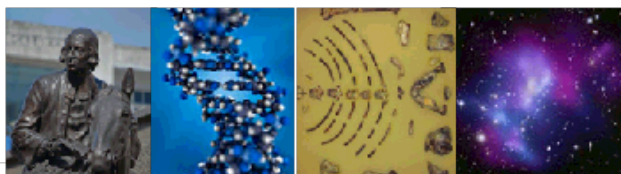


WesleyNexus

Science and Religion within the Wesleyan Tradition



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October 19, 2014

Dear WesleyNexus Colleague:

Last month I highlighted the WesleyNexus sponsored retreat at the West River Center near Annapolis, MD. Events like that are always invigorating for me. I get to meet new friends, discuss challenging topics in an environment that is relaxed and respectfully uninhibited. You get to know people in a way that is impossible through social media or email. At the same time, retreats are always an exception, a break from the regular patterns of living. There is always the question of what to do that will affect life more broadly.

To facilitate the continuing discussion in local congregations, WesleyNexus has a variety of papers available for you to use as discussion starters. Please email us at Wesleynexus@aol.com and tell us who you are, where you are, your congregation, and what subjects are highest on your agenda. The topics might range from cosmology, universe origins, quantum theology, human origins, origins of life, evolutionary issues, faith and science, beliefs & biblical literalism, and perhaps other topics of general interest. In addition, this month's newsletter identifies upcoming events and internet available resources that will help those interested in starting or continuing the conversation in their local community. If you have an event organized for 2014 or 2015, please let us know so that we can post it for others who might be interested.

WesleyNexus will continue to encourage science and religion dialogue for those who identify with the Wesleyan tradition and those outside the tradition. We do need your help. As we move forward with programs such as our live webcasts and our retreat, we will need additional funds. Since we have no staff, offices or consultants, all your gifts are used for programs and our website. Please consider supporting us with a contribution either through the PayPal DONATE link below, or, by sending a check to:

WesleyNexus, Inc.
24500 Fossen Road
Damascus, MD 20872



Thanks in advance for your support

God Bless,

Rick Barr, Secretary,
WesleyNexus, Board of Directors

DoSER Program of AAAS

<http://www.aaas.org/DoSER>

Since its inception as a science education and outreach program of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the DoSER program (Program of Dialogue on Science, Ethics, and Religion) has supported a variety of educational programs designed to reach out to faith communities and develop an appreciation of “the ethical, religious and theological implications of scientific discoveries and technological innovations” and increase the overall understanding of science among all participants in those communities. The current Program Director is Dr. Jennifer Wiseman, an astrophysicist who is the Senior Project Scientist for the Hubble Space Telescope at NASA. Under her direction, DoSER's current initiatives continue to reflect this mission of outreach:

Discussion Starter - Same World, Different World Views

In an effort to bridge the gap of mistrust between the scientific community and evangelical Christians, DoSER has implemented an outreach program called the Perceptions Project. The project has invited scientists and religious leaders together for in-person dialogue most recently in Atlanta on September 16-17. To promote and improve fruitful conversation, a “Discussion Starter” was developed focusing on one of three communication models where:



JENNIFER WISEMAN, DO SER, AAAS; LEITH ANDERSON, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EVANGELICALS; KATHARINE HAYHOE, CLIMATE SCIENTIST; MARTIN KRENNHUBER, ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT; BOB BROWN, AAAS; CHRISTOPHER A. SCHILLER

- We can best improve relations by uncovering and affirming the shared values that guide individuals from both communities in their day-to-day lives.
- We can best improve relations by actually working together on our common concerns
- We can best improve relations by simplifying them so that the two communities can remain civil while each pursues its own ends.

The model is available on the DoSER website by clicking “CHOICEWORK” on the linked page [here](#).

Science Perceptions National Conference, March 13, 2015

“[Perceptions: Science and Religious Communities](#)” is a national conference that will bring together leaders in science and religion—including DoSER director Jennifer Wiseman, National Association of Evangelicals president Leith Anderson, and climate scientist Katharine Hayhoe - “to further conversation and to plan a course for future dialogue.” More information will be available at a future date.

DoSER Science for Seminaries Grants:

[Science for Seminaries](#) is a \$1.5 million pilot program targeting the incorporation of science into the seminary curriculum. The participating seminaries will develop and implement a minimum of two courses. AAAS will provide science resources, including short science-education videos for class use and provide scientist-advisers to act as expert advisers. A Religion News Service article can be found [here](#).

American Scientific Affiliation

<http://network.asa3.org/>

“The American Scientific Affiliation, or ASA, was founded in 1941 as an international network of Christians in the sciences. As scientists, members of the ASA take part in humanity’s

exploration of nature, its laws, and how it works. As Christians, ASAers want to know not just how the universe operates and came first place.” They are united by their commitment to orthodox Christianity “that is, any subject on which there is a clear scientific consensus.”



their website materials suitable for download and discussion. The journal Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith can be found [here](#) and [God and Nature Magazine](#), a “literary resource.” Also of interest is a very extensive events calendar which can be found [here](#).

Evolution Weekend, February 13-15, 2015

<http://www.theclergyletterproject.org/>

In 2008, The United Methodist Church passed a resolution that “endorses The Clergy Letter Project and its reconciliatory programs between religion and science, and urges United Methodist clergy participation.” In February of each year, the Clergy Letter Project promotes Evolution Weekend. WesleyNexus encourages participation in this initiative and has sponsored panel discussions at the Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference Mission Center in Fulton, MD. The information you need to sign up can be found on Michael Zimmerman’s Clergy Letter Project Newsletter [here](#).



Faraday Institute (UK)

<http://www.faraday.st-edmunds.cam.ac.uk/index.php>

The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion is an academic research enterprise based at St Edmund's College, Cambridge. The Institute has four main activities: 1) Scholarly research and publication on science and religion, including the organization of invited groups of experts to write joint publications, 2) To provide short-term courses in science and religion. 3) To organize seminars and lectures on science and religion. 4) To provide accurate information on science and religion for the international media and wider public. Through the Faraday website, there are numerous videos and papers that can be found here for [videos](#) and [here](#) for papers.

John Templeton Foundation

Mission: The John Templeton Foundation serves as a philanthropic catalyst for discoveries relating to the Big Questions of human purpose and ultimate reality. They support research on subjects ranging from complexity, evolution, and infinity to creativity, forgiveness, love, and free will. They encourage civil, informed dialogue among scientists, philosophers, and theologians and between such experts and the public at large, for the purposes of definitional clarity and new insights.

Many of you may know the Templeton Foundation through the awarding of the yearly Templeton Prize for “progress in humanity’s efforts to comprehend the many and diverse manifestations of the Divine.” This year’s award winner was Tomas Halik, “Czech priest and philosopher who risked imprisonment for illegally advancing religious and cultural freedoms after the Soviet invasion of his country, and has since become a leading international advocate for dialogue among different faiths and non-believers”. You can find his prize webpage [here](#) and a list of previous winners with links to downloads and videos for more recent recipients [here](#).



Other Program and Events

Zygon Center

On November 3, 2014 at the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago, The Zygon Center will sponsor a lecture by Dr. Michael Hogue. Dr. Hogue received his Ph.D. in Theological Ethics from the University of Chicago in December 2005, joined the Meadville Lombard Theological School faculty in September, 2005. He received his M.A. from the University of Chicago and earned his B.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies from Hope College in Holland, Michigan.



The next week, on November 10, Dr. Ursula Goodenough will present a lecture "What's the Religious Potential of Our Scientific Understandings of Nature?" Both Dr. Hogue and Dr. Goodenough address their talks from the perspective of [religious naturalism](#). More information can be found on the [Zygon Calendar](#) page.



Abraham's Dice Conference

<http://www.stonehill.edu/events/abrahams-dice/>

From November 16-19, Stonehill College in Easton, MA will bring together some of the world's leading scholars in the field of science and religion to explore the interplay of chance and providence in the monotheistic religious traditions. Dr. Karl Giberson, currently Scholar-in-Residence in Science & Religion at Stonehill College, and seventeen contributors, who remain on the forefront of science and religion, aim to examine the significance of randomness and its intersection—or lack thereof with divine action. They will ask how that interplay has been understood over time as our appreciation of the workings of nature has changed. Speakers include Michael Ruse, Alistair McGrath, John Barrow and John Polkinghorne.

Emergence and Environment: Science and Religion November 21-22, 2014

<http://issr.yolasite.com/>

The International Society for Science and Religion (ISSR) will host a 24-hour conference at the San Diego Convention Center, just before the opening of the Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion. The ISSR Conference is free and open to the general public. No prior registration is required.



The ISSR Conference features three sessions:

The first session will focus on the latest research on the topic of emergence in the fields of biology and physics and the implications of these findings for philosophy and religion. The second session tackles some of the unique challenges that science presents for those who are within the evangelical community, focusing on the theme "Science and Christian Scripture: Issues of Origins and Evolution." The final session will concentrate attention on ecological and environmental concerns and the challenges they present for the major religions today.

Explaining Away Conference

<http://scm.ulster.ac.uk/explainingaway/conference.html>

On January 8-9, 2015, in Belfast, Ireland, there will be a two day conference where the relationship between science and religion is addressed from the perspective of what it means to explain and to

explain away. This intriguing approach is part of a two-year Templeton Foundation project; the “project will explore the concept of explaining away using probability theory as well as investigating explaining away in social groups using mathematical modeling and complex networks. As such the project is very interdisciplinary in nature as it relates to artificial intelligence, formal epistemology / philosophy of science, mathematical modeling and complex networks as well as the interaction between science and religion.” The project overview can be found [here](#).

Participant Referrals

We encourage participants to forward to us articles and video that they find particularly thought provoking and worth sharing. The following are two items that were forwarded to us and present provocative themes worth pondering.

The first is by Stanley Fish commenting on a recent book by Ronald Dworkin called Deeper Than God. In the book, Dworkin asks “to what extent and on what basis should constitutional protection be afforded to religious activities, especially when those activities are in conflict with settled law... the theme of this book is that religion is deeper than God. Dworkin doesn’t mean that being religious and believing in God are incompatible; he means that the latter is a possible version of, but not the essence of, the former.” In a time when many consider themselves spiritual but not religious, this question is worth pondering. The article can be found [here](#).

The second reference concludes a series of twelve articles in the *The Stone* where two philosophers ask “Can Wanting to Believe Make Us Believers?”. Again, a provocative question. The article can be found [here](#).