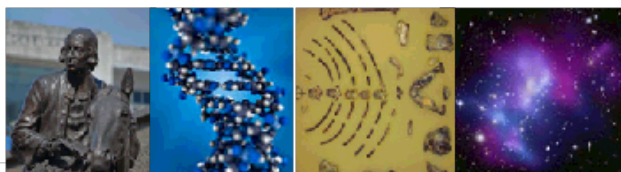


WesleyNexus

Science and Religion within the Wesleyan Tradition



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January 19, 2015

Dear WesleyNexus Colleague:

It has been a cold, dark week here in Maryland. The holiday season is past and it is time to get back to work: rising at six, getting coffee and turning on the computer. Recently I have been working from home. I didn't think I would like it having worked over thirty years in the city, always keeping work and home separate.

Today, with email and cell phones, such simple divisions are no longer possible. At first I wasn't sure how I would react to breaking my work/home rule but now I find it a blessing, requiring me to adjust my orientation to both work and home, opening up new possibilities for both.

I think science and religion are like this. For many years, they were separated into two compartments, one where professionals "objectively" interrogated the universe and the other where persons pursued their subjective private spiritual lives. Developments over the past few decades have broken down this division, spawning new possibilities and not a little bit of apprehension as well. In February, WesleyNexus continues our project to break down barriers between these two human activities by promoting a discussion between persons of differing faiths and ideology. We invite you to attend the February program described below, either in person or via the internet. It is our hope that through this experience, new, incremental opportunities will arise, just like my current efforts at tele-working.

We continue to ask for your support. WesleyNexus is very much a virtual organization. I write this on my home computer using free email and incurring no organizational expense. All funds that we collect are spent on maintaining our web presence, sponsoring programs, distributing the newsletter and promoting activities of other organizations within the science and religion space.

All contributions are acknowledged for tax reporting purposes. 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



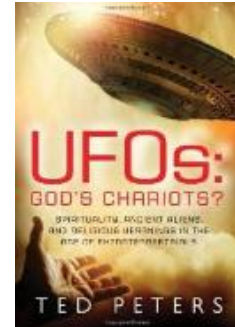
Thanks in advance for your support.

God Bless,

Rick Barr, Secretary,
WesleyNexus, Board of Directors

Space Rocks: Exoplanets, Astrobiology and Christian Faith. Summary of Dr. Ted Peters' talk at Trinity UMC in Frederick, MD
By Rev. William Maisch

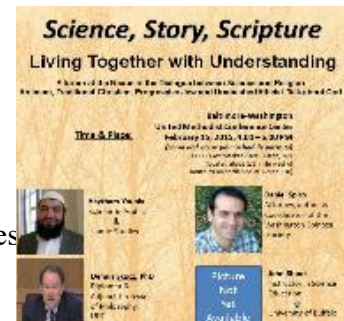
On Saturday, January 10, over 60 individuals gathered at Trinity UMC, Frederick to hear from the Rev. Dr. Ted F. Peters. The program was jointly sponsored by WesleyNexus and the Church Council at Trinity United Methodist. Dr. Peters is a distinguished research professor of Systematic Theology at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, and a fellow at the Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences in Berkeley, CA, and one of the early trailblazers in the developing discipline of science and religion. Dr. Peters' lecture reflected upon the necessity to evaluate assumptions and assertions of astrobiology (including the Drake Equation) through use of astrotheology. Dr. Peters asked attendees if their conception of God was broad enough to include creation of the entire universe, including the possibility of life on our neighboring planets and moons as well as recently discovered exoplanets. Dr. Peters challenged the attendees to reflect on their understanding of creation and evolution in terms of creatio ex nihilo (creation from nothing) and creatio continua (continuing creation). A lively question and answer session followed Dr. Peter's presentation. Dr. Peters' blog can be found [here](#). We are truly grateful for the co-sponsorship and the superb coordination of the logistics by Rev. Eliezer Valentin-Castanon and the people of Trinity United Methodist



WesleyNexus Evolution Weekend, February 15, 2015, at 4:00 pm EST, in Fulton, MD

Update: Registration is now available for the event on our website, www.wesnex.org.

For the past two years, WesleyNexus has sponsored a major panel discussion as part of the Clergy Letter Project's Evolution Weekend. This year we will continue this tradition by hosting a panel discussion between an Imam, a traditional Christian, a progressive Jew and an unabashed atheist, as they talk about God, addressing the topic “Science, Story, Scripture: Living Together with Understanding.” The panel includes Haytham Younis, a scholar in Arabic and Islamic Studies, Dennis Skocz, Ph.D., career diplomat and Adjunct Professor of Philosophy at UDC, Daniel Spiro, author and coordinator of the Washington Spinoza Society, and John Shook, Ph. D., Instructor in science education at the University of Buffalo. The initial flyer can be found [here](#). More information will be posted once available, so please come back to our website.



We now have a link available on the WesleyNexus website (www.wesnex.org) to register for the Evolution Weekend event. The registration is easy and quick. Please do it now. Live streaming will again be available for all who register their individual participation and their church discussion groups. There is no cost for you to organize a local discussion group that evening and watch the event live. You will also be able to submit questions to the four panelists. Once you register,

you will be given a special email for questions during the Q and A part of the program. Please send us an email at WesleyNexus@aol.com if you have any logistical questions

WesleyNexus Welcomes Rev. Angela Maves as a new Board Member

At its Annual meeting in November 2014, the WesleyNexus Board voted affirmatively on the nomination of Rev Angela Maves to the Board of Directors. Angela was raised in Yorkshire, England. Working in advertising in London, she met George who is from Washington DC and moved here permanently in 1984. She first attended Foundry UMC, then moved to Miami, Florida (William Jennings Bryan UMC) and later attended Church of the Saviour upon returning to DC. She graduated from Wesley Seminary in 2006 and has served as a chaplain at The George Washington University Hospital for twelve years. She also serves as a Deacon at Dumbarton UMC where she has been for fifteen years. Angela has been interested in Native American Indian culture for thirty years, most recently writing and filming with a Dakota Elder in South Dakota on the preservation of language and culture at a petroglyph site in Minnesota. She enjoys reading and discussing theology, and she is especially interested in the connections between physics and spirituality. Angela and George have one daughter, Emily, a senior in mechanical engineering in Detroit.

Reminder: DoSER Program of AAAS: Science Perceptions National Conference, March 13, 2015.

<http://www.aaas.org/event/science-perceptions-national-conference>

Registration for the Science Perceptions Conference is now open with the You may register [here](#).

“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.”

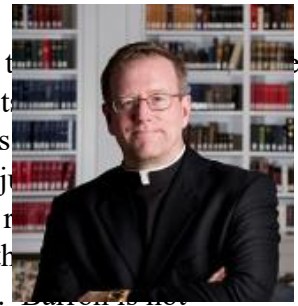


The list of speakers includes Nobel Prize winner in physics William D. Phillips, climate scientist Katherine Hayhoe, DoSER director Jennifer Wiseman and Leith Anderson, the President of the National Association of Evangelicals. Additional speakers are listed on the website which can be found [here](#).

A Philosophical Pause: “The Decline of Philosophy” by Robert Barron

In this article, Robert Barron, founder of the global ministry, Word on Fire, and the Rector/President of Mundelein Seminary, reflects on the notion proposed by philosopher Daniel Dennett that those who espouse a naturalistic, materialistic world view should call themselves “the brights,” implying, of course, that those affirming one of the many varied forms of religious belief and practice are not so bright. In this article, Barron focuses on a recent article in Salon.com by John G. Messerly commenting on a recent survey that

only 14% of all English speaking philosophers are theist. Messerly proclaims that “genes and environment explain human beliefs and behaviors—people do not believe in genomes in environments. The near universal appeal of religious belief suggests a genetic component to religious beliefs and practices, and science increasingly confirms this. Furthermore, when intelligent people do believe in God, it is because they are justified in themselves for some deep emotional or psychological reason. He then equates religious belief with science in contrast to biological evolution, which clearly is understood to be atheistic. As philosophers, you know those really smart “brights,” should give one pause.

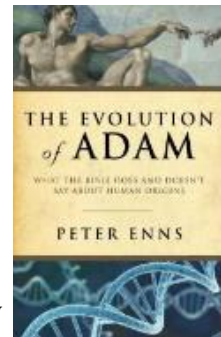


impressed and responds quite pointedly: “I have found that, in practically every instance, the scientists who declare their disbelief in God have no idea what serious religious people mean by the word "God." Almost without exception, they think of God as some supreme worldly nature, an item within the universe for which they have found no "evidence," a gap within the ordinary nexus of causal relations, etc. I would deny such a reality as vigorously as they do.“ In his talk on the 10th of January, Ted Peters called this type of thinking “practicing theology without a license”. What do you think? You can find Barron’s article [here](#) and Messerly’s article [here](#).

Also, you can find an article by Sean Carroll on the survey referenced by Messerly [here](#).

Science Proves God, Not! Two Articles, One by Geoffrey A. Mitelman and One by Peter Enns

On Christmas day, the evangelical writer Eric Metaxas published an op-ed piece in the WSJ “Science Increasingly Makes the Case for God.” Rabbi Geoffrey A. Mitelman responded in an article in the Huffington Post claiming “Sorry, Science Doesn't Make a Case for God. But That's OK” offering two reasons that science fails in this area. The first is that science is always changing and the second is that science and religion are two different ways of thinking. Theologian Peter Enns supplements these two reasons with additional, theological insights reflecting on the limits of our language and our understanding. Particularly in theology, we use metaphors. For Enns, “Thinking that science can prove or disprove God begins with the notion of God where our metaphors are confused for the real thing.”

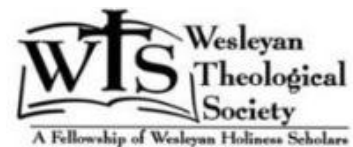


You can find Enns’ article [here](#) and Mitelman's article [here](#).

50th Anniversary Meeting of the Wesleyan Theological Society, March 6-7, 2015

By E. Maynard Moore, Ph.D

The 2015/50th Anniversary Meeting of the Wesleyan Theological Society will be held at Mount Vernon Nazarene University, Mount Vernon Ohio, on March 6-7, 2015. The meeting keynote speakers will be Doug Strong, Seattle Pacific University, and Beth Felker Jones, Wheaton College. The Presidential address will be given by Richard Thompson, Northwest Nazarene University. The two-day session will follow the annual meeting of the Wesleyan Philosophical Society, and persons can register for both. The WTS Conference will feature a wide variety of topics in the Wesleyan tradition, including Biblical Studies, Moral Theology, Theology and Practical Culture, Ecumenical Studies, and Women's Studies in the Wesleyan Tradition. WesleyNexus Advisory Board member Dr. Thomas Oord of Northwestern Nazarene University will play a prominent part in the proceedings. WesleyNexus President Dr. Moore has had a paper approved and scheduled in the section Theology



and Science: his topic will be “John Wesley's Engagement with the Science of his Day.” Please mark your calendar now and save the date. We hope that you will join us for the conference in Mount Vernon, Ohio March 6-7. More information is on the website: www.wtsweb.org.

**61st Annual meeting of the Institute for Religion in an Age of Science (IRAS) –
Star Island (off Portsmouth), New Hampshire, August 8-15, 2015**

Call for Papers, deadline February 1, 2015; website www.iras.org

By E. Maynard Moore, Ph.D

Theme: Unsettling Science and Religion: Contributions & Questions



Queer studies, the critical philosophical approach initiated by Michel Foucault and taken up by a number of contemporary thinkers, builds upon research in the biological sciences to challenge the assumptions of heterosexuality, monogamy, gender and sexual dimorphism as not founded in "naturally occurring" categories but instead as cultural constructs, created through time, traditions, politics and power dynamics. At its most basic level, it suggests that reality is more complex and far stranger than any thought, idea, system or belief can capture. It aims at continuing conversations and explorations of the world in which we live, rather than arriving at any final conclusions.

The goal 2015 IRAS conference is to borrow the techniques and challenges from within queer studies and queer theory, with the goal of unsettling—or “queering”—our own discipline(s). To this end, we call for papers and poster presentations on topics at the intersection of religion, science and queer theory. This might include ways to challenge the boundaries within and between religion and science, and or between and within the academy, as well as the boundaries of the sacred and secular, of reason and faith. Ultimately, we want to ask how queer religion, science and philosophy, can and/or should be.

Paper proposals of no more than 250 words, or poster proposals of no more than 100 words, should be sent by email to Pauline Candaux by February 1, 2015. Please put “IRAS Paper: Your Last Name” in the subject line of your email. We will have a certain amount of full and partial scholarships for the top papers.

Confirmed keynote speakers include: Carol Wayne White, Karen Barad, Fern Feldman, Catherine Keller, Laurel Schneider, Emilie Townes, Claudia Schippert, Whitney Bauman, Lisa Stenmark, and Chapel Speaker, Donna Schaper

Book Review:

Sample, Tex. [The Future of John Wesley's Theology: Back to the Future](#)
with the Apostle Paul. (Cascade Books: Eugene, Oregon, 2012)
ISBN 9781610976299.

As reviewed by E. Maynard Moore, Ph.D

