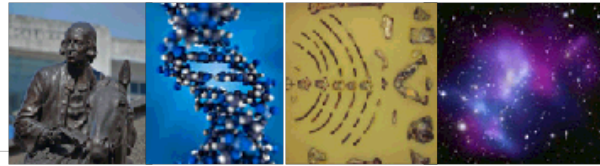


# WesleyNexus

*Science and Religion within the Wesleyan Tradition*



Home 15

Back

Links

Contact Us

Dear WesleyNexus Colleague:

August 16, 2016

WesleyNexus has been producing our monthly Newsletter since March, 2010. At that time we distributed a single page message to a few dozen participants. In that message (found [here](#)), Maynard Moore, then Vice President and now President, sounded an aspirational note by inviting others to join our newly born community. At the time, our distribution was mostly to persons in the Washington, DC area who were also engaged in local discussions on science and religion in a number of locations. Some of these discussion groups continue to exist while others have been folded into our broader, expanded network that now spans the globe with participants linking in from all over the world. As of last month, only 20% of our web activity came from Maryland, DC and Virginia. Nearly 2/3 of our site visitors come from other states in the US with the remainder originating in Europe, Canada, South America and even China, Australia and New Zealand. Perhaps our most significant accomplishment has been to sponsor four live web events annually at the Baltimore-Washington Conference Mission Center as part of Evolution Weekend. Three of these events were recorded and can be found on our homepage ([www.wesnex.org](http://www.wesnex.org)). We will be sponsoring our fifth program on February 12, 2017 which will be available both in-person and live online. In addition, we continue to support multiple local DC area events. Details will be included in our online newsletter as dates become available.

As we mention below, we are pleased to announce two new members to our boards. Dr. Sy Garte will be joining our Executive Board. Sy is a resident of Rockville, Maryland and will be able join us as we work towards developing our future activities. We are also reaching out across the Atlantic to Cambridge, England. Dr. Christopher Knight has joined our Advisory Board and, along with ten other distinguished scholars, will provide us with both support and advice. All in all, this coming year promises to be both challenging and rewarding.

With all our growth and program enhancements, WesleyNexus remains an all-volunteer organization and need support from our participants to continue our presence on the web and to develop in-person programs. We thank everyone who helped contribute to this effort. To continue our programs, we will need support from others. As always, all funds that we collect as donations 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 either through PayPal receipt or by letter.** 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, Maynard, and the rest of the WesleyNexus Board of Directors

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**Sy Garte, Ph.D. joins the WesleyNexus Board of Directors**

We are pleased to announce that Sy Garte will be the newest member of the WesleyNexus Board of Directors. Sy is a United Methodist active in his local church in Rockville, Maryland. He is also a scientist with a PhD from The City University of New York in biochemistry. For more details on his background, please check out our Board page at [http://www.wesnex.org/H\\_AboutUs\\_Bios.html](http://www.wesnex.org/H_AboutUs_Bios.html)



**Joining the WesleyNexus Advisory Board: Dr. Christopher C. Knight**

Christopher C. Knight is the Executive Secretary of the International Society for Science and Religion (ISSR) and a Research Associate of the Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies in Cambridge, England. At one time he was a priest of the Anglican church, in which his last post was as Chaplain, Fellow, and Director of Studies in Theology at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge. He is now a priest of the Orthodox church. He is the author of about fifty book chapters and papers, as well as two books in the Fortress Press' "Theology and the Sciences" series. These are *Wrestling With the Divine: Religion, Science, and Revelation* (2001) and *The God of Nature: Incarnation and Contemporary Science* (2007). He is at present working on a third book, focusing on what he sees as the potential Eastern Orthodox contribution to the science-theology dialogue. The ISSR website can be found here: <http://www.issr.org.uk/>



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**How far can a religion professor go when questioning his faith?  
The Idaho Statesman**

“The Rev. Thomas Jay Oord, a theology professor at Northwest Nazarene University, carried around deep thoughts about God that some of his fellow Nazarenes find troubling. Now Oord faces an uncertain future. Statesman reporter Bill Roberts traces Oord’s journey from an evangelical Nazarene to his waning days at NNU in a two-day series starting Sunday in the Idaho Statesman.” Dr. Oord is the WesleyNexus Advisory Board. Once the links are available, we will be posting them on the homesite page. See the promotion [here](#).



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**Philosophy Now, June/July 2016**

Philosophy Now is a magazine for everyone interested in ideas. It aims to engage ordinary people by “convincing them that philosophy can be exciting, worthwhile

and comprehensible, and also to provide some light and enjoyable reading matter for those already ensnared by the muse, such as philosophy students and academics.” The June/July issue contained two articles that seemed of particular interest to those interested in science and religion. Though they allow four articles to be read free each month, back issues are not available without subscription. We thank the editors of Philosophy Now for allowing us to make an approved copy of both the following can read the current issue of Philosophy Now on their website: <https://philosophynow.org>



### **Richard Feynman’s Philosophy of Science by Ben Trubody**

Richard Feynman was one of the most influential physicists of the last fifty years and one of the few scientists to effectively reach the larger public. He won the Nobel Prize for QED (Quantum Electro Dynamics) and was a personality with staying power – with references to his bongo playing on the popular TV show Big Bang. In Ben Trubody’s article, Feynman is presented as a reluctant philosopher whose insights into what the scientific enterprise entail challenge textbook understanding. Quoting Feynman, the purpose of science is “to find out ab initio, again from experience, what the situation is, rather than trusting experience of the past in the form in which it was passed down”. One should try to see things new, without filters, without preconceived notions or expectation. You can find the full article [here](#).



### **Chaos & An Unpredictable Tomorrow by Peter Saltzstein**

Much has been written about chaos theory over the past few decades. From a scientific perspective, complex systems are understood as deterministic even though they are not predictable, either in principle or as a matter of practicality. There is a sense of holistic understanding within chaos theory whereby everything potentially can affect everything else. According to Saltzstein, a philosopher who teaches at Horry-Georgetown Technical College in Conway, SC, “what is going to happen in the world seems to depend on how all the world’s complex systems behave from moment to moment. The future, then, is self-organized, but to no particular end, purpose or plan.” The question that can also be asked however, is it possible for there to be a general end or purpose that is open to novel possibilities? With that question, a new dimension of discussion is opened. You can read Saltzstein’s article [here](#).



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**<http://www.patheos.com/Topics/Faith-and-Reason>**

One of WesleyNexus’ goals is to create open and respectful dialog between participants willing to explore the nature of faith and its relationship to science and reason. With so many confrontational voices on the web, it is a relief to see diverse voices coming together to discuss these issues. A collection of reflections on faith and reason has been published recently by Patheos.com. On this site, contributors discuss the tension between faith and reason found in faith communities and even in the broader culture. While WesleyNexus affirms the compatibility between faith and reason, we are happy to promote dialog that brings together varied perspectives. We applaud Patheos for bringing this collection together. These contributions are worth reading for personal reflection or, even better, sharing with others to pursue the questions together. You can find the webpage [here](#):



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### **Infinity, Cosmos, & Panentheism in Nicholas of Cusa by Austin Roberts**

In this fascinating article, Austin Roberts highlights the cosmological reflections of Nicholas of Cusa (1401-1464) and introduces us to a profound, original figure who challenged the presuppositions of his time with a “provocative vision of a centerless, edgeless cosmos.” This view contradicted the Aristotelian/Thomistic/Neoplatonic hierarchical cosmos -- the "Great Chain of Being"-- that “dominated medieval thought.” Roberts points to four fundamental ideas developed by Nicholas that are still philosophically and scientifically relevant. Just as important, he develops one of the earliest presentations of panentheism, a theological understanding of the God/World relationship that has gained significant traction over the past 100 years. The article can be found [here](#).



Thanks to Facebook for presenting this article posted by Austin Roberts.

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### **A Debate Over the Physics of Time by Dan Falk**

Time is one of those concepts which everybody knows, everybody uses and everybody thinks they understand -- until one asks what it really means. Then things get very interesting. In Dan Falk’s essay, time as understood by physics and cosmology is explored. From one perspective, since Einstein, time isn’t real. Writing in 1955, Einstein said “for us believing physicists, the distinction between past, present and future is only a stubbornly persistent illusion.” Well, not so fast. Falk highlights a recent conference where 60 physicists tried to hash out what we mean by time, its origin and what it means for the “future”. You can read the article [here](#).



George Ellis, a cosmologist at the University of Cape Town, talks in a presentation.

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### **Did the Universe Boot Up with a “Big Bounce?” by Clara Moskowitz**

In this Scientific American article, Clara Moskowitz reflects on the possibility that “the cosmos may have rebounded from an earlier contraction and a “big crunch” into a “big bang” that started things off all over again.” If so, this certainly would have an impact on how one views creation, creator and eschatology – the understanding of how things end. Or perhaps it makes no sense. Perhaps the question itself reaches a limit that makes it unanswerable. Or perhaps it is just physicists having fun. While the mathematics will escape most of us, the question of the origin and destiny of the universe inspires us all with a sense of awe and humility. The article can be found [here](#).



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### **Upcoming Events**

**Samson in Stone: New Discoveries in the Ancient Synagogue at Huqoq in Israel's Galilee**  
**By Dr. Jodi Magness (sponsored by the Institute for Science and Judaism)**

Sunday, September 11, 2016 -  
Breakfast 10:00 a.m., Lecture 10:30 a.m.  
Bender JCC OF Greater Washington  
Rockville, Maryland



Join Professor Jodi Magness in a slide-illustrated lecture describing exciting, recent finds from excavations in the ancient village of Huqoq in Israel's Galilee. Professor Magness leads a consortium of universities in a project that began in 2011 and has uncovered mosaics and other material from a fifth century, C.E. synagogue. She will also discuss the possible implications of the discoveries for understanding Jewish religious life in ancient Galilee.



<http://www.scienceandjudaism.org/events/>

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**Institute for Science and Religion at Chestnut Hill College**

9601 Germantown Ave.  
Philadelphia, PA 19118  
September 22, 2016 @ 7:00 am - 9:00 pm



“Do Humans Have Minds? Neuroscientific and Biblical Issues”  
Nancey Murphy, PhD  
Senior Professor of Christian Philosophy, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena CA

For more information go to <http://irands.org/>

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**Summary of Past Events**

**American Scientific Affiliation Meeting, July 22-25, 2016 by Mike Beidler**

From July 22-25, during a nationwide heatwave where the temperatures skyrocketed above 100 degrees F, the [American Scientific Affiliation](#) (ASA) held its 71st Annual Meeting at Azusa Pacific University (APU), which is nestled in the San Gabriel Valley about 25 miles northeast of Los Angeles. The occasion also celebrated the ASA's 75th anniversary as North America's premiere network of Christians in the sciences, the 4-year difference reminding the attendees that the organization not only predates the United States' entry into World War II but also, along with the rest of the Greatest Generation, struggled to facilitate the difficult balance between its members' civic duties with the work of the Kingdom.



This year's theme -- Brain / Mind / Faith -- wove a thread throughout the 4-day gathering, which introduced new ASA Executive Director [Leslie Wickman](#), highlighted a spectacular new book on the geology of the Grand Canyon co-written by a number of ASA members ([Grand Canyon](#), Monument to an Ancient Earth: Can Noah's Flood Explain the Grand Canyon?), and offered an opportunity to engage with science-and-faith-minded APU students and InterVarsity Christian Fellowship.

Plenary speakers included:

Dr. William "Bill" Newsome, Professor of Neurobiology at Stanford University, whose research aims to understand the neuronal processes that mediate visual perception and visually-guided behavior. Newsome's presentation, "Of Two Minds: A Neuroscientist Balances Science and Faith," highlighted findings from [Brain 2025: A Scientific Vision](#) -- which was charged with accelerating the development and application of innovative technologies to construct a dynamic picture of brain function that integrates neuronal and circuit activity over time and space -- and its implications for the Christian faith.

Dr. Justin Barrett, chief project developer for Fuller Theological Seminary's Office for Science, Theology, and Religion Initiatives (STAR) and director of Fuller Graduate School of Psychology's doctoral program in psychological science, gave a presentation on "Contemporary Trends in the Science of Religion: Adaptationist and Byproduct Theories and Their Implications," Barrett's presentation explored the cognitive and evolutionary origins of religion, positing that religion is a beneficial evolutionary adaptation and that theistic belief has a biological basis, hypotheses which in no way threaten the truth of Christianity.

Dr. Roger C. Wiens, a scientist at Los Alamos National Laboratory where he is principal investigator for the ChemCam instrument on the Mars Curiosity Rover, gave a phenomenal presentation on "Exploring Mars with Curiosity: A Scientific and Spiritual Journey." Wiens took time to describe the rover's use of laser-induced breakdown spectroscopy ([LIBS](#)) in order to further NASA's work of better determining Mars' geological history and whether the red planet's alluvial plains, with its alternating sediments of coarse and fine grain, may have hosted life at some point.

Dr. Audrey (Ellerbe) Bowden, Assistant Professor of Electrical Engineering at Stanford University, presented on "Imag(in)ing a Brighter Future for Healthcare," giving the audience an overview of the Stanford Biomedical Optics Group's work in developing and deploying novel tools, such as optical coherence [tomography](#), for optical imaging at the microscale and nanoscale. Bowden's presentation was a perfect wrap-up to the Annual Meeting with her encouragement to make our work a spiritual experience. She asked us to consider Proverbs 25:2, "It is the glory of God to conceal things, but the glory of kings is to search things out." Bowden further reminded us that as we exercise certain elements of our shared faith -- dependence (James 1:5), humility (Philippians 2:3-4), and a proper God-focused perspective (Romans 3:23-24) -- in our respective fields, we all must work to be the light of Christ (John 9:5) to the world (Matthew 5:14).

During the event's celebratory banquet, Dr. Edward B. "Ted" Davis, Professor of the History of Science at Messiah College and former ASA president, examined the ASA within the historical context of science and religion in America using a plethora of primary sources, including the intriguing early-20th century cartoon work of E. J. Pace and ASA founding member Irwin Moon's "Sermons from Science."

One highlight of the Annual Meeting actually occurred before the first plenary session was held, taking the form of a half-day workshop that gave an instructive overview of introductory topics in science and religion that can be used in Sunday schools. Dr. Denis Lamoureux, Associate Professor of Science and Religion at St. Joseph's College in the University of Alberta, gave lessons on (1) "Beyond the 'Evolution' vs. 'Creation' Debate, introducing attendees to the various views of origins; (2) "Ancient Science in the Bible," which argued that the Bible cannot and should not be utilized as a scientific textbook; (3) "Intelligent Design: Delusion or Divine Revelation?", which explored the idea that nature -- as a whole -- does indeed reflect a divine Creator; (4) "Galileo the Theologian," which examined Galileo's own principles of biblical interpretation; and (5) "Darwin's Religious Beliefs," which presented evidence that Darwin never descended into full-blown atheism and remained to the end of his days powerfully impacted by his perception of an intelligently designed cosmos. (Audio slides of all five lessons, with handouts and discussion guides, are available online [here](#).) Having engaged with Lamoureux on a number of occasions and utilized his materials throughout the last eight years, I can't help but praise the depth of his pastoral sensibilities.

In addition to the pre-meeting workshops, plenary sessions, panels, and 75th Anniversary-themed presentations, ASA members participated in a variety of half-hour breakout sessions in the following categories: Life and Environmental Sciences; Teaching Faith and Science; Physical Science; Literature, Science and the Bible (including a brilliant presentation by Kansas State University geologist Keith Miller on "Natural Evil and the Mythology of J.R.R. Tolkien"); Appropriate Technology and Stewardship; and Mind

Sciences.

[Next year's Annual Meeting](#), with the theme of Exploring New Heights for Science and Stewardship, will take place at the Colorado School of Mines in Golden, Colorado, from July 28-31, 2017.

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**Just in!**

**An Evening Conversation with Deborah Haarsma in Washington, D. C.  
Conversation with Deborah Haarsma on “God and the Multiverse.”**

Date:

Monday, September 12, 2016 - 6:30pm to 8:30pm

Location:

National Press Club

529 14th Street, NW

Washington, DC 20045

To register, go to:

<http://www.ttf.org/event/evening-conversation-deborah-haarsma-washington-d-c>

**The Emergence of Life: On the Earth, in the Lab, and Elsewhere  
Thursday September 15, 2016 | 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.**

"The emergence of life is among the most compelling questions in astrobiology. This symposium brings together scientists, humanists, and authors to explore what we know about the origins of life, how we came to know it, and what it means. Organized around the spaces in which we explore the origins of life--in terrestrial nature, in the laboratory, and on other planets--participants will include biologists, geochemists, physicists, historians, philosophers, and authors, each discussing a different aspect of or approach to an origin of life. Each session will feature commentary by a noted journalist and/or author."

More information at:

<http://www.loc.gov/loc/kluge/news/originslife.html?loclr=eanfkw>







