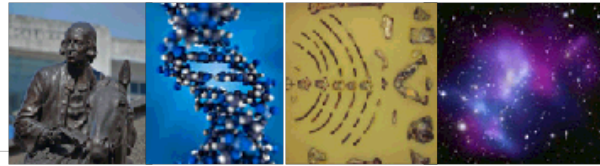


WesleyNexus

Science and Religion within the Wesleyan Tradition



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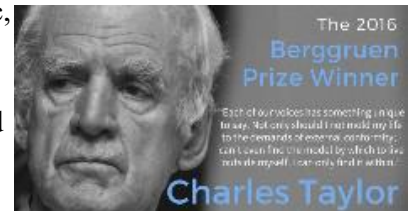
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Dear WesleyNexus Colleague:

October 25, 2016

Earlier this month, Charles Taylor, a philosopher and professing Catholic, has been named the first winner of the [Berggruen Prize](#). The \$1 million award from the Berggruen Institute is given annually to a thinker whose ideas are of broad significance for shaping human self-understanding and the advancement of humanity. “The founders of the Berggruen Prize describe it as “awarded annually to a thinker whose ideas are of broad significance for shaping human self-understanding and advancement.” It’s hard to imagine a more appropriate first recipient than Charles Taylor” says Craig Calhoun, President of the Berggruen Institute, in a recent [HuffingtonPost.com article](#). It is worth highlighting a very significant point that relates directly to the science and religion dialogue. Taylor describes an intellectual history whereby secular culture was an outgrowth of religious faith which became increasingly separated from its religious roots. “Many had a sense that to face the great transformations of a new era, religious innovation was required. Those who made the innovations didn’t imagine that for others, they would become part of a path away from religion — any more than creators of modern technologies imagined that living in a world that felt technologically overpowered would lead many to seek a renewed spirituality.” Religion has never been merely a matter of the intellect, however. As Calhoun points out, “it is participating in a different way of imagining the world. This can include achievements of modernity and the cause-and-effect systems in which they are embedded but isn’t limited to that. Reaching beyond might be based on belief in a higher power like God. It might also be based on commitment to a good higher-than-mere-instrumental human flourishing, like love (especially in the sense of agape). Quoting Talyor, we have moved “from a society where belief in God is unchallenged and indeed, unproblematic, to one in which it is understood to be one option among others and frequently not the easiest to embrace.” But even if religion becomes in some sense harder, it doesn’t vanish and religious experience may even gain new dimensions. Also see "How My Millennial Students Found Their ‘Hitchhiker’s Guide’ to a Secular Age" by James K. A. Smith [here](#).



This month, we have included a number of articles that articulate a Christian response to the world where religion is one option. We hope you find these insights helpful and worth sharing. Thanks to WesleyNexus Board member Sy Garte for his substantial contribution this month.

We remain 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. Beginning in September, you can now designate your contribution in whole or in part to “Discovery & Faith,” our new initiative announced last month that has a focus on developing study materials for children at the *nexus* of science and religion. **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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Event: A Science and Religion Discussion With Mike Beidler

Mike Beidler is a retired U. S. Navy Commander, currently serving as the Acting Director for International Affairs for the Department of the Navy. Among Mike's academic degrees, he holds a Master of Science in Global Leadership from the University of San Diego. He is a frequent contributor to publications of the BioLogos Foundation and other organizations and periodicals demonstrating the harmony between evolutionary theory and the Christian faith. He is also an author, President of the American Scientific Affiliation (DC Metro Section), and lifetime member of the National Center for Science Education (NCSE). You can join Beidler at two different events shown below.



Two Program Dates and Locations:

Sunday, November 6, 2016 at 6:00-8:00 pm.

LaPlata United Methodist Church
3 Port Tobacco Road, La Plata MD 20646-2870
Get the flyer for this event [here](#).

Sunday, November 13, 2016 at 6:00-8:00 pm.

Concord-St. Andrews United Methodist Church
5910 Goldsboro Road, Bethesda MD 20817-6034
Get the flyer for this event [here](#).

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WesleyNexus again sponsors Evolution Weekend Maryland in 2017

For the fifth consecutive year, on **February 12 – Evolution Weekend** across the country – WesleyNexus and our supporting partners will be sponsoring a special program that will be live-streamed on the worldwide web. The subject in 2017 will be **“Are Our Children at Risk? Food insecurity, Climate Change, Racial Bias.”** The live streaming program begins at 3:15 Eastern Time, and will conclude no later than 5:15. The panelists have been confirmed:



Dr. Gary Sherman, MS, DVM, PhD with expertise in reproductive, microbial, molecular and evolutionary biomedical science; National Program Leader for Veterinary Science and Agrosecurity at USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

Dr. Frank Niepold is the Climate Education Coordinator in the Climate Program Office (CPO) of the

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), U.S. Department of Commerce, and a member of the United States Climate Education Interagency Working Group.

Rev. Amy Stapleton, team leader for organization accountability at the General Commission on Religion and Race of the United Methodist Church.

Of particular interest is the participation of **Bishop LaTrelle Easterling**, newly elected by the Northeastern Jurisdiction of the United Methodist Church and assigned to the Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference as the episcopal leader in the National Capital Area. Bishop Easterling will provide the “faith perspective” on each of the three presentations noted above.

Once again, the program will take place at the Mission Center of the Baltimore-Washington Conference, 11711 East Market Place, Fulton, Maryland 20759. A special scientific tour is being arranged for March which will be open to those in attendance. Those who will engage with us via the internet will have the opportunity to participate in the Evolution Weekend program by sending in questions for the panelists during real time, and we will get to as many of these questions as time permits. Our friends around the country should be planning NOW to organize discussion groups in their churches in order to have your own discussion on these issues. There will be a book display in the foyer of the Mission Center for those seeking print resources. More details will be forthcoming in the weeks ahead, so everyone is encouraged to visit our home page for up-to-date information.

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In Science and Scriptural Interpretation, Communities Matter by Tim Reddish

“**Intro by Senior Editor Jim Stump:** One of the common criticisms against evolutionists is that Christians who don’t accept the science is about presuppositions or starting points. I’m sure you know the mantra. Yes, of course we have presuppositions—in both our science and our biblical interpretation. So do they. So does everyone else. I can’t imagine anyone disputing that point these days. The trickier and more subtle point is that presuppositions must function as a guide and even a foundation for our investigation, but must themselves be subject to critique at times. I say “at times” because you can’t pull out the foundation bricks and examine them at the same time you’re trying to construct the building on top of them. You can’t question everything. Skepticism itself assumes a stable point from which it questions. This is one of the central points of Michael Polanyi, a Hungarian scientist and philosopher from the middle of the twentieth century. He has had a kind of cult following among some in academic science and religion circles because his views undermine both extremes of scientism and fundamentalism. His book Personal Knowledge came out of his Gifford Lectures of 1951-52, and is worth the effort to read. Today, Tim Reddish gives us an introduction to Polanyi and this notion of personal knowledge”. The article can be found [here](#).



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God in the Flesh: John Sanders and Process Theology by Jay McDaniel

“This page seeks to bring into conversation the pioneering work of John Sanders and the perspectives of Process Theology as each address issues related to God, language, cognition, religious experience, theology, and the Christian faith. The page is intended as a springboard for discussions. John and I are colleagues at Hendrix College in Conway, Arkansas; and some of our students have asked for a page on this website along these lines. This is that page. I hope that I’ve done justice to John’s work, and also that he will correct any errors, as his time allows, in conversations with students. I also hope it will introduce readers of this website, heretofore unacquainted with John's work, to a very important theologian for our time. Most of my knowledge of John’s work



comes from a decade of hallway conversations, not a careful study of his writings. This is unfortunate but true. We've both been very busy in our respective worlds of Open Theism and Process Theology, and we've not read much of one another. Still, we have learned a lot from each other and will continue to do so. To learn more about John's work on his own terms, there is no better place to turn than his own website." The article can be found [here](#).

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The Tarnished Golden Rule by Lucy P Marcus

“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” What a simple and logical concept – a straightforward way to resolve knotty moral dilemmas. Yet, at a time when distinguishing right from wrong seems to be more difficult than ever, this classic postulate – the “Golden Rule” – seems to be going out of fashion...The reciprocity norm has been virtually omnipresent since the dawn of human civilization. Yet we cannot take it for granted. We must not lose sight of its value, in our personal or professional lives, and we must not allow our leaders to do so, either.”



The article can be found [here](#).

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Religion and science can have a true dialogue by Kathryn Prichard

One of the leading scientific research journals in the world, Nature, published a great column titled “Religion and science can have a true dialogue” by Kathryn Prichard, an employee of the Archbishops’ Council in the Church of England. The article appearing in the Sept 20 edition of Nature describes Ms. Prichard’s experience at an event where cosmologists explained their work to an audience of bishops and clergymen. She mentions a number of other projects being undertaken in the UK aimed at breaking the barriers between scientists and Christian clergy, including one called “Take your Vicar to the lab.” In addition to the content of the article, it is significant that this journal, not known for its sympathy towards religion, would publish such a positive view of the religion-science dialogue. The article can be found [here](#).



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Katharine Hayhoe, a Climate Explainer Who Stays Above the Storm By John Schwartz

The New York Times just published a very nice portrait of climate change communicator Katharine Hayhoe. The article mentions ([found here](#)) her Christian faith, but doesn’t dwell on it, probably since this is a science column rather than a science/faith column. It does mention that Dr. Hayhoe’s husband is a pastor. On her home page, Dr. Hayhoe lists some of the organizations she supports, including the Evangelical Environmental Network, a Christian group devoted to stewardship and creation care http://www.creationcare.org/about_us. The Times article stresses the approach that Dr. Hayhoe takes in trying to convince people about the reality of climate change: she is not hostile or confrontational, but sympathetic, gracious, and understanding. That is a good standard to follow for all of us who are engaging with others on important issues.

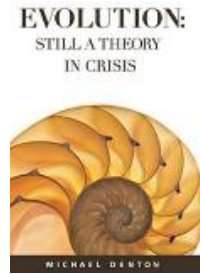


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Evolution, Still a Theory in Crisis by Sy Garte (guest author) and Aniko Albert

Note: Sy Garte is a member of the WesleyNexus Board of Directors

Michael Denton is a member of the Intelligent Design movement and has recently had a book called Evolution, Still a Theory in Crisis published by the Discovery Institute. This book is an update to Denton’s 1985 book of the same title (minus the word “still”), but it is an important departure from the earlier work. Last February, my wife, Aniko Albert, and I were asked to present a review of the book on the Biologos web site. Despite the ominous title, we found that the book appears to represent a positive step in the thinking of at least some adherents of ID. While ID (like all viewpoints in the faith-science dialogue) is a broad tent, we were encouraged by the acceptance on Denton’s part of many aspects of evolutionary biology, and by what seemed like the beginnings of a coherent scientific hypothesis consistent with both mainstream biology and an understanding of God’s grace in creation. The review is accompanied by commentaries from Biologos staff and leadership. The article can be found [here](#).



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Authentic Science & Authentic Christian Faith by Paul Arveson

The American Scientific Affiliation (ASA) is one of the oldest and most active organizations of Christians working or interested in the sciences in the US. Throughout its 75 years of history, it has played an invaluable role in shaping the nexus between the spiritual and scientific interests of its members and society as a whole. The ASA publishes an academic peer-reviewed journal, Perspectives in Science and Christian Faith, and an ezine called God and Nature, edited by Emily Ruppel. In a recent edition of this highly entertaining and informative publication, Paul Arveson contributed an excellent review of the role of the ASA in his own life of following the paths of science and grace. Paul is the past president of the Washington Metro Chapter of the ASA, which continues to meet regularly. Paul’s topic is a vital one; namely, the issue of authenticity in both science and Christian faith, and how important that is for all who seek greater understanding of God’s words and works. The article can be found [here](#).



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Promoting Science Education: Articles by Michael Zimmerman (Clergy Project Founder)

Creationism is making yet another appearance at the Texas State Board of Education. Zimmerman discusses this disturbing situation in a piece that was just published in the HuffingtonPost [here](#).



Zimmerman is the founder of the Clergy Letter and is on the Advisory Board of WesleyNexus. He encourages you to share the piece widely and feel free to comment on it. Perhaps our actions might help Texas students receive the high quality science education they deserve. In addition, take a look at two other essays that have been recently published. The [first](#) deals with the extinction of species while the [second](#) deals with the extinction of languages.

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Is Science “Awe”some for Christians? By Jeff Hardin

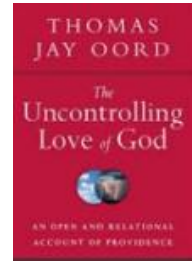
“INTRO BY DEB HAARSMA: When someone pointed me to a recent article from the Daily Mail, I was stunned to read the headline: “Nature shows are 'putting viewers off science' because the beautiful scenes reaffirm belief in god.” Rarely does the conflict between theism and scientism appear so starkly! At BioLogos we celebrate the beauty of nature as pointing to God, but this doesn’t come at a cost to science. As I described in a recent talk (see also this cartoon), scientists of all worldviews feel a sense of awe and excitement about what they study, without any sacrifice in scientific quality. To share some wise reflections on wonder, science, and faith, today I welcome Jeff Hardin to the blog. Jeff is a leading biologist, a man of deep Christian faith, and chair of the BioLogos Board.” The article can be found [here](#).



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WesleyNexus Board Member Contributes to Uncontrolling Love Of God Discussion

In 2015, Tom Oord published [The Uncontrolling Love of God: An Open and Relational Account of Providence](#). The book is quite a success and, as we mentioned last month, readers have been invited to contribute reflections on a published website called <https://uncontrollinglove.com/>. This month, Rick Barr, a member of the WesleyNexus Board of Directors has written a response “**Uncontrolling Love: Tailor Made for All Creation**”. Rick’s article can be found [here](#).



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Luther College Fellow

Tony Mitchell, a scientist, blogger and WesleyNexus participant has informed us that there is a fellowship opportunity for someone able to “discuss intersections between religion, science, politics, and the arts”. “The Oen Fellowship program enables the department to invite a distinguished guest lecturer to Luther College biannually to explore and discuss intersections between religion, science, politics, and the arts. Oen Fellows spend three to five days on campus meeting with both faculty and students to discuss issues in formal and informal settings. The Oen Fellowship endowed program was established in 1992 through a gift by Ordean and Carol Oen, friends of H. George Anderson, the seventh president of Luther College and the second presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (1995-2001). Students studying religion also benefit from many visiting lecturers. Some are hosted by the department and others are invited through various college-wide lecture series. Visiting lecturers in religion have included Cornell West (Princeton University), Diana Eck (Harvard), Martin Marty (University of Chicago), Elaine Pagels (Princeton University), and Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza (Harvard University)”. More information can be found [here](#):

