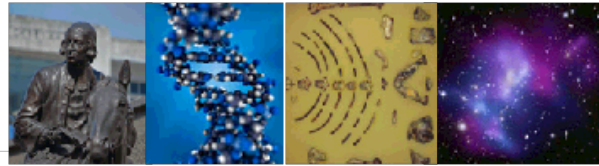


# WesleyNexus

*Science and Religion within the Wesleyan Tradition*



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Dear WesleyNexus Colleague:

February 28, 2017

February is typically a heavy month for us as we sponsor the annual Evolution Weekend event in Maryland, and subsequently we see a spike in our website hits. Just by way of a short report, you will be interested to know that we had 41 people in the room on February 12th as we pursued the 2017 theme: “**Are Our Children at Risk: Food Insecurity, Climate Change, Racial Bias.**” But we had twice that number with 83 location around the country and internationally – at least twice the number of those in the Baltimore-Washington Conference Center... and of course, some of these locations were local churches with groups of people gathered for their own discussions on the issues being raised.

Each of our panelists addressed their assigned topic within the overall theme, and each drew a consistent conclusion – following their review of reams of data, most of which was shown on slides integral to the presentations, the view was consistent: our children are at risk. And each of the panelists left us with a challenge to consider: what is our responsibility, as an individual and as a church, to take actions that might mitigate, however slightly, the impact of these trends on our children?

**Dr. Gary Sherman, MS, DVM, PhD** with expertise in reproductive, microbial, molecular and evolutionary biomedical science, has spent most of his career as National Program Leader for Veterinary Science and Agrosecurity at USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture. He now serves in the office of the Vice President for Research at Virginia Tech. His presentation showed an increase in population on the planet of another 2 billion people by 2050, and with no additional arable land and scarcity of drinking water, he asked how are we going to feed this population without rapid and comprehensive genetically modified seeds and food? This is a question that few of us want to face.



**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 and the U.S. Global Exchange Research Program. His presentation featured a series of compelling charts and graphs that show the impact of increased carbon in the atmosphere over the last 50 years, and then illustrated the consequence of the continued change over the next 50 years if we do nothing about current usage of fossil fuels. He also illustrated some of the results if we begin to take some very simple steps in conservation and use of alternative energy sources, but again, the question is out there for a decision: what are we willing to do about this matter in the face of dire consequences for our children if we continue down the current path?



**Rev. Amy Stapleton**, team leader for organization accountability at the General Commission on Religion and Race of the United Methodist Church, was formerly the national organizer for the Methodist Federation for Social Action. She drew on

her long experience in urban ministry and her work on the General Commission within the Board of Church and Society, first to address the matter of implicit bias (which few of us are comfortable in facing), and then showed the result -- backed up by comprehensive data, including the effect of continuing structures of institutional racism in our society. By focusing on school children and by diminishing range of opportunity that most of these children in urban areas are facing, another question that is difficult to face: what are we willing to do to address these barriers and to expand the access to quality education for the next generation?



**Bishop LaTrelle Easterling**, episcopal leader for the Baltimore-Washington Conference of the United Methodist Church in Washington, DC, speaking as an individual and from a personal perspective, drew all of these comments together as she served as interlocutor for the afternoon. First she made a very strong statement, consistent with standing resolutions passed by the General Conference of the United Methodist Church, affirming that faith and science need each other for a comprehensive understanding of the world and our responsibilities within society. She did not attempt to answer the questions which the panelists had earlier raised, but underlined the importance of those questions, making it clear that the church must become and remain engaged on all three issues on the program. Then in a powerful conclusion to her remarks, she drew on the words of the Lord's Prayer, phrase by phrase, to show that it is our individual responsibility, every time we pray those words, to engage in these and other issues that hold so much consequence for the next generation.



Moderator for the afternoon, **Catherine Bennett, PhD**, neuroscientist and Board member at the Institute for Science & Judaism, received a number of questions from the audience and the internet, making these available to the panelists for their response. The questions picked upon several additional issues that could only be hunted at in the presentations, though time was too short for a full elaboration of many points. Those who participated in the event and anyone who missed the event can now access the full discussion on the WesleyNexus website and on YouTube here.



**We greatly appreciate the collaborating groups and sponsors that helped us underwrite expenses for this event, especially The Clergy Letter Project and the Institute for Religion in an Age of Science, but also the several churches and individual who have sent donations since January 1. Now our budget is in a state of recovery, so if you can manage a contribution, large or small, it will help us tremendously as we develop and present several additional programs during the years. WesleyNexus is a 501(c)(3) charitable, educational organization, and we will acknowledge all gifts from individuals for tax reporting purposes.**

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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**The March for Science: April 22, 2017**

During the live streamed event on February 12, WesleyNexus President Dr. Maynard Moore announced that clergy are being invited to join with scientists from all parts of the nation (and around the world) on Earth Day 2017, April 22. The March for Science is a celebration of our passion for science and a call to support and safeguard the scientific community. Recent policy changes have caused heightened worry among scientists, and the incredible and immediate outpouring of support has made clear that these concerns are also shared by hundreds of thousands of people around the world. The mis-characterization of science as a partisan issue, which has given policymakers permission to reject overwhelming objective evidence in research, is a critical and urgent matter. It is time for people who support scientific research and evidence-based policies to take a public stand and be counted. The organizers have expressed appreciation of having clergy support and we hope that those in the WesleyNexus network will participate in the march in whatever city you will find yourself on Earth Day. The website <http://www.marchforscience.com>, is updated daily with more information. Sigma Xi, the nation’s largest science honorary society, will be promoting all of the marches to its members and chapters. We expect that some of the satellite events will rival in size anything happening in Washington, DC. The website lists every city in which a march is currently being organized, numbering well over a hundred at last count.

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**IRAS Summer Conference, June 24 – July 1, on Star Island**



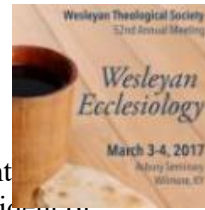
The Institute for Religion in an Age of Science (IRAS), in partnership with the Parliament of the World’s Religions and multiple expert scientists, extends an open invitation to everyone in the WesleyNexus network to take part in the very special **63rd Annual IRAS Conference**. The theme in 2017 is “**The Wicked” Problem of Climate Change: What Is It Doing to Us and for Us?**” This important dialogue at the nexus of science and religion will take place in beautiful Star Island, off the coast of Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Registration is open to all in the WesleyNexus network at a 30% discount, and for anyone new to Star Island, another 30% discount is available. Experts in fields of climate science; neuroscience; food security and policy; crosscultural psychology, institutional conflict, social justice; and religion and ecology will explore climate change as a complex, multi-generational, ecological, ethical, economic, scientific, political, and religious issue. Occurring at this critical time, as immense changes in the climate change policies of our national government leadership are happening, based, in part, on the denial of the scientific evidence, the speakers will attempt to establish an improved basis for new levels of communication, education, public understanding, and action about the science of climate change among the religious communities of our nation and the world. This summer conference is an excellent way to spend a week in informed dialogue, but the environment presents the opportunity for a wonderful family vacation. We urge everyone in the WesleyNexus network to take advantage of the available discounts. For the complete list of experts and more information, go to the website <http://www.IRAS.org>.

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**52nd Annual Wesleyan Theological Society Meeting, Asbury Seminary, Wilmore Kentucky**

Dr. Scott Kisker, now on the faculty at United Theological Seminary in Ohio, as WTS President will convene the conference on March 3rd and 4th at Asbury

Seminary in Kentucky. Keynote speakers this year are Dr. Sondra Wheeler, Professor of Christian Ethics at Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington DC, and Dr. Phil Meadows, Senior Research Fellow at Nazarene Theological College, and soon to be Professor of Evangelization Studies at Asbury Theological Seminary.



WesleyNexus Advisory Board member Dr. Thomas Jay Oord will make several presentations and will chair the Science & Religion section of the Conference. Dr. Maynard Moore, President of WesleyNexus, will be among those making paper presentations during the conference. For more information and perhaps a late registration, check out the website <http://www.wtsweb.org>. We will have a report from the conference in the March newsletter.

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**Maynard Moore** also has a newly published "**Report on the Fall 2016 God Seminar**" as a participant fellow in the Westar Institute's ongoing work. The article, which affirms the claim that it is our prerogative to rethink the concept of God, is in the Institute's quarterly magazine, **The Fourth R**, March-April 2017, and can be found [here](#).

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### **WesleyNexus breakfast in the Baltimore-Washington Conference, June 2**

All clergy and interested lay persons who will be registering for the session of the Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference June 1-3, 2017, at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel in Washington DC, will have the opportunity to register at no additional charge for the special WesleyNexus breakfast on Friday June 2. The special Guest speaker will be Dr. Connie Bertka, team leader for the Smithsonian Institution's traveling exhibit on Human Origins. Dr. Bertka will be speaking on the topic "How to Talk about Evolution with People in the Pews." There will be an opportunity for questions and discussion after her presentation. So we urge all who will be attending Annual Conference in 2017 to consider participating in this informative event.













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