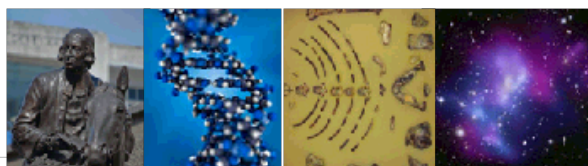


WesleyNexus

Science and Religion within the Wesleyan Tradition



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Dear WesleyNexus Colleague:

September 29, 2017

For decades, John Haught has been one of the leading theologians advocating for the compatibility of science and religion. His 1995 book, [Science & Religion: From Conflict to Conversation](#), gave clear and concise introduction to science and religion to many students and other interested readers. His books on religion and evolution such as [Deeper Than Darwin: The Prospect For Religion In The Age Of Evolution](#), argue that biological evolution presents an opportunity for faith communities to be enriched by scientific discoveries. His new book, [The New Cosmic Story: Inside Our Awakening Universe](#), continues that theme. In it he presents three generic ways that the cosmos can be interpreted. The first, archaeonomy, looks to the past to construct the lawful patterns that underlie the world we experience. This orientation is what drives the scientific enterprise and is embedded in its concepts and methodology. For this view, the universe is a series of physical states where subjectivity, particularity and uniqueness are of little importance. The aim is to discover the laws and patterns of the world we live in. The second perspective is that of analogy whereby what is fundamentally real is transcendent, eternal and unchanging. It is separate from the on-going developments of our evolutionary universe. Perennial and platonic philosophy as well as various forms of religious fideism view reality in this way. The third, anticipation, sees things differently. From this perspective, the universe is incomplete, still evolving with new, novel patterns emerging from what came before. It is a story that is unique and particular with the ending only vaguely perceived. Subjectivity and objectivity, interior and exterior, the general and particular, and time and eternity are seen as working together in a cosmic drama filled with surprise. The scientist is as much a part of the drama as is the discoveries of science. Religions, too, are part of the evolutionary drama not yet fully formed but waiting for future developments.

This month the articles presented are generally secular in orientation. Even the one which focuses on religion (Science is the How Religion is the Why) is oriented towards the scientific study of religion – not religion itself. With Haught’s anticipatory model one can view these writings are part of the broader drama of human participation in the unfolding cosmic drama. They can be seen, using Haught’s words, as contributions to the human “quest for meaning, good, beauty and truth – an extension of the cosmic story.” This is what science and religion tries to do – and needs to do – for as Haught later warns us, “the intellectual credibility – even survival of all religious traditions – depends now on how convincingly they adopt their beliefs and aspirations to a scientifically understood universe whose special extension, temporal scale and creative unfolding were unknown to religion’s founders and main teachers.”

We continue to appreciate the collaborating groups and sponsors that helped us underwrite expenses for our February live-streamed event, especially The Clergy Letter Project and the Institute for Religion in an Age of Science, but also the several churches and individuals who have sent donations since January 1. **We are now planning for our next Evolution Weekend event on February 11, 2018, and we continue to support the work of curriculum development in the Discovery and Faith project. You can designate support for either of these projects, or leave your contribution undesignated.** Over the Fall months, we will continue to receive funds for our programs in 2018, so if you can manage a contribution, large or small, it will help us tremendously. 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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Happy Birthday! Discovery & Faith Turns One-Year-Old!

Jennifer Secki Shields

Hard to believe it has been a year since WesleyNexus launched **Discovery & Faith**, a ministry dedicated to developing resources that will help children and youth experience the harmony between science and biblical faith. This time a year ago, our website, www.discoveryandfaith.org was (by website standards) a newborn—with just a little bit of background info to tell about us. Today our site features our sample lesson and a couple of blog and informational pieces. This month we launch our monthly newsletter, Word & Wonder, for Christian parents and educators.



Discovery & Faith’s resources help learners explore the connections between God’s world and Word through our innovative “side-by-side” approach to science and biblical faith, which:

- incorporates hands-on, minds-on STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) activities into each Bible lesson;
- talks about God’s creation in evolutionary terms; and
- draws on the best biblical scholarship to tell the Bible stories of Genesis in their original context, rather than trying to superimpose a scientific worldview on the biblical text.

We’ve got a long way to go, but our baby is starting to cruise!

I invite you to check out this month’s D&F topic,

[“How does God hold the wind and the rain in his hands?”](#) While you’re there, please explore the rest of the website, and if you find that your heart and mind are as ours, I ask you to consider lending us your hand as well by making a donation to support our work. Whether you can help in big ways or small, every bit counts.

Jennifer Secki Shields is founder and director of Discovery & Faith, an initiative sponsored by WesleyNexus to help children and families experience the harmony between science and faith. She serves on the WesleyNexus Board of Directors.

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Ilia Delio OSF 9/30/17 – The Universe Within

September 30, 2017 @ 1:00 pm – 4:45 pm

WHERE: National Presbyterian Church
4101 Nebraska Ave NW
Washington, DC 20016
USA

CONTACT:
Martha Johnston
202-340-5166



<http://contemplativeoutreachofmarylandandwashington.org/event/ilia-delio-osf-93017/>

Click [here](#) to register:

“Join us on Saturday afternoon, September 30, to hear Ilia Delio share her thoughts about “The Universe Within.” Finding our place in the world is a challenging task. Ilia will explore the inner universe and the role of consciousness, elaborating on the insights of modern science and the tradition of the mystics.”

Ilia’s bio is available [here](#).

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Science and Religion 101 Online

BioLogos has announced that our friend Denis Lamoureux has a new MOOC available on science and religion. MOOCs are massive open online courses that allow you to learn from leaders in their fields while working through the content at your own pace. This course is hosted by Coursera, which is one of the best in the business. You can take the course for free, or pay \$49 to take the course for official certification (as well as increased accountability and motivation).



Denis O. Lamoureux is an Associate Professor of Science and Religion at St. Joseph's College in the University of Alberta. His appointment is the first tenure-track position in Canada dedicated to teaching and research on the relationship between scientific discovery and Christian faith. Lamoureux's academic specialty focuses on the modern origins controversy. He is the author of Evolutionary Creation: A Christian Approach to Evolution (2008), I Love Jesus and I Accept Evolution (2009), and Evolution: Scripture and Nature Say Yes! (2016). He is a contributor in the book Four Views of the Historical Adam (2013). Lamoureux is also a research assistant in paleontology at the University of Alberta. He holds three earned doctoral degrees—dentistry, theology, and biology.

Find more information [here](#).

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“The Birth of Monotheism & the Redefinition of Divinity in the Old Testament”

On September 23, in the Columbus School of Law at Catholic University of America, a lecture/discussion was co-sponsored by the CUA School of Theology & Religious Studies and the St Anselm’s Abbey (Dominican) on the topic “The Birth of Monotheism & the Redefinition of Divinity in the Old Testament.” The event featured the scholarly research of Mark S. Smith, PhD, Helena Professor of Old Testament Literature and Exegesis at Princeton Theological Seminary, and an alumnus of St. Anselm’s School in Washington DC. Dr. Smith has previously taught at New York University, St. Joseph’s University, Yale University, and the



University of St. Thomas, and is the author of *The Early History of God: Yahweh and Other Deities in Ancient Israel* (2002) and most recently *Where the Gods Are: Spatial Dimensions of Anthropomorphism in the Biblical World* (2016). In this lecture Dr. Smith showed how recent research based on scientific methodology and continuing archaeology in the Near East demonstrates a progressive emergence of monotheism over a millennium of religious practice. Interestingly, all the rival deities, once Yahweh reached the status of “godhead,” were incorporated in the Christian tradition as subsidiary gods, many of which survive in biblical texts as angels who serve as messengers for the divine One. A complete synopsis of Dr. Smith’s work can be found [here](#).

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Reminder: God and Human Suffering: Conversations on 21st Century Genetics and Our Shared Future

October 6, 2017

(from Covalance, The Lutheran Alliance for Faith, Science, and Technology)

Episcopal Conference Center of Utah, 75 South 200 East, Salt Lake City, UT 84111

(more details to come)

This faith and science workshop on human germ-line editing is sponsored by the University of Utah: Department of Pediatrics, Division of Medical Genetics and UCEER Center for Excellence in Ethical, Legal and Social Implications); the Rocky Mountain Synod and its Utah Conference of the ELCA, Mount Tabor Lutheran Church of Salt Lake; and the Episcopal Diocese of Utah. Questions event leaders will be pondering include: What is our shared mission as people of science, ethics, and faith? What is the role of recent dialogue regarding germ-line editing of human embryos and in the development of regulations that both promote the alleviation of suffering, and protect the inherent diversity of our planet?



<http://luthscitech.org/event/god-human-suffering-conversations-21st-century-genetics-shared-future/>

You can also read the September 2017 Covalance journal [here](#).

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Science is the How Religion is the Why by Jon While

About the research:

“Surprisingly, although the relationship between ‘science’ and ‘religion’ is often talked about in the media, by public intellectuals, and in public space, very little research has been done that explores what people actually think about their own or others’ views on the relationship between science and religion, or by extension, rationality, reason, and faith.



Our project will explore in an open-minded way questions relating to:

The way in which evolutionary science has been viewed both historically over the past 150 years and up to the present day: Why people might take an anti-evolutionist stance, and what might drive this either culturally or socially. The real nature of different cultural or religious positions on evolutionary science. Whether the perception of a link between atheism and evolutionary science is damaging to communicating biological sciences.

How representations of a conflict between science and religion in public space discourse relate to individuals' day-to-day experience of the relationship between their own belief and acceptance of evolutionary theory. How people of all faiths and backgrounds' day-to-day experiences relate to representations of 'religiosity' and 'rationality' in public space discourse."

Find this article at the Episcopal Cafe [here](#).

Also see <http://sciencereligionspectrum.org/about-2/>

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Neil deGrasse Tyson as Secular Prophet

In a recent interview by CNN's Fareed Zakaria, the popular scientist Neil deGrasse Tyson gives us sober warning about climate change. "The longer we delay, the more I worry we might not be able to recover from this because our greatest cities are on the oceans and water's edges historically for commerce and transportation, and as storms kick in, as water levels rise, they are the first to go – and we don't have a system, we don't have a civilization with the capacity to pick up a city and move it inland 20 miles. This is happening faster than our ability to respond. That could have huge economic consequences." The video can be found [here](#).



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Why Math Is the Best Way to Make Sense of the World by Ariel Bleicher

In this article, Ariel Bleicher interviews Dr. Rebecca Goldin's initiative to improve quantitative literacy. Golden is professor at George Mason University where she is research director of Statistical Assessment Service which aims at correcting "scientific misunderstanding in the media resulting from bad science, politics or a simple lack of information or knowledge." In addition to her work at George Mason, Goldin volunteers to work with elementary and middle-school students to improve mathematical understanding and competence. She promotes increased competency by recommending that students "...take more math and science than is required. And take it seriously." Why? Because "I can think of no better tool than quantitative thinking to process the information that is thrown at me." Take, for example, the study she had cited. At first glance, it might seem to suggest that a third of college graduates are lazy or ignorant, or that higher education is a waste. But if you look closer... you'll find a different message: "Turns out, this third of students isn't taking any science." The article can be found [here](#).



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does god play dice? An Interview with Shan Gao by Richard Marshall

In this interview, Shan Gao addresses quantum mechanics from the perspective of a philosopher of science who has been intrigued by quantum enigmas since his undergraduate college days. Shan Gao is an Associate Professor at the Institute for the History of Natural Sciences, Chinese Academy of Sciences. He received his PhD degree in History and Philosophy of Science from the University of Sydney in 2013. He is the founder and managing editor of International Journal of Quantum Foundations. He is the author of several books including the recent [God Does Play Dice With the Universe](#).



His research focuses on the foundations of quantum mechanics and history of modern physics.

In this article, Shan presents the current picture of quantum physics but also digs deeper, going beyond questions of computation and prediction to what is really going on, questions of central concern to philosophy of science. At the center of the article are the understanding of the Schrödinger equation (Schrödinger's cat video here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOYyCHGWJq4>) and the double-slit experiment (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DfPeprQ7oGc>). While the topic is dense and formidable, the conversational tone of the article gives it clarity and comfort that helps convey understanding. Even so, it is a deep subject and takes a good bit of concentration to work through.

Of particular interest to science and religion is an experience described by Dr. Gao where he describes how he came to his understanding that the Schrodinger wave function is “the random discontinuous motion of particles,” the central idea of his new book [God Does Play Dice With the Universe](#). As he describes it, “Yes, this is the most important idea of my new book. Let me first tell you a real story about how the idea came to my mind more than 20 years ago. During my graduate study at the Institute of Electronics, Chinese Academy of Sciences, the puzzle of how the electron moves in an atom had been plaguing me. Day after day, I gradually doubted the reality of continuous motion. But I still felt in my bones that the electron is a particle and it must move in space in some way. Finally, in an early morning of October 1993, I experienced a sudden enlightenment or revelation. At that moment, I felt that my body permeated the whole universe and I was united with it. I “disappeared.” A clear picture then appeared: a particle is jumping in a random and discontinuous way. It is not inert but active; it moves purely by its own “free will.” While it remains for science to debate if this insight is satisfactory, it highlights the linkage between intuition, imagination and experience in the creation of scientific concepts.

This challenging article can be found [here](#).

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The Case Against Reality by Amanda Geffer

“As we go about our daily lives, we tend to assume that our perceptions – sights, sounds, textures, tastes – are an accurate portrayal of the real world. Sure, when we stop and think about it – or when we find ourselves fooled by a perceptual illusion – we realize with a jolt that what we perceive is never the world directly, but rather our brain’s best guess at what that world is like, a kind of internal simulation of an external reality. Still, we bank on the fact that our simulation is a reasonably decent one. If it wasn’t, wouldn’t evolution have weeded us out by now? The true reality might be forever beyond our reach, but surely our senses give us at least an inkling of what it’s really like.”



Not so, says Donald D. Hoffman, a professor of cognitive science at the University of California, Irvine. Hoffman has spent the past three decades studying perception, artificial intelligence, evolutionary game theory and the brain, and his conclusion is a dramatic one: “The world presented to us by our perceptions is nothing like reality. What’s more, he says, we have evolution itself to thank for this magnificent illusion, as it maximizes evolutionary fitness by driving truth to extinction.” Read the complete article [here](#).

