



Frequently Asked Questions

(revised November 14, 2009)

Where did the name WesleyNexus come from?

The name was chosen to show a connection—nexus—for our group to John Wesley. Wesley not only accepted many scientific findings of his day, but his writings demonstrate a profound enthusiasm for studying science. Underlying WesleyNexus is our attempt to connect with Wesley's enthusiasm for scientific study, hoping to encourage that attitude within our churches today.

What do you mean by "Wesleyan"?

We refer to "Wesleyan" in a very broad sense as any group that follows the basic theology of John Wesley, the "father" of Methodism in Britain, and the leader to whom all Methodists in the early United States looked for guidance and inspiration. Today, there are an estimated 100 million "Wesleyans" around the world, among whom the 8 million members of the United Methodist Church are numbered.

Is WesleyNexus associated with the United Methodist Church?

WesleyNexus is not associated officially with the United Methodist Church; however, all five individuals involved in the forming of WesleyNexus are active in United Methodist local churches. We have not sought official sponsorship by any United Methodist agency because we want our dialogue to include those beyond the boundaries of The United Methodist Church. We welcome others in the Wesleyan tradition and those in other faith traditions who sincerely enjoy the interaction and creative dialogue among people taking seriously science and religion.

How was WesleyNexus started?

A small group of people found it interesting and helpful to share thoughts and information related to the discussion of science and religion topics. They decided to form WesleyNexus.org to provide resources to assist others interested in the science and religion dialogue. Our goal is to stimulate the dialogue and provide a more formal way to share resources.



Who can join WesleyNexus?

One does not formally “join” WesleyNexus because we are not a membership organization. WesleyNexus is open to any and all who accept our principles of dialogue and want to participate. Please see information on the Home Page.

Do I have to pay dues to be part of WesleyNexus?

WesleyNexus does not have dues. However, we are a non-profit corporation so we can accept contributions. To provide such support we encourage you to contact our Treasurer Dick Rohrer at rrhorer@rcn.com.

If there are no dues, how are funds obtained for the web page and services provided by WesleyNexus?

The funds to start up were contributed by the five individuals who established the non-profit corporation called WesleyNexus, Inc. Future contributions to WesleyNexus will be used to expand the educational resources and website services available to all participants.

If I participate in WesleyNexus how do I benefit?

You will have access to all the information available on our website whether or not you participate in the dialogue. By joining as a participant you can be put on the email distribution list and be notified of upcoming events – we enforce a privacy policy that assures you that we will not sell or distribute your email address to other organizations or individuals. You can contribute your thoughts and ideas by submitting papers. There is no cost to participate, but you can contribute to help support the WesleyNexus projects whether you join or not.

Your mission statement says the group supports “sound science and religion”. What is sound science? How about sound religion?

We believe that sound science means being open to wherever careful research leads. Looking for only data that supports a preconceived conclusion is not thought of as sound scientific research even if scientific instruments and methods may be used. Similarly, sound religion does not reject another’s beliefs simply because these may differ from our own. As Wesleyans, we affirm the principles that have been defined as the “Wesleyan Quadrilateral:” for analysis and interpretation of our religious convictions, we draw upon (1) Scripture, (2) Tradition, (3) Reason and (4) Experience. “Sound Science” is encompassed by Reason.



How many participants do you desire for WesleyNexus?

We have no number goal for participants in WesleyNexus. Historically it was necessary before publishing/printing a brochure, or newsletter, to estimate the size of the group to help decide on how many copies to print. In modern web publishing the actual number of people accessing the information is essentially irrelevant. We have attempted to set up the organizational structure for WesleyNexus to make the organization useful if only a few sign up, and yet, not be constrained if a large number of interested folks want to participate.

Does WesleyNexus support Darwinism?

WesleyNexus does not advocate or support any one position; however, some of our members may well be part of advocacy groups as individuals. John Wesley lived in the century before Darwin, and he affirmed a position which has commonly come to be called “the great chain of being” in which humanity was thought to occupy the highest place. This is often considered a “pre-cursor” to what Darwin later published. Because Wesley's writings show enthusiasm for science, we believe that if John Wesley had been alive at the time Darwin published “Species” he would have actively studied all the contemporary writings and vigorously worked on writing theological opinions concerning evolution.

Does WesleyNexus oppose the teaching of Intelligent Design in our schools?

WesleyNexus does not take political positions on questions related to science and religion, but does encourage thoughtful study of the issues. One such resource which we believe informs the discussion is *Darwin and Intelligent Design*, Francisco J. Ayala, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 2006. Those of us who are members of the United Methodist Church are pleased to say that we welcome the statement passed by the 2008 General Conference warning about inclusion of the Intelligent Design position in the science curricula of public schools. That Statement, now included in the [Discipline](#), can be found elsewhere on our website.

I am starting a small discussion group in my church; do you have a suggested resource as an introduction to John Wesley, including his interest in science?

John Wesley for the 21st Century, John O. Gooch, Discipleship Resources, Nashville, 2006, which has a good chapter on God and Science.



Does belief in evolution lead to atheism (for example: Richard Dawkins)?

There are many practicing Christian biological scientists who accept evolution. An example is Dr. Francis Collins, formerly the Director of the Human Genome Project and now Director of the National Institutes of Health. (see the Wesley Seminary video series referenced on the WesleyNexus website under the Resources tab).

Some conservative Christians worry that science, especially evolutionary theory, contributes to an anti-religious secularization of contemporary society. How would WesleyNexus answer this concern?

The WesleyNexus approach is to suggest reading and learning from sound resources. One example related to this comment: *What about Religion and Science? A Study of Reason and Faith*, Paul E. Stroble, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 2007.

Is there really a war between science and religion?

The “war scenario” has a very limited number of supporters. A good resource discussing the history of the “war” between science and religion are the lectures by Professor Lawrence M. Principe of John Hopkins University (*Science and Religion*. The Teaching Company, 2006.)