

Highly Diverse New Issue

Daniel K. Brannan, PhD.

Professor of Science & Religion Interfaces and Philosophy of Biology

Department of Biology; College of Arts and Sciences

Abilene Christian University

This is our third issue of *Dialogue & Nexus*, an online science and religion interface journal. We focus the journal as a venue for undergraduates publish their capstone Senior Theses. Out of all the submissions for the 2015-2016 academic year, we had a 40.9% acceptance rate. Those papers that met the quality standard are published here. This is a peer-reviewed process based on a twenty-four-point rubric as judged by two to three professors. Only those earning at least a twenty-point average go on to the editor. The editor then decides on the appropriateness of further working the paper up to journal standards. We have consistently seen about a third of the papers being accepted. This year the quality improved slightly as a result of pre-screening the papers with several standard grammar checks by the editor. Our quality remains high as a result.

This third issue has eighteen papers covering a wide diversity of topics showing how Christianity may interact with science. We have seven papers dealing with science and society/social justice issues including sexual orientation concerns (Baker and Scout), Feminism in light of Christianity (Bishop and Hurst), race relations (Latham), end-of-life care in prisons (Robinson), and how Christians should view universal health care positively (Scaggs).

Additionally, there are six papers dealing with theological concerns: what neuroscience says about the soul (Figel), original sin and atonement (Gregory), deism in Christianity (Johnson), divine agency (Rakestraw), intercessory prayer (Vincent), and imaging God (Siemens).

Altruism continues to be a difficult topic to resolve. Siemens and Villeda each attempt to show how most of what has been called altruism is mere cooperation whereas a truly self-sacrificial action requires far more than what most of us can accomplish.

For the first time, we have a philosophy of science paper by Neill showing how the dialectic materialism of Marxist-Leninist thought has a positive role in science and Christianity. We end with two ethics papers: one on Christian environmentalism (Grasse) and another on use of reproductive technologies (Najera).

While I am not necessarily in agreement (nor are the department or university) with my students' approaches to many of these thorny issues, I never stand in their way of expressing their positions *provided they have presented a cogent and logically consistent argument*. Every year, I expose my students to logical fallacies and critical thinking. It pays off. As might be expected, our students face controversy head on; they let the data take them where others fear to tread. Their positions may not be popular but they are logically valid and sound. The only requirement is that they always show compassion, respect, and acceptance of others regardless of their disparate positions; we need to always recognize that we are all imperfect children loved by God.