Nancey Murphy. *Religion and Science: God, Evolution, and the Soul*. Carl S. Helrich, ed. Proceedings of the 2001 Goshen Conference on Religion and Science. Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 2002.

George F.R. Ellis. *A Universe of Ethics, Morality, and Hope*. Carl S. Helrich, ed. Proceedings of the Second Annual Goshen Conference on Religion and Science. Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 2003.

Antje Jackelén. *The Dialogue between Religion and Science: Challenges and Future Directions*. Carl S. Helrich, ed. Proceedings of the Third Annual Goshen Conference on Religion and Science. Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 2004.

John F. Haught. *Purpose, Evolution and the Meaning of Life*. Carl S. Helrich, ed. Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Goshen Conference on Religion and Science. Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 2005.

The contemporary religion-science interaction is all too often not a dialogue but a debate or, worse, a diatribe. This contentious conversation is premised upon a dichotomy: one believes either in science as the sole source of truth about humanity and the world ("scientism") or in the Bible as the sole source of truth about the cosmos and our place within it ("fundamentalism"). Each position is based upon an epistemological faith-commitment. Such is the making of an intractable conflict ("science" versus "faith") that sadly has pierced the Body of Christ, dividing the church into ideological factions ("liberals" versus "conservatives"). Christians formed within the peace tradition ought to be conscientious objectors to this culture war, encouraging instead a conflict-transforming dialogue between science and theology.

The Goshen Conference on Religion and Science cuts through the false dichotomy of the culture war by enacting and modeling an alternative conversation. Occurring annually since 2001 at Goshen College and funded through the Miller-Jeschke Program for Christian Faith and the Natural Sciences, these gatherings bring together clergy and laity of various Christian traditions, biblical scholars and theologians, scientists from different fields of research, and even the odd philosopher or two. Each three-day conference

is organized around the person and writings of a single prominent scholar, and is limited to fifty participants. The published proceedings under review here include the guest lectures, transcripts of Q & A sessions, and reflections from Sunday morning worship.

The 2001 conference featured Anabaptist scholar Nancey Murphy (Fuller Theological Seminary), who lectured on theories of human nature, divine action, and biological evolution. The 2002 conference featured cosmologist and Quaker George F. R. Ellis (University of Cape Town), who explored interrelations between physics, metaphysics, and meaning. The 2003 event featured Antje Jackelén (Lutheran School of Theology, Chicago), who lectured on the challenges and potential contributions of hermeneutics, feminism, and postmodernism to the dialogue, emphasizing the need for attention to hermeneutics in both theology and science. And the fourth (2004) featured Catholic scholar John F. Haught (Georgetown University), who examined the connection between scientific questions of the origin of life and the structure of the cosmos and theological questions of cosmic purpose, divine providence, and the meaning of human life.

Of particular interest for peace tradition Christians are the interrelated respective lectures by Murphy and Ellis, which build on previous jointly authored work (Nancey Murphy and George F.R. Ellis, *On the Moral Nature of the Universe: Theology, Cosmology, and Ethics* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996]).

Seeking a coherent worldview conversant with recent science and consistent with their faith commitments, they envision a cosmic hierarchy that is nonviolent "from top to bottom" by divine design. As Creator, God ordains "top-down" cosmic constraints via the laws of physics that not only are finely tuned to favor a stable cosmos and complex organisms but allow human freedom. As Redeemer, God enters the cosmos "bottom-up" in a non-coercive, kenotic (self-limiting, self-emptying) manner that respects rather than violates the created nature of things. Within this worldview, they view suffering as part-and-parcel of the ongoing divine work of cosmic redemption by kenotic means; it is a necessary cost of a nonviolent cosmos, exemplified supremely by the voluntary death of Jesus.

Their account of divine action offers a welcome alternative to the dominant Protestant view that sees divine freedom and physical necessity

as contestants in a zero-sum game—and thus pits the Creator against the creation. On their account God acts not contrary to, but only in a manner consistent with, the God-created nature of things. God does not exercise cosmic sovereignty by overpowering creation but rather freely conforms to it. And God can enter the cosmos freely yet non-coercively at the most basic level of reality by acting primarily via subatomic events, so that the divine sway in the material realm is hidden behind the veil of quantum uncertainty.

Murphy and Ellis presuppose that the epistemic uncertainty (unpredictability) inherent in quantum theory entails that subatomic events are ontologically indeterminate. The supposed undetermined nature of quantum phenomena "makes room" in the cosmos for both divine freedom and physical laws: God can freely sway an electron here or photon there without making observable waves that might upset the statistical predictions of quantum theory. But is nature at bottom really indeterminate? Although they share the majority position, their account begs a major question of ongoing debate among physicists and philosophers. This is especially problematic, given that a well-developed alternative theory to standard quantum mechanics accurately describes all subatomic events by fully deterministic laws.

One wonders how their account could be compatible with the orthodox Christian doctrine of incarnation. The ancient creed does not say God became an electron or photon and entered the cosmos via an unobservable subatomic event! Instead, God became a flesh-and-blood human being, entering the world as a complex body at the macro-level of reality via an observable event. Moreover, biblical accounts depict God as acting in the world via macro-level observable events, such as the words and deeds of Jesus. But quantum uncertainty is physically irrelevant at the macro-level of complex bodies and observable events, which are adequately explained by the deterministic laws of Newtonian physics. Hence, there is no recourse here to the indeterminate character of quantum phenomena to allow for free yet non-coercive divine action. It seems that they must either revise their account of divine action or abandon the orthodox doctrine of incarnation.

Nonetheless, Murphy's and Ellis's work deserves attention, for in effect their worldview defends Gospel nonviolence as a "natural-law ethic"

immanent in the divine cosmic design. They thus offer an alternative both to "Constantinian" Christianity that appeals to "natural law" to justify war and to secular worldviews that interpret nature fundamentally in terms of competition and conflict.

These Conference proceedings would prove useful in the college or seminary classroom. They would helpfully supplement courses in philosophy of science, systematic theology, contemporary theology, philosophical theology, biblical hermeneutics or ethics. But they are not for the uninitiated. Digesting the lecture material requires at least some background in theology and science. As well, the transcriptions of the Q&A sessions, while highly valuable for insiders, will read like an already on-going conversation for outsiders. For those lacking an orientation to basic questions and viewpoints within the religion-science dialogue, I recommend using these volumes to supplement a standard text such as Ian Barbour, *Religion & Science: Historical and Contemporary Issues* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1997).

"Science versus religion" is a pressing cultural issue affecting the church and its mission, and needs to be addressed by our colleges, seminaries, and mission agencies. The proceedings of the Goshen Conference are a welcome resource.

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