

Lay Academy of Religion Moves to the Human Sciences

By Bob Newman

We have been studying the Natural Sciences (Physics, Biology, Chemistry, Astronomy, and Cosmology) because Jesus teaches us to do so. The Bible takes the natural or physical universe very seriously as an integral part of the creation. Of course the Bible understands the universe in terms of the cultural knowledge available in ancient times. Modern Science, since Copernicus, Galileo, Isaac Newton, Darwin, and Einstein, makes it necessary that we apply our God-given minds to a vastly different universe. Now we labor to gain knowledge of the complexities we inherit through -out 13.7 billion years of natural evolution

During the past three years, we have benefited from the visits to our Church of Dr. James Adams, NASA Scientist, Dr. John F. Haught, Professor of Theology, Georgetown University, and Dr. Illia Deleo, Professor of Theology, Villanova University. Each of these experts, through their writings and public workshops have stretched our minds. They did this by showing us how we can know and understand our God, and ourselves, only if and when we take seriously our respective places and roles in this vast and sometimes inscrutable creation which the Bible tells us our God created “very good.”

In addition to these Natural Sciences, we now move more toward the Human Sciences (Historical Criticism, Literary Criticism, Psychology, Sociology, Economics and branches too numerous to mention). When we apply Scientific Method to ourselves, our Species of Homo Sapiens, what shall we learn? We have an excellent scholar to move us forward. This is Dr. Andrew Newberg, Direct of Research, and Professor of Neurology at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital. Dr. Newberg’s topic will be “The Spiritual Brain: Science and Religious Experience.”

Mark your calendar, Dr. Newberg will begin his lectures (24 lectures on DVD) on *Sunday February 7, 5:30-7:00pm, Activities Bldg. 201.* Dr. Newberg’s specialty is the Human Brain and how the brain supports, promotes, and encourages human spiritual and religious experiences. Many Scientific studies have been done on this intriguing question and he reports them to us and explores how what we learn helps us to understand Religion and Spirituality better. As usual we encourage discussion/questions and all Lay Academy sessions are free and open to the public. If you have questions, please contact the Church Office (304) 343-8961, or me, Bob Newman (304) 345-0225. Please join us for this new series, and take advantage of this opportunity to share the joy of study and learning, and above all, to grow your faith.