



SPU Internal Grant Interim¹ or Final Grant Report²

Academic Year & Type of Grant (FRG, SERVE or Innovation): 2015, FRG

PI Name (and Co-PI's): Cara Wall-Scheffler

Original Title of the Proposal: Using Wesley's theology of New Creation as a framework for interpreting the role of evolution throughout God's good creation

The Final Project Report must briefly address the following in 1-2 pages:

1. Summarize the project goals and the activities that took place to meet those goals during the grant period. Note who was involved and if anyone was an SPU student.

The project goals were multi-faceted, but primarily centered around working through a Templeton Foundation funded project through Scholarship & Christianity in Oxford (SCIO). This project, which took place in part during a workshop in Oxford, was determined to create a final paper which discusses how evolution might be viewed as part of God's intention for the world, and how a Wesleyan theology shapes such a view. I worked in concert with Rob Wall and Randy Maddox, and an SPU student, Andrea Belleville.

2. What were the major findings? If there are no findings or completed work at this time, what did you learn from carrying out this project that could be applicable to future scholarly works?

The first part of this project that has been completed essentially set up a narrative that there are questions in the Bible that have biological implications, if not answers, namely texts such as 1 Corinthians 15. Within this text Paul is asked by an interlocutor to explain what 'bodies' will be like in New Creation. To this end I set up what bodies look like now, what Jesus's body looked like post resurrection, and what we might expect bodies to look like in New Creation, given how bodies are always in relationship with an environment or niche. This has opened a few other ideas, including what other physical aspects of this reality might need to be considered when thinking about New Creation, particularly ideas about matter and time. In the future, I will also consider matter and time, in addition to biological evolution.

¹ Faculty with a multiple year grant or asking for an extension or reallocation of their grant monies must complete as much of this form as possible as an interim grant report before multiple year disbursement, extension or reallocation can occur.

² When electronically submitting your report to CSFD, please cc: your chair and/or dean (whomever received your original grant notification).



3. How were or will the results be disseminated (publication, presentation, creative work, etc. – be as specific as possible)? Please add an addendum or link to completed projects or provide a time-line for future dissemination.

The first stage of this project was presenting the findings in a Walls Lecture, on campus, May 4, 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VoLTC-6fl4Y&feature=youtu.be>

4. What future scholarly works will be related to this project?

I will be in Oxford this summer again writing up the first portion from the lecture, as well as adding an extensive introduction discussing Wesleyan theology, and how my approach to New Creation stems from a particular reading of Scripture. This is based on the feedback from the lecture by our respondent Randy Maddox.

Additionally, feedback from a non-Wesleyan, former scholar-in-residence Stephen Fowl, suggested that I need to pay particular attention to how other denominations describe how time will work in New Creation. I hope that by focusing on Wesleyan theology the understanding of time that I detail might be believable, but I do not want to neglect other Christian traditions so will spend some time parsing out the idea of 'trajectory'.

In short, my work in Oxford this summer will be focused on writing up this project for publication.

5. Is there external funding that you would like to pursue with the [Office of Sponsored Programs](#)?

The office has agreed to help me fund this summer's work in Oxford as I write up the Walls Lecture for publication. Thank you!

6. Did you run into any problems or difficulties in completing the project? How were these resolved?

NO: this has been a wonderful experience and I have been blessed by numerous colleagues offering kind and thorough comments and critiques.

7. If you had student participation – how did participation in this project further their professional goals or vocational understanding?

YES: I had a student (Andrea Belleville) participate with me through reading and discussing numerous books on the theology of creation. It helped her decide to move into graduate research (instead of medical school), and also has given her a much stronger sense of why she is a Christian. I trust that now when she goes to graduate school she will know how to find answers to some of the combative questions she might encounter among her peers, and even her mentors.