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THE CSH SCIENCE AND RELIGION FORUM

# Limits of Science – Opportunities for Religion?

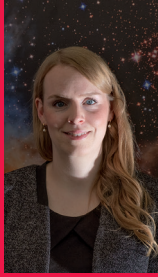
**Conference 7th and 8th November 2019**

**Gurten, Bern, Room «Ussicht-Wytsicht» 9.00–18.00h**



## Programm

CSH Science & Religion Forum



Organisation: Prof. Dr. Claus Beisbart, Dr. Jessica Lampe,  
Prof. Dr. Kevin Heng, Prof. Dr. Isabelle Noth

The CSH Science & Religion Forum aims to bring scientists, philosophers and theologians together to engage in constructive, interdisciplinary discussions on a broad range of topics once a year.

It is led by CSH Postdoc Dr. Jessica Lampe, who is also appointed by the Faculty of Theology at the University of Bern, in collaboration with Prof. Dr. Kevin Heng (CSH), Prof. Dr. Dr. Claus Beisbart (Institute of Philosophy) and Prof. Dr. Isabelle Noth (Institute of Practical Theology).

# Limits of Science – Opportunities for Religion?

Science and religion have often been perceived as contradictory. Supporting a more harmonious picture of their relationship, some authors have argued that scientific inquiry has principled limitations and thus leaves territory to religion and theology, for instance regarding the meaning of existence and human values.

But does this division lead to a stable situation in which science and religion fulfill different tasks, thus complementing each other? Or does the proposed partitioning fail? Where exactly are the limits of scientific inquiry? And to what extent is religion or theology in a position to step in and to deal with concerns not addressed by the sciences? Where is there common ground?

The 2019 conference aims to address such questions, focusing on four areas: cosmology; values; meaning of life/first-personal standpoint; and social science applied to religion. Scholars from various natural and social sciences, theology and philosophy are gathering to engage in truly cross-disciplinary exchange. Our aspiration is to identify themes of common interest and re-negotiate the borderlines between science and religion.

# Invited speakers

## Session 1

**Bernard Carr** is emeritus professor of mathematics and astronomy at Queen Mary University of London. His research interests include black holes, dark matter and gravitational waves. Apart from his work on general relativity and cosmology, he also has an interest in the relationship between science and the religions. He has authored the chapter on cosmology and religion in the Oxford Handbook of Religion and Science.

**Christian Weidemann** is a philosopher working as a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Münster in Germany. His main fields of work are philosophy of religion, natural theology and philosophy of science. He has published about the problem of evil, fine-tuning, and the significance of extraterrestrial life for theology.

**Matthias Egg** is a postdoctoral researcher at the Institute of Philosophy at the University of Bern. His main fields are the philosophy of science and, more specifically, philosophy of physics, where he has been working on the measurement problem and the interpretation of quantum mechanics. He is also a founding member of the Forum for Christian Studies.

## Session 2

**Kevin Elliott** is professor at the Lyman Briggs College at the State University of Michigan, where he is also affiliated with the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife and the Department of Philosophy. He is mainly interested in problems at the intersection between philosophy of science and ethics, e.g. the risk that scientists take when running inductive inferences. He is an expert on the role of values in science and has recently published an introduction to science and values.

**Rebekka Hufendiek** is a philosopher who is currently finishing her habilitation thesis at the University of Basel, where she is working as a postdoctoral researcher. Her research topics are located in philosophy of science and philosophy of mind. She has published on emotions, embodiment and functions. Her current research project is about naturalistic accounts of the origin of morality.

**Christina Aus der Au** is professor at the Pädagogische Hochschule Thurgau as well as lecturer at the University of Basel. Given her background in both philosophy and theology, her main research interest is in the relationship between a religious and a secular worldview. She has published on anthropological dimensions of the neurosciences and of theology and on environmental ethics.

### Session 3

**Jessica Lampe** is a postdoctoral researcher in the University of Bern's Interfaculty Research Cooperation on religious conflicts and coping strategies. Her habilitation project focuses on inner religious and spiritual struggles and strategies of coping with these. Her PhD is in biomedical sciences and she has published, among others, on emotions in animals and emotional contagion. In 2018 she was listed on the Forbes "30 under 30" list of the German-speaking countries.

**David Pruett** is an award-winning computational scientist and an emeritus professor of mathematics at James Madison University. He is the author of "Reason and Wonder: A Copernican Revolution in Science and Spirit", which tries to combine the insights of modern science and the wisdom of spiritual traditions.

### Session 4

**Myriam Rudaz** holds a Ph.D. in clinical psychology. She is also a psychotherapist and mind-body trainer and currently works at the Psychiatric Services in Münsterlingen. She conducts research in the field of mindfulness, spirituality and mental health and is interested in the impact of spirituality on mental health.

**Raymond Barfield** is professor of pediatrics at Duke University as well as of Christian philosophy at Duke Divinity School. He is a pediatric oncologist with an interest in the intersection of medicine, philosophy and theology and the role of religion in health care. He is the founding director of the programs *Pediatric Quality of Life and Palliative Care* and *Theology, Medicine, and Culture* at Duke University and has published widely in medicine, philosophy, and literature.

**Heinzpeter Znoj** is professor of social anthropology and director of the Center for Development and Environment at the University of Bern. One of his research interests is the role of religion in Indonesia. He has also published on corruption, economic exchange and the history of social anthropology.

Thursday, 7th November 2019

**08:15**     **Welcome coffee**

09:15     Welcome address by the Rector (Christian Leumann)

09:20     Welcome address by Jessica Lampe

**SESSION 1**    Chair: Isabelle Noth

## Cosmology and Religion

09:30     **Bernard Carr**  
(Queen Mary London)     Metacosmology and the shifting boundary between science and religion

10:10     Discussion

**10:30**     **Coffee break**

11:00     **Christian Weidemann**  
(WWU Muenster)     Why physical cosmology does (and will always) leave room for religious explanations

11:40     Discussion

12:00     **Matthias Egg**  
(University of Bern)     Ambitions and limitations of scientific metaphysics

12:40     Discussion

**13:00**     **Lunch Break**     In the Gewölbekeller

**SESSION 2**    Chair: Claus Beisbart

## Value-free Ideal and Religion

14:30     **Kevin Elliott**  
(Michigan State University)     Science and values: Independent realms or collaborative partners?

15:10     Discussion

**15:30**     **Coffee Break**

16:30     **Rebekka Hufendiek**  
(University of Basel)     Can theories on the evolution of morality contribute to the vindication of morality?

17:10     Discussion

17:30     **Christina Aus der Au**  
(Pädagogische Hochschule Thurgau)     Science and religion: Yin and Yang or rather Tom and Jerry?

18:10     Discussion

Friday, 8th November 2019

**10.00 Welcome coffee**

**SESSION 3** Chair: Kevin Heng

## Meaning of Life/First-personal Standpoint

10:30 **Jessica Lampe**  
(University of Bern) Spiritual struggles and ultimate meaning: what matters?

11:10 Discussion

11:30 **David Pruett**  
(James Madison University) Reason and wonder: weaving science and spirituality into a personal mythology

12:10 Discussion

**12:30 Lunch Break** In the Gewölbekeller

**SESSION 4** Chair: Jessica Lampe

## Applied Science Meets Religion and Spirituality in Practice

14:00 **Myriam Rudaz**  
(Psychiatric Services in Münsterlingen) The effect of caring for bliss on mental health and wellbeing

14:40 Discussion

**15:00 Coffee Break**

16:00 **Raymond Barfield**  
(Duke University) Care for the dying as an act of faith: why the practice of medicine needs storytelling as much as it needs science

16:40 Discussion

17:00 **Heinzpeter Znoj**  
(University of Bern) Social anthropology's close encounters with religion

17:40 Discussion

18:00 **Forum Dinner** (for speakers and organisers only)

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