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## Trigg's "Beyond Matter: Why Science Needs Metaphysics" (Book Review)

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effort to preserve and disseminate the original records of prominent Baptist congregations in North America from the colonial era. Local experts assisted in the composition of the two volumes. Charles Hartman was a former pastor of the Swansea congregation and is an adjunct professor of history at Roger Williams University. J. Stanley Lemons is emeritus professor of history at Rhode Island College and is the historian of the First Baptist Church in America.

Each volume is organized similarly. The historical introduction provides the congregational history, biographies of key members and pastors, and the contributions the congregation made to Baptist life and history. The bulk of the volume contains the transcribed church records (membership rolls, minutes of meetings, correspondences, etc.), which have been thoroughly and carefully footnoted. Comprehensive indexes of subjects, places, and people conclude the volume.

With an emphasis on transcriptional accuracy (the records of the Swansea congregation took three years to prepare), these works provide researchers a reliable repository of primary source material, which will comprise a significant corpus upon the completion of the series. These titles are essential additions for libraries supporting programs in early American church history, Baptist studies, and those with Baptist denominational affiliations.

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**Beyond Matter: Why Science Needs Metaphysics,**

by Roger Trigg, West Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Press, 2015.

162 pp. \$24.95. ISBN 9781599474953

*Reviewed by John D. Laing, Associate Professor of Systematic Theology & Philosophy, Harvard School for Theological Studies, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Houston, TX*

In this relatively short but dense volume, Roger Trigg, emeritus professor of philosophy at the University of Warwick and senior research fellow at the Ian Ramsey Center (Oxford University), masterfully argues that a coherent undergirding philosophy is needed in order for science to proceed.

Trigg begins by noting that many (scientists) have claimed that science needs no metaphysical framework or philosophical foundation, but he correctly points out that historically, science was a sub-discipline of philosophy. Those who make this claim typically follow logic akin to that of the so-called Vienna Circle, a group of preeminent scientists and philosophers in the early twentieth-century, who adopted a theory of truth and knowledge dependent upon empirical verification; if a proposition or theory cannot be explained/proven by the scientific method, it is nonsense, and metaphysics (including theology) falls into this category. The Vienna

Circle's verification principle ultimately came under attack from several quarters: it could not meet its own criteria for truth, the progress of science itself undermined the empirical requirement, and Wittgenstein – one of the founding members of the group – began to question the privileged status of science, arguing that it is one set of rule-governed practices alongside other equally valid practices. Thus, although some (e.g., Dawkins, Hawking, etc.) still claim science is the only path to knowledge, Trigg rightly notes that there are good reasons to disagree: science is grounded in philosophical assumptions that cannot be discovered or validated via the scientific method.

Throughout the work, Trigg challenges both the relativism of postmodernism and its skepticism of any approach to truth, and the confidence of modernist naturalism and its scientific imperialism. Ironically, the history of science can feed both viewpoints: on the one hand, technological success can inspire confidence in science as *the* means to truth and understanding of reality, but on the other hand, failures and superseded theories – fundamental to the progress of science – can lead to skepticism because proper scientific theories are always open to further testing and falsification. Trigg maintains that there is an objective reality that can be observed, tested, evaluated and known, but he questions the claim that science is the only way to reach that knowledge. Metaphysics deserves a place at the intellectual table and is, in fact, necessary for science to proceed. To prove his point, Trigg devotes most of his attention to undermining the privileged status of science in modern intellectual life.

Thus, he argues that science needs metaphysics for several reasons. First, a philosophical definition is needed for the very idea of science (e.g., science requires empirical observation and testing with the possibility of falsification). Second, science needs metaphysics to define its limits and progress. The determination of what counts as the data of science (e.g., restrictions to natural phenomena) is itself a philosophical decision, and the scientific imagination is fueled by metaphysical speculation about reality and possibility. If science is a search for truth (and it is, properly conceived), then it cannot be conducted in isolation from metaphysics because judgments and evaluations require a philosophical base. Third, even empiricism has also proven troublesome to the exalted status of science for two reasons. First, much of what passes for science today cannot be observed. Modern physics is based on the attempts of physicists to explain the phenomena they do observe by appeal to mathematical formulae and theoretical entities (e.g., alternate universes, string theory, etc.). Second, empiricism demands that some credence be given to natural inclinations and reason (e.g., we seem to naturally believe in purpose and dualist views of persons), which can lead away from a purely physicalist approach to knowledge and truth (i.e., typical scientific approach). He concludes that both approaches to knowledge – empiricism and rationalism – can lead to truth and are needed for science to properly proceed.

This important work is valuable to those interested in both science and philosophy, and should be included in the libraries of Christian colleges, universities, and seminaries with programs in those disciplines. As may be evident from the brief summary here, it is rather scholarly and technical, so the reader will need some facility with both disciplines in order to follow the argument. Those who put forth the effort to work through the material will be rewarded with new insight into the nature of science and the limits of human knowledge.

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**Beyond the Attic Door,**

by Tracy Del Campo. Bloomington, IN: WestBow Press, 2014.

91 pp. ISBN 9781490837079

*Reviewed by Sherill L. Harriger, Library Director, Pontious Learning Resource Center,  
Warner University, Lakes Wales, FL*

The book, *Beyond the Attic Door*, is primarily for children between the ages of eight and fourteen. The story is set in 1925 when a very controversial subject is on the lips of everyone - the forthcoming "Scopes Monkey Trial." School teacher, John Scopes, is soon to be tried for illegally teaching evolution in school; however, the adult characters in the book do not skirt the subject with the children, Lulu and Buddy, but are completely transparent about the subject and their Christian beliefs on the matter. The book has the right amount of history, humor, and mystery to make the reading enjoyable, and, of course, children will be children and will always enter a "forbidden" room. What they find in that room and what they experience will forever shape their personal perception of the Bible and the God they serve.

The book, written in present tense, is a little slow in the beginning but progresses very quickly once the mystery locked behind the attic door is revealed.