



Science and Transcendence Advanced Research Series  
A Program of the Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences  
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## **CTNS STARS Program Awards \$200,000 Renewal Grants to Two Interdisciplinary Teams**

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BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA-- January 16, 2009 – STARS, “Science and Transcendence Advanced Research Series” a program of The Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences (CTNS), announces the recipients of two \$200,000 grants advancing research in science and transcendence.

These grants, in addition to the \$120,000 each these teams previously received, will support the expansion of the winning teams’ research projects. These two grants are awarded based on an evaluation by distinguished judges and are the final in a series of twenty-seven CTNS STARS grants totaling \$1.3 million.

### **Recipients of \$200,000 STARS Renewal Grants**

#### **"The Rationality of Ultimate Value: Emotion, Awareness, and Causality in Virtue Ethics and Decision Neuroscience"**

Warren Brown, Professor of Psychology, Graduate School of Psychology, Fuller Theological Seminary (Co-Principal Investigator)  
Gregory Peterson, Associate Professor, South Dakota State University (Co-Principal Investigator)  
Kevin Reimer, Professor of Psychology, Azusa Pacific University  
Michael Spezio, Assistant Professor, Scripps College; Visiting Scientist, California Institute of Technology  
James Van Slyke, Adjunct Professor, Azusa Pacific University

#### *In their own words:*

“Thus far, this project has created exciting new approaches to research on moral action and virtue. Most remarkably, the project has yielded a novel approach to neuroscience and psychological study of virtuous exemplars within a laboratory context. We have also successfully used semantic analysis to probe for transcendent concepts in the schemas of virtuous exemplars. Finally, our team has formulated a philosophical understanding of virtue that both incorporates this new scientific research and argues for the critical importance of transcendence and exemplarity in moral action.”

## "Information and the Origin of Life"

Andrew Robinson, Honorary University Fellow, University of Exeter (Co-Principal Investigator), UK  
Christopher Southgate, Research Fellow, University of Exeter (Co-Principal Investigator), UK  
Terrence Deacon, Professor of Biological Anthropology and Linguistics, University of California, Berkeley

Niles Lehman, Professor of Chemistry, Portland State University

Bruce Weber, Emeritus Professor of Biochemistry, California State University, Fullerton

*In their own words:*

“Our new philosophical definition of ‘interpretation’ is providing a novel approach to the scientific question of the origin of life. We have begun to generate models and proposals that are already starting to demonstrate the advantage that even very simple entities gain by interpreting their environment. The theological part of our proposal is that these three-fold patterns in the world also provide ways of talking about the Christian understanding of the life of God and God’s interaction with the world.”

[www.ctnsstars.org/enews/news\\_rteam1.html](http://www.ctnsstars.org/enews/news_rteam1.html)

### **From the Principal Investigator:**

“I am delighted with the extraordinary quality and ground-breaking approaches to interdisciplinary research by these two outstanding teams who have each won a \$200,000 renewal grant from CTNS for their STARS research,” said Robert John Russell, STARS Principal Investigator and the Ian G. Barbour Professor of Theology and Science in Residence at the Graduate Theological Union. “Their continuing research is at the center of a wide range of scientific area spanned by the twenty-seven STARS grants: from fundamental physics and evolutionary biology to the neurosciences and mathematics. The implications for our understanding of human spirituality, virtue ethics, the scientific question of the origin of life, and the meaning of “ultimate reality” are very promising.”

[www.ctnsstars.org/enews/news\\_rteam2.html](http://www.ctnsstars.org/enews/news_rteam2.html)

CTNS STARS sponsors ground-breaking interdisciplinary research on the ways science, in light of philosophical and theological reflection, points towards the nature, character and meaning of ultimate reality. STARS research is undertaken in a highly innovative way, through small teams of scientists and humanities scholars. Results of the research will be jointly authored by the members of the team, thereby producing a unique synthesis of science and humanities scholarship. More information on the research teams may be found at [www.ctnsstars.org/enews/news\\_rteam1.html](http://www.ctnsstars.org/enews/news_rteam1.html)

STARS is a program of the [Center for Theology and Natural Sciences](http://www.ctns.org/) (CTNS) in Berkeley, California. Since 1981, CTNS has worked to build bridges between theology and science through research, teaching, and public service. Residing in Berkeley, California, CTNS is an Affiliate of the Graduate Theological Union (GTU). The Graduate Theological Union is the largest and most diverse partnership of seminaries and graduate schools in the United States, pursuing interreligious collaboration in teaching, research, ministry, and service <http://www.gtu.edu>.

For more information about CTNS, visit [www.ctns.org/](http://www.ctns.org/) or call 510-848-8152.

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