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ISCAST is a think tank of Christian academics, scientists, professionals and theologians who explore the interface and interactions between science & technology with the Christian faith.

A Message from the President

The 2009 Conference on Science and Christianity (COSAC) was another step forward in establishing ISCAST as a serious agent in the science-religion debate in Australia.

Clearly there is a need for qualified and wise input into the discussions about the place of religion in general and Christianity in particular in our society. Increasingly, there is also a need for such input relating to science, and into the science-religion interface.

This is demonstrated in the tangled debate about Global Warming. Science also takes us into other new areas, like stem cell research. In each area new discoveries challenge our understanding of who we are and how we should apply the discoveries of science while being accountable to the Lord of creation.

ISCAST has both the personnel and the credentials to operate in this space but, to do this effectively and intelligently, we need to be organised and resourced.

At COSAC the members of ISCAST agreed that the Board should look for resources to appoint a CEO to manage the affairs of ISCAST. Such a person would be particularly active in rejuvenating ISCAST chapters, recruiting new members and identifying issues relating to science and Christianity that require research and input.

To this end the Board has agreed to approach members and supporters to raise \$10,000 or more to fund a major submission from funding sources for operating funds. I will be writing to you soon to ask specifically to contribute to this fund and so help establish our ministry here in Australia.

Other news includes:

- The board has appointed Dr Patsy Robertson, chair of the Communications Working Group, as a full ex officio member of the Board. The CWG oversees the development of the website, the production of the Digest and so on. The CWG expressed the desire to be more accountable to the Board and for the Board to provide leadership with regard to new initiatives.
- The Board has approached Stockdale ACS, an administrative services company, to provide the support required for running ISCAST nationally. This includes following up memberships, supporting ISCAST projects, acting as the minutes secretary for Board meetings and so on. I am grateful that Stockdale ACS is available for this. Running organisations such as ISCAST is becoming more complex and, to be freed of the administrative workload to do what we do best, is liberating.
- As part of this appointment, the Board has employed Richard Gijsbers as a paid board secretary. I am delighted with this appointment because of the organizational skills, vision and energy Richard brings to the Board. He has been responsible for enthusing others into developing the CWG, the Website and the vision statement.
- We are seeking to standardise the membership of ISCAST across Australia. In the past different chapters have made different offerings to members in their region. This has led to inconsistencies across the country. As we are seeking to raise our profile in Australia, we also want to establish a consistent identity and encourage an active contribution to science and Christianity throughout the country. You will receive correspondence regarding this as well in the near future.

Grace and peace,

A/Prof. Alan Gijsbers

In this Issue:

- News Items
- Journal Abstracts
- Event News

www.iscast.org

News Items

Items of interest to the interaction between science and Christianity and of significance to the ISCAST family. Your submissions of these are welcome.



Newton on Stage

"God is the same God, always and everywhere. . . . In him are all things contained and moved; yet neither affects the other. God suffers nothing from the motion of bodies. [And] bodies find no resistance from the omnipresence of God."

Many would be surprised to discover that the author of these theological musings is none other than Sir Isaac Newton. [More](#)



The Next Revolution in Biology

"In every field of science, when it's successful, you think you understand all of it," says Martin Nowak, professor of mathematics and biology at Harvard University. "In classical mechanics," he

explains, "there was a time when physicists thought, 'Well, that's all there is. If I know the place of the particles in the universe, I can predict the future.' But then came quantum mechanics and relativity theory. There was a total revolution." [More](#)

News items continued next page...

News Items



Simon Conway Morris' personal story - Coming to faith

The Cambridge Professor of Evolutionary Palaeobiology is unusually candid about why he rejected materialism and became a Christian in this short video posted on the Test of Faith website and Facebook group. [More](#)



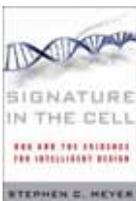
Charles Taylor on Faith and Scientific Progress

Mark Vernon (pictured left) writes in The Guardian: "Is science closer to religion than is typically assumed? Is religion closer to science? Might rational enquiry, based on evidence, share similarities with faith? These questions were raised by Charles Taylor, the distinguished Canadian philosopher, speaking at a Cambridge University symposium. [More](#)



NASA / Australia space alliance reviewed

As the 50th anniversary of a key agreement that governs Australia's involvement with NASA's space program approaches; a more strategic and forward-looking treaty is being considered by the government, writes Ari Sharp in the SMH. [More](#)



Meyer and Falk explore the Cell

The BioLogos blog "Science and the Sacred" has posted a fascinating and mature dialogue between Dr Stephen C. Meyer and Dr Darrel Falk regarding Meyer's new book "Signature in the Cell". [More](#)



Test of FAITH Youth Material - Second Installment

The final instalment of the free online material for leaders of Christian

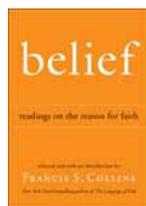
youth groups is now available.

There are four sessions for 11-14s, and five for 14-18s, plus a leader's guide that covers the basic background to the issues. [More](#)



Darwin's Test of Faith: Lessons from a Victorian Agnostic, by Nick Spencer

What did Charles Darwin believe? And what can we learn from it? For Darwin, Christianity was like a proof to be established. His faith was based on the natural world, rather than on the Bible and knowing God. Without real appreciation of the Cross, suffering and loss made it impossible for Darwin to hold on to his so-called 'rational' faith. Nick Spencer explores Darwin's complex loss of faith in this new article. [More](#)



Francis Collins releases new book

Dr. Francis Collins, director of the National Institute of Health and New York Times bestselling author of The Language of God, is releasing a new book called "Belief: Readings on the Reason for Faith". Similar to what Christopher Hitchens did in The Portable Atheist, Collins draws together the most important writings on faith and belief, from C. S. Lewis to Madeline L'Engle, Martin Luther King to Merton to create a definitive anthology of readings on the rationality of faith. [More](#)



Essay Competition to Honour John Polkinghorne's 80th Birthday

In 2010 ISSR will be celebrating the 80th birthday of its founding President, John Polkinghorne.

ISSR is now offering major cash prizes for an essay by a student or junior academic on an aspect of the work of John Polkinghorne. [More](#)



Climate wars give science bad name

UNIVERSITY leaders are pressing for a public campaign to restore the intellectual and

moral authority of Australian science in the wake of the climate wars, writes Luke Slattery in The Australian. [More](#)



Desmond Tutu's genome sequenced as part of genetic diversity study

Archbishop Desmond Tutu has become the latest prominent figure to have his full genome deciphered, scientists revealed today.

The South African clergyman and human rights campaigner agreed to the procedure as part of a study into the breadth of human genetic diversity and the role an individual's genetic makeup plays in their health. [More](#)



God Science DVD now available from CPX

CPX has released an exciting new DVD containing interviews with a host of prominent scientists, historians and philosophers examining the place of faith in an age of science. The DVD is now available for pre-order from their online store. [More](#)



Science, Religion and the Truth of Genesis

The recent ABC audio interview featuring Rev Stephen Ames, Dr Mick Pope and Dr Shane Clifton is now available for download from the Sunday Nights site. [More](#)



A conversation with Sarah Darwin and Tall Ship experience

Date: Thursday 25 February 2010
Time: 5.45pm (tallship tours from 4pm)
Venue: Nelson Room, Seaworks, 82 Nelson Place Williamstown (Melways 56 E10).

Sarah is Charles Darwin's great, great granddaughter and a biologist. She is retracing her ancestor's steps on the Dutch clipper Stad Amsterdam for TV station VPRO. [More](#)

No access to the internet and want more information? Contact the ISCAST office (see back page) and we will forward it to you. Postage and handling fees apply.

Christian Perspectives on Science and Christianity: Journal Abstracts

The ISCAST Online Journal – Christian Perspectives on Science and Technology is a forum for those exploring the interaction between science, technology and the Christian faith. Submissions are invited and they may be academic articles, less formal discussions aimed at non-academic readers, opinion pieces, or book reviews. Articles and discussions will be refereed. The intended readers are Christians interested in science and technology, and scientists and technologists interested in the Christian faith. Specialist knowledge is not assumed. Below are selected abstracts from the journal. (see www.iscast.org/journalpage)



Addressing world needs

Ian Hore-Lacy, December 2009.

Author

Ian Hore-Lacy is a biologist and environmental scientist who is a Fellow of ISCAST and Director of Public Communications with the World Nuclear Association.

Abstract

God has made abundant provision for our needs. We must not only be environmentally conscious, but overcome political obstacles and technological challenges to deploy that abundance effectively. Norman Borlaug's work on high-yield wheat varieties transforming India's food situation is an inspiring example.



Stewardship of the rural environment: care, use, enjoy - and rest!

Ross Macmillan, November 2009.

Author

Ross Macmillan is a Senior Fellow in Agricultural Engineering, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, University of Melbourne and an ISCAST Fellow.

Abstract

The early chapters of Genesis present a theology of creation and provide humans with the authority for its care, use, enjoyment and for rest. These themes help to define the concept of stewardship with the associated responsibility which humans have for the earth, for its creatures and for each other. Our failure to care for creation and in particular the rural environment is identified as the result not only of human sin but also of technical ignorance. Our experience and the examples given suggest that our continued use of the rural environment is only likely to be care-full if it is based on a productive system which can justify the cost of a continuing program of research to eliminate the damaging inputs and a willingness to pay for the real costs of the production of our food and fibre. This subject is important because it is fundamental to life on earth, because the

rural environment and our agricultural industries are obviously suffering from our lack of care and because this failure will continue to affect all of society.



ISCAST Incoming President's Address

A/Prof Alan Gijsbers,

September 2009

Author

Associate Professor Alan Gijsbers

Abstract

Recorded at COSAC 2009, The 7th Biennial Conference On Science And Christianity, Geelong Conference Centre, Adams Ct, Geelong, Australia, 18-20 September 2009.



The End of Materialism

Prof. Simon Conway Morris, September 2009

Source: CPX

Abstract

Prof. Simon Conway Morris talks to CPX following his visit to Melbourne, Australia for the COSAC 2009 conference.



Science and an unlikely God

Prof. Simon Conway Morris, September 2009

Source: CPX

Abstract

Prof. Simon Conway Morris talks to CPX following his visit to Melbourne, Australia for the COSAC 2009 conference.



Starfish, Octopuses and the uniqueness of Humans

Prof. Simon Conway Morris, September 2009

Source: CPX

Abstract

Prof. Simon Conway Morris talks to CPX following his visit to Melbourne, Australia for the COSAC 2009 conference.



Dr Graeme Finlay on Science and Theology

Dr Graeme Finlay,

September 2009

Source: CPX

Abstract

Cell biologist and theologian Dr Graeme Finlay is interviewed by CPX about the cell, Christianity, science and theology.



Science, Religion and the Origin of Species

Source: ABC Local Sunday Nights, September 2009

David Young, John Pilbrow and Nicola Hoggard-Creegan talk to John Cleary about the impact of Darwin and evolution on Christian thought on the ABC Local Sunday Nights program. The interview is available for download online or via the regular Sunday Nights with John Cleary Podcast, available through iTunes.

2009 marks the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin and the 150th Anniversary of the publication of 'On the Origin of Species'. It is often said that this marks the beginning of the decline of religion and the ascendancy of science, as the primary frame of truth for society.

150 years on, Science has banished religion to the realm of superstition. That's at least the way some in the Science community would have it. Tonight on ABC radio a discussion about Science, Religion and the Origin of Species from a group of Scientists. This week in Geelong a group of scientists who are all committed religious believers are meeting to discuss the significance of the Origin of Species 150 years on. And in a few moments time we will be joined by a distinguished group of delegates to the conference.

**Do you have an article to submit to Christian Perspectives on Science and Technology?
Contact the editorial team via www.iscast.org/journalpage**

Event News

Test of Faith DVD Presentations

Dates & Topics:

1. Sunday, February 28

Beyond Reason? Science, Faith and the Universe

2. Sunday March 7

An Accident in the Making? Creation, Evolution & Interpreting Genesis

3. Sunday March 14

Is Anybody There? Freedom to Choose

Time: 2.00pm - 3.30pm

Venue: St Francis Church Pastoral Centre, corner Elizabeth and Lonsdale Sts.

Cost: Donation invited

The invitation to take part in discussions is open to all who attend.

Establishment of the Test of Faith Google Group

A new Google Group has been set up for those wishing to lead or participate in a Test of FAITH course in Australia. The group includes details of upcoming courses in each state.

To view or join the group, visit:

<http://groups.google.com.au/group/ISCAST-TOF>

Can You Believe in God and Science?

Date: Wednesday 17 March at 8:00pm

Venue: St James' Conference Centre, 12 Batman St, West Melbourne

Speakers: Prof John Pilbrow, A/Prof Alan Gijsbers, Dr Denise Cooper-Clarke & Rev Murray Hogg

No cost.

This ISCAST event is part of a series organised by St Jude's Carlton.

The other events in the series, run by St Jude's Carlton and other churches in Melbourne, include:

Atheism & Belief: The Difference Jesus Makes

Date: Saturday 13 March at 8pm

Venue: BMW Edge – Federation Square

Speaker: Dr Greg Clarke, Director, Centre for Public Christianity.

Entry Cost: \$10

How to Respond to Dawkins and Atheism

Date: Wednesday 3 March at 8pm

Venue: St Jude's Carlton

Speakers: Dr Greg Clarke, Director, Centre for Public Christianity (on video) & Dr Bruce Langtry, Senior Fellow in Philosophy, University of Melbourne

Philosophy in a Pub – Two philosophers in discussion: Does God Exist?

Date: Thursday 18 March at 8pm

Venue: University Hotel 272 Lygon St (cnr Grattan St) Carlton

Speakers: Dr Bruce Langtry & Dr Doug Adeney.

Stewardship of the Rural Environment: Care, Use, Enjoy - and Rest!

Date: 17 April 2010

Speaker: Ross Macmillan, Senior Fellow in Agricultural Engineering, University of Melbourne

Venue: Brian Bayston's home, 3 Lorne Grove, Camberwell, Vic

For more details on events visit

www.iscast.org

Digest Subscription and Renewals 2010

Please fill out the form if you would like to subscribe to the Digest for the first time or continue your subscription in 2010, and return it to us by mail or by fax with any payment that might be required. Renewals apply to subscribers who are not members of ISCAST Victoria and who have elected to receive the Digest by post, or those wishing to change their subscription from email to post. You can also register online at www.iscast.org/Digest_Registration.

Yes, please send me a copy of the ISCAST Digest every three months during 2010

Yes, please renew my subscription to the ISCAST Digest issued every three months during 2010

Preferred format: Email (no cost) Post (\$10 annual subscription for hardcopy format)

Name: _____

Address: _____ **Postcode:** _____

Email: _____ **Phone:** _____

Chapter: Sydney Bathurst/Orange Victoria Sth Australia Tasmania Queensland

I would like to know more about being associated with ISCAST

Annual Subscription by post: \$10 (Credit Cards add \$2 processing fee) **Total Due: \$** _____

Contact the ISCAST Vic office for payment details.



This is an official organ of ISCAST (The Institute for the Study of Christianity in an Age of Science and Technology, a not for profit organisation registered in New South Wales, Australia).

It is published quarterly in both hard copy and digital formats. It includes news items of relevance to both the ISCAST family and to the engagement of science and Christianity in Australia, New Zealand and elsewhere.

It also includes abstracts of articles submitted to "Christian Perspectives on Science and Technology", ISCAST's online journal and the latest information of events hosted by ISCAST Chapters around Australia and New Zealand.

Items published on the ISCAST website and in this Digest explore the interaction between science and the Christian faith and will be published to foster the discussions and debate. ISCAST cannot endorse any or all of the opinions expressed here.

Details of events published will be correct as at the date of publication but you are encouraged to check the website or with the relevant contact before the event.

Hard copy versions of the Digest are available at the cost of \$10 pa and subscriptions can be arranged by contacting the ISCAST Victoria office.

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