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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.

## Positions Vacant

In ISCAST we see that our website is a major means of sharing our reflections and ideas with the outside world. Oversight of the development of the website and our other media (including this Digest) is the responsibility of the Communications Working Group headed by Dr Patsy Robertson.

Reporting to the CWG are:

- The Christian Perspectives on Science and Technology (our online journal) editorial committee headed by Dr Bruce Craven
- The website project team headed by James Garth

We are looking for people to join us in a number of positions to work in this area. Specifically these are:

### Members of the Communications Working Group

We meet every six to eight weeks and we oversee the development of our communications function. Meetings are a mixture of face to face and teleconference so that members who cannot physically attend the meetings are able to contribute. Please feel free to contact Patsy if you want to come on board. She can be contacted via [admin@iscast.org](mailto:admin@iscast.org).

### Members of the Online Journal editorial team

Bruce is eager to develop this team and to encourage and provide a wider contribution of papers and scholarship for the Journal. Publishing in this area is vital to what we do and the existing team are keen for newcomers to join them.

Communications are usually by email and the work is shared out among the team. Prerequisites for this job are a familiarity with science-faith issues and an understanding of publications, particularly academic journals. Do you want to give it a go? Please contact Bruce at [editor@iscast.org](mailto:editor@iscast.org).

### Reviewers of Papers

Bruce is continually receiving drafts of papers for the Journal which need to undergo peer review before they can be published. Experts in all areas of science and theology will be called on occasionally as papers are submitted in their areas of expertise.

Communications will be by email and Bruce needs to be confident that papers will be reviewed expeditiously. Prerequisites are post-graduate degrees in your area of expertise and experience in reviewing papers is preferred. Are you interested? Please contact Bruce at [editor@iscast.org](mailto:editor@iscast.org).

### Support for ISCAST Podcast required

Are you iTunes and computer literate? Have a keen ear for podcasts? Would like to help out with making our latest lectures and presentations available to the wider public and science/faith community?

If so, we would love a volunteer to assist with maintaining the ISCAST Podcast. The role involves transferring new material, ie. audio and video files of lectures and presentations, across to the podcast on a fortnightly basis to help keep it fresh and current. The process is very well documented, and requires a commitment of no more than one hour per fortnight. If you can assist, please contact [admin@iscast.org](mailto:admin@iscast.org).

### In this Issue:

- News Items
- Journal Abstracts
- Event News

[www.iscast.org](http://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.*



### Lawrence Ernest (Lawrie) Lyons: 26 May 1922 - 14 October 2010

Lawrie Lyons was a fine Christian and excellent scientist, motivated in both by his strong faith in the Lord. And what a motivation that was! He was respected nationally and internationally for his pioneering work on the electrical and photo-conductivity of organic materials and in the Christian community for his long-standing commitment to the dialogue between Science and Christianity from an evangelical point of view. In 1989 he was the founder of ISCAST and its first President. [More](#)



### Quantum Reality: Exploring the Cutting Edge

By Rod Dreher – Director of Publications, John Templeton Foundation

For centuries, Western science and philosophy has been built on the bedrock understanding that there is a clear difference between the material and the immaterial—or, in theological terms, between the natural and the supernatural. What if new scientific findings hinted that the distinction might present an inaccurate view of reality? [More](#)

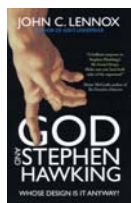
*News items continued next page...*

## News Items



### Does The Universe Have A Purpose?

This question was debated last weekend in Puebla Mexico, the newly dubbed Ciudad de las ideas (City of Ideas) at the third annual International Festival of Great Minds. Contributing speakers included Richard Dawkins and William Lane Craig. [More](#)



### Upcoming John Lennox book responding to Stephen Hawking

The mathematician and philosopher of science Professor John Lennox will be releasing a short book in January entitled "God and Stephen Hawking: Whose Design is it Anyway?" [More](#)



### Australian Centre for Space Engineering and Research

UNSW has launched the Australian Centre for Space Engineering and Research (ACSER), using \$4.7 million from Australia's space research program to investigate ways of flying satellites in formation to create super-accurate models of the Earth's surface. [More](#)



### Pope lifts ban on condoms to fight AIDS

Pope Benedict XVI has given Catholics permission to use condoms to fight AIDS in a historic shift welcomed yesterday by theologians and health experts. [More](#)



### Climate change: A Summary of the Science

Climate change continues to be a subject of intense public and political debate. Because of the level of interest in this topic the Royal Society has produced a new guide to the science of climate change. The guide summarises the current scientific evidence on climate change and its drivers, highlighting the areas where the science is well established, where there is still some debate, and where substantial uncertainties remain. [More](#)



### Bionic ear inventor receives Lister Medal

Professor Graeme Clark AC, the inventor of the bionic ear, has been recognised for his contribution to surgical science by being awarded the prestigious Lister Medal, the third Australian to receive the medal since it was established in the 1920s. [More](#)



### Sir Martin Rees on science, theology and cosmology

In this extended interview in The Independent, the Astronomer Royal and outgoing President of the Royal Society, Sir Martin Rees talks candidly about science education, climate change, philosophy and theology, and the challenges humanity faces in surviving the 21st century. [More](#)



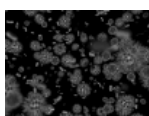
### Converging on the Web - the Map of Life

Simon Conway Morris is one of the world's top biologists and a leading scholar of evolutionary convergence, the idea that all life evolves toward similar adaptations, using very different routes. The Cambridge University paleobiologist has recently launched Map of Life, a comprehensive Web resource for students, academics, and other readers curious to learn more about convergence. [More](#)



### Religion Has Scant Effect on Environmental Views, Poll Suggests

Few Americans say their religion influences their environmental views, according to a new poll by the Pew Research Center for People and the Press. [More](#)



### Scientists reveal HIV cell mystery

Melbourne researchers have discovered a crucial mechanism of HIV, boosting hopes of a cure for the virus that affects more than 33 million people worldwide. [More](#)



### Curbs on war robots urged

The rapid proliferation of military drone planes and armed robots should be subject to international legal controls, conferences in London and Berlin will argue this month. Public awareness of attacks by unmanned aerial vehicles, such as Reapers and Predators, in Afghanistan and Pakistan has grown but less is known of unmanned ground vehicles. [More](#)



### Hawking's 'theory of everything' leaves out God

Theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking says in his latest book [The Grand Design, New Answers to the Ultimate Questions of Life, by Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow, (Bantam Press, London, 2010).] that the big questions of life can be answered "within the realms of science." Stephen Ames explains why he thinks such a conclusion is flawed. [More](#)



### The Great Brain Debate

Baroness Susan Greenfield CBE and Deloitte Digital's Peter Williams debated "The role social technology plays in society and the knowledge community - is it a blessing or hindrance?" at the Keynote Plenary Session at the Melbourne 2010 Knowledge Cities World Summit on 18th November. [More](#)



### James Gregory Lecture

Prof Pauline Rudd's recent Gregory lecture on "Is there more to life than genes" is now available.

The next Gregory lecture will be on March 3rd 2011, entitled "Can a Scientist Believe in Miracles?". It will be presented by Sir Colin Humphreys CBE from the Dept of Materials Science at Cambridge, who was knighted last June for services to physics. [More](#)



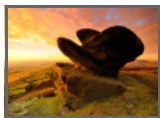
### The ISCAST Podcast is back!

After a brief vacation, the ISCAST Podcast has returned and is better than ever, with over 20 lectures, presentations and videos now available, and more coming soon. [More](#)

**No access to the internet and want more information? Contact the ISCAST office (see back page) and we will forward the full item 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](http://www.iscast.org/journalpage))



### [The Deep Time Issue - A Christian Geologist's Perspective](#)

Presentation by Prof David Cohen from the ISCAST (NSW) / CASE Meeting on 18 October 2010 at New College, University of NSW.

Now available to download as an mp3 from the 'Presentations' area on the website.

#### Presenter

David Cohen is the Head of the School of Biological, Earth and Environmental Sciences and Deputy President, Academic Board, UNSW, and is a Past-President of the (International) Association of Geochemists.

#### Abstract

Questions surrounding the origins and development of our species have been the subject of much research and speculation in disciplines ranging from Biology to Archeology. The greatest challenge for studies on origins is probably that of "deep time". For biologists, geologists, physicists and even historians dealing with deep time, the window gets progressively dimmer the further we look back, as data become more sparse and less reliable. The quality and quantity of information emerging from deep time is, however, rapidly improving. This is especially the case for the fossil record where recent scientific discoveries indicate the presence of life on Earth in very early stages of Earth history and a succession of major, even cataclysmic, climatic events that reset the path of geological and biological development on Earth.



### [God and Creation](#)

Peter Barry, September 2010

#### Author

Peter H. Barry, PhD, DSc; Emeritus Professor, Conjoint Professor, UNSW Dept of Physiology, School of Medical Sciences, The University of New South Wales

#### Abstract

In Hebrews 1: 1-3, we read:

*In the past God spoke to our forefather through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of*

*his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.*

It is absolutely clear that both God, the Father and Jesus, the Son, created the universe and that God, particularly in Jesus, is sustaining all things – all the physical laws, natural processes and systems through which the universe and world has evolved and continued over the last 13.7 billion years or thereabouts, and that not only is God our creator but that through Jesus, and his death on the cross for us, we are able to come into a special relationship with God.



### [Deep Ancestry – The Journey of Man](#)

Presentation by Dr Ian McFarlane: "Deep Ancestry – The Journey of Man: Tracing the genetic journey of human beings from mitochondrial and Y-chromosome DNA studies", from the ISCAST (NSW) / CASE Meeting on 23 August 2010 at New College, University of NSW.

Now available to download as an mp3 from the 'Presentations' area on the website.

#### Presenter

Dr Ian McFarlane is formerly of the School of Biotechnology and Biomolecular Sciences, UNSW.

#### Abstract

The ability to isolate, purify, amplify and determine the coding sequence of even small amounts of DNA from a variety of sources has led to an explosion of applications in forensics, medical genetics, biological classification and diversity, palaeontology, genealogy and population studies. In particular, the last 10 years has seen the production of print and video medium for popular consumption that has generated enormous interest in human population studies. This largely began with the concept of 'Mitochondrial Eve' and the subsequent publication of Bryan Sykes book 'The Seven Daughters of Eve' in 2001. Extensive DNA sampling of human groups in defined geographical areas from around the world has led, in conjunction with evidence from archaeology, climatology and fossil studies, to some remarkable conclusions about modern human origins. Much of the genetic data has come from studies on mitochondrial DNA and Y-chromosome DNA. In this presentation I propose to talk about how the data is generated, why it is useful and how it has made contributions to answering questions about human origins, human migration to

colonise an "empty" planet, the time scale of these events, kinship within our species, and relatedness to our closest animal relatives, including Neanderthal Man. What should we understand from the concepts of 'Mitochondrial Eve' and 'Y-chromosome Adam'? How might they relate to Biblical Adam and Eve?



### [New Developments in Military Technology: The convergence of Swords and Ploughshares?](#)

James Garth's talk given on 21 August 2010.

Now available to download as an mp3 from the 'Presentations' area on the website.

#### Presenter

James Garth, aerospace engineer with an interest in military technology and ethics

#### Abstract

With recent advances in technology a virtual revolution is taking place in the way modern wars are being waged. In the last decade alone, technologies such as enhanced C4ISR, network-centric warfare, all-aspect stealth and 'precision' weaponry have revolutionized the battlespace. Cyber-warfare is now a mature discipline in its own right, and lethal unmanned vehicles now routinely fly in the skies of Afghanistan and Iraq. Science fiction is fast becoming science fact, and the emerging prospects of neuro-cognitive warfare, tailored pathogens, cyber-enhanced 'super-empowered individuals', nano-energetics and other nonkinetic decentralised technologies will present us with a new suite of deeply troubling concerns. Much of this rapid development has taken place without significant debate within the public square about the consequences of where this technology is taking us or the constraints that should be employed regarding its use.



### [Atheism & belief: the difference Jesus makes](#)

Presentation by Dr Greg Clarke (Director, Centre for Public Christianity): Atheism & Belief: The Difference Jesus Makes, on 13 March 2010 at BMW Edge, Federation Square, Melbourne.

Now available to download as an mp3 from the 'Presentations' area on the website.

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

# Event News

## ISCAST (VIC) Annual Lecture 2011

**Date:** 19 August 2011

**Venue:** St Paul's Cathedral, Flinders Street, Melbourne

**Keynote Speaker:** Nancey Murphy

Professor of Christian Philosophy at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA. She received the B.A. from Creighton University (philosophy and psychology) in 1973, the Ph.D. from U.C. Berkeley (philosophy of science) in 1980, and the Th.D. from the Graduate Theological Union (theology) in 1987.

**Topic:** Did my Neurons Make Me Do It?

## COSAC 2011 - Conference On Science And Christianity

**Date:** 26-28 August 2011

**Venue:** Aspect Tamar Valley Resort, 7 Waldhorn Drive, Grindelwald Tasmania 7277 (Just outside Launceston)

**Keynote Speaker:** Nancey Murphy

**Topic:** Disenchantment: Faith and Science in a Secular World

From the time of the Enlightenment, Western society has become progressively disenchanted, as a sense of the transcendent and of spiritual forces, which pervaded mediaeval life, was lost, even repudiated. Modern science was part of the cause and is now, in its reductionist form, a result of this process. Paradoxically, in this secular age, there is a new "disenchantment" with such science: post-modern skepticism. Are we now disenchanted with disenchantment? How do Christians who are scientists speak into this world?

**The call for presenters will be issued soon.**

For more details on events visit  
[www.iscast.org](http://www.iscast.org)

## Annual Lecture and Intensive Report

Professor D Gareth Jones' lecture, *Through a Glass Darkly* on 29 October 2010 opened the ISCAST Vic Intensive - a weekend of academics, theologians, scientists, professionals and pastoral workers sharing the theme "Who Says? The Use and Misuse of the Bible in an Age of Science and Technology".

It was a full and, yes, intensive time with many perspectives of science and faith being explored.

Gareth Jones' opening lecture has been uploaded to the Resources section on the website under the heading ISCAST Presentations.

The abstracts from the Intensive, including Gareth Jones' other two lectures, have also been added. Scroll down to the heading ISCAST Intensive to see the list of presentations.

Included with some of the abstract pages are the full presentation notes and audio files available for you to download. The remaining presentation notes will be added as soon as they are ready.

Go to <http://iscast.org/resources>.

Presenters, how about submitting your paper from the Intensive for publication in the ISCAST Online Journal? Bruce Craven can be emailed at [editor@iscast.org](mailto:editor@iscast.org).

## Baby Congratulations

Mark and Susana Boland are pleased to introduce Santiago, born on 11 November 2010.



## Digest Subscription and Renewals

Please fill out the form if you would like to subscribe to the Digest for the first time or continue your subscription 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 and who have elected to receive the Digest by post, or those wishing to change their subscription from email to post. The digest is issued quarterly. You can also register online at [www.iscast.org/Digest\\_Registration](http://www.iscast.org/Digest_Registration).

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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 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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