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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.

ISCAST and Mammon

As Treasurer of ISCAST I have been working through our budget aiming to enable us to develop our strategic goals. Over the last 12 months we have achieved much in working towards them.

Accordingly, we have established contacts in each capital city in Australia (except Darwin) and are encouraging them to meet regularly, support one another, and explore issues arising out of our sciences and how these challenge our faith.

Over the last 12 months the Board has welcomed Dr Roger Morris from the Sunshine Coast, Rev. Dr Denis Edwards and Dr Nick Hawkes from Adelaide, and Rev. Chris Mulherin from Melbourne as fellows of ISCAST. We also have a number of other applications for fellowship in the pipeline.

At its last meeting, the Board set aside funds to create a new website to house ISCAST's online journal (Christian Perspectives on Science and Technology). Journal articles submitted for publication in CPOSAT have tended to get lost in the wider ISCAST website and the integrity of the journal as a standalone repository for formal articles has been jeopardised. The new site will address this.

Regarding our research program, we have identified a number of grant opportunities and have encouraged ISCAST members to consider using these to extend their own research in science and faith. The calls for submissions from the Templeton Foundation, BioLogos and elsewhere have proved to be catalysts triggering thinking about the possibilities for innovative research.

In conjunction with the Graeme Clark Research Institute, we supported a number of lectures on God and Science in each of the capital cities (again, except Darwin). While the attendance was small, a number of people have responded strongly and approached us for help—particularly in working through challenges posed by the new national science curriculum. ISCAST fellows are now actively involved with some schools exploring how we can develop material to help teachers deal with the religious issues raised by evolution,

Big Bang Cosmology and biotechnology.

The Board has also prepared a policy on providing scholarships to members. We are pleased to announce that Greg Jacobs is the first to receive a scholarship under this policy to enable him to attend a course in the UK run by the Faraday Institute.

I strongly believe that we are starting to live up to our high calling. However, this activity costs money.

Fortunately, over the years, ISCAST has accumulated about \$100K in assets. Against this however we are relying almost solely on membership subscriptions and donations to cover our day to day expenses. The Board has budgeted for a deficit this year with the expectation that our activity will bring us support and funding in return.

In short we are well off for assets but cash poor. We have applied several times for grants and we will continue to apply for them while ensuring that all our eggs are not in the one basket.

Accordingly, I encourage you to think about your support for ISCAST. If you are not yet an Associate member, for \$50 per year you can support us and receive our Digest every quarter as well as a discount to COSAC next year. If you have been a member of ISCAST and have not paid your subscriptions this year, please consider doing so. We will be contacting you soon asking you to renew your membership.

Finally, in re-joining, please consider providing a donation to top up what you are paying and to enable us to continue to develop the work of ISCAST.

We are living in exciting times in which nearly every area of the sciences in which we work is challenging how we see ourselves. We have an important role in working with society and the church to respond to these challenges. Your help and involvement in this is vital. Thank you.

Michael Wong
Treasurer, ISCAST

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.



Welcome to newly appointed ISCAST Fellows

- Dr Roger Morris from the Sunshine Coast
- Rev. Dr Denis Edwards from Adelaide
- Dr Nick Hawkes from Adelaide
- Rev. Chris Mulherin from Melbourne

Have recently been appointed fellows of ISCAST. We welcome them into our institute and look forward to their contributions to our discussions in science and religion. [More](#)



Romans Remixed - Ethos Annual Conference & Dinner

Topic: Gospel, Culture, Empire - and Finding the Way Home

Date: 29 June - Dinner, and 30 June - Workshops

Venue: Ridley Melbourne, Parkville

Speakers: Brian Walsh & Sylvia Keesmaat [More](#)

News items continued next page...

News Items



Christianity and the Rise of Western Science

In an article on ABC Religion and Ethics, 8 May 2012, Peter Harrison writes "It is often assumed that the relationship between Christianity and science has been a long and troubled one. Such assumptions draw support from a variety of sources." [More](#)



Theology Must Save Science From Naturalism

In an opinion piece on ABC Religion and Ethics, 22 May 2012, Conor Cunningham writes "The conversation between science and theology has been hijacked by a restrictive naturalism, which rests on an impoverished understanding of science, one that is underwritten by an atrophied imagination, and that leaves us bereft of nature." [More](#)



Is Philosophy Relevant to Physics?

On Buzz Blog we read "Over the past few months, a controversy has erupted between members of the fields of physics and philosophy. It all started in January when Lawrence Krauss, a well-known cosmologist and science writer, published his book titled A Universe from Nothing: Why There is Something Rather than Nothing. Krauss' book attempts to show how the universe could have come from "nothing," as implied by quantum field theory." [More](#)



Free new online

course - Science & Religion: Cognitive Neuroscience

The University of California, Irvine are offering a free new online course called Social Science 130B: Science and Religion II - Cognitive Neuroscience. [More](#)



Physics vs Philosophy: Really?

Marcelo Gleiser joins the heated discussion and puts forward his view on the relationship between physics and philosophy. This post has received 200 comments since being written on May 2, 2012. [More](#)



Australian companies get first shot at green energy cash

On May 23, 2012, David Wroe reported that "Australian companies will be guaranteed the chance to pitch for business flowing from the Gillard government's \$10 billion clean energy fund that Labor will announce today in an effort to sell the benefits of green jobs at home." [More](#)

science + religion TODAY Can a better understanding of sacred values help us resolve inter-group conflicts?

This question is explored in a post on Science & Religion Today by Scott Atran, a research scientist at the Research Center for Group Dynamics and a professor of psychology and public policy at the University of Michigan and a research director in anthropology at the National Center for Scientific Research in Paris. [More](#)



Introducing Robot Ethics

Joshua Rothman, a graduate student and Teaching Fellow in the Harvard English department, has written a post on 'Introducing Robot Ethics' in the Boston Globe ideas blog, known as Brainiac. In his post he writes: 'Thirty years ago, few people envisioned just how completely computers would be integrated into our everyday lives; today, they're everywhere.' [More](#)



Infanticide and the spectre of eugenics

Michael Mullins, editor of Eureka Street, wrote an article in response to the news reported on Friday 2 March in the Sydney Morning Herald that 'killing newborns is morally the same as abortion and should be permissible if the mother wishes it'. [More](#)



Can Physics and Philosophy Get Along?

Gary Gutting (pictured), professor of philosophy at the University of Notre Dame, editor of Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews, and author,

also joins the debate on physics and philosophy stating that "I'd like to see if I can raise the level of the discussion a bit." His post on The Stone has received over 300 comments since May 10, 2012. [More](#)



Reason for Faith Festival podcasts now online

Podcasts from the Reason for Faith Festival, held across Melbourne in April 2012, are now available online. [More](#)



Congregations gripped by conversations

with scientists

Through Scientists in Congregations, a grant program funded by the John Templeton Foundation, over thirty congregations have been awarded grants which will enable them to develop local initiatives. [More](#)



Physics and the final frontier

In Third Way: Is there a scientific argument for an afterlife? Theoretical physicist John Polkinghorne constructs a case for a human destiny beyond death - and finds grounds for Christian hope. [More](#)



A Universe from Nothing?

Professor of Philosophy David Albert criticizes Lawrence Krauss' "A Universe From Nothing" in The New York Times. Albert finds Krauss' explanation of the origin and configuration of the fundamental physical laws - including the laws of relativistic quantum field theories - to be wanting. [More](#)



Book Review: Where the Conflict Really Lies: Science, Religion, & Naturalism

A book review on Alvin Plantinga latest book, Where the Conflict Really Lies: Science, Religion, & Naturalism was posted by Brian Auten in the Apologetics 315 blog on 25 February 2012. [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 Technology: 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)



Children of God: the awkward teenage years

Michael Smith, April 2012

Author

Michael Smith, Department of Zoology, University of Melbourne, Parkville.

Abstract

In this essay I explore some of the manifestations of 'teenage rebellion' in matters of faith and society: how disillusionment with God can manifest and impact our lives. As we grow from infancy to adulthood, an early childish optimism towards our idealised vision of life often gives way to dissatisfaction, cynicism and disillusionment in our teenage years. This is a natural by-product of a youthful idealism based on unrealistic notions, and hopefully as we continue to mature to adulthood we understand life more deeply and regain our satisfaction, enthusiasm and sense of wonder with all that this life and universe have to offer. In general, I believe that this disillusionment is rooted in our early failure of understanding. The core of the Christian faith is a personal relationship with God through the person of Jesus. A person who believes in God but does not have a relationship with him may find that this level of faith is insufficient to withstand the additional pressures, responsibilities and difficulties that adulthood requires. On a broader perspective, I also look briefly at disillusionment with science from the Enlightenment to the present day.



Reading Scripture badly: the technological threat to biblical literacy

Murray Hogg, February 2012

Author

Murray Hogg BEng MDiv MTh is the chair of ISCAST Victoria and Pastor of Camberwell East Baptist Church.

Abstract

This paper was first presented at the ISCAST Vic Intensive, Queen's College, University of Melbourne, on Saturday, 30th October 2010.

Introduction: Technological innovation impacts our lives, including the life of faith, in very many ways (Hipps 2009). Of these,

I wish to consider one in particular: the impact of new technology on biblical literacy. I will suggest that it is possible that new technology can lead us to read Scripture badly. My intent is neither to denigrate new technology nor to advocate resistance to it. Indeed, I will not even consider whether technological change should be regarded as good or bad. The fact is that technological change is part and parcel of our contemporary social landscape and the questions I am interested in exploring are these: What is the new technology?; What impact does it have on our lives?; and How might we best come to terms with that impact?



Reflections on the Christian mind

Alan Gijsbers, February 2012

Author

Associate Professor Alan Gijsbers MBBS FRACP FACHAM DTM&H PGDipEpi University of Melbourne, Head of Addiction Medicine Royal Melbourne Hospital, Medical Director The Melbourne Clinic, Richmond. Former National Chairman, Christian Medical and Dental Fellowship, Australia, President ISCAST, President HealthServe Australia.

Abstract

These notes arose out of the ISCAST (Vic) evening in which Ron Choong (Academy of Christian Thought, www.actministry.org) was a late scratching. These notes are my reflection beyond the evening rather than a summary of the very interesting discussion of that evening. I must admit I have finished up in somewhat of a different place from where I had initially planned to go, but subsequent events have changed the emphasis of my thinking.

For academics, we usually understand the Christian mind as the way Christian theology integrates with everyday life. Thus Mark Noll's famous The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind is an extended discussion of the failure of evangelicals to contribute to the academic world of high culture, including:

economics and political science, literary criticism and imaginary writing, historical inquiry and philosophical studies, linguistics and the history of science, social theory and the arts.



I am tired, therefore who cares? Disenchantment in the age of information overload

Murray Hogg, February 2012

Author

Murray Hogg, Pastor of East Camberwell Baptist Church (Melbourne, Aust.) and Fellow of ISCAST.

Abstract

This paper was first presented at COSAC 2011, ISCAST Conference on Science and Christianity held in Launceston, Tasmania.

Introduction: The problem of information fatigue In keeping with the theme of COSAC 2011, I intend to explore the idea of disenchantment. In particular, I shall explore that disenchantment with science which arises when people are overwhelmed by the sheer volume of available information. This problem stems from the way in which our culture encourages individuals to take responsibility for their own beliefs. We place great value on making our own informed decisions, to which end we emphasise the need to gather enough information to allow us to make a decision for which we alone take responsibility.

This approach breaks down when we are unable to gather sufficient information on a particular issue either because the issue is very complex or because other issues compete for our attention. Then we have the problem of information overload and, when the sheer volume of information becomes overwhelming, information fatigue. A person suffering the latter simply gives up on the process of informed decision making and, more often than not, simply adopts whatever opinion holds within their peer group.

In this paper I will briefly examine this phenomenon of information fatigue particularly as it relates to disenchantment with science. I will suggest that the remedy to such disenchantment is not to bombard people with more and more scientific information - a response which serves only to compound the problem. Rather, what is needed is a sea-change in the way people think about knowledge. In particular, we must recognize that the idea of the autonomous individual knower cannot be realized in practice. Rather we must depend upon others for a great deal of what we know. I will argue that a model for such an approach is provided by the natural sciences themselves.

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

ISCAST Melbourne: 3-Day Intensive

The "Intensive" (mini conference) is planned for the weekend of the 10-11 November 2012. This will follow our annual lecture scheduled for Friday 9 November.

The Call for Papers is now open.

Topic: Divine Disclosure in an Age of Science and Technology

Keynote Speaker: Rev Dr Mark Worthing, Research Fellow, Graeme Clark Research Institute, Tabor Adelaide.

Venue: Center for Theology and Ministry, 29 College Crescent, (corner Morrison Close), Parkville 3052

Time: 9am–5pm Saturday & 9am–4.30pm Sunday

Call for Papers

ISCAST invites interested persons to submit proposals for papers on the conference theme "Divine Disclosure in an Age of Science and Technology." Papers may be primarily theological, biblical, or philosophical in nature, but preference will be given to those which show a focused engagement with Science and Technology.

The Call for Papers is available from the website. Proposals should be received by 31 July 2012 and submitted by email.

Phone 03 9535 7045 with enquiries or go to:

www.iscast.org/Intensive2012

ISCAST-CASE Science-Faith Panel Discussion (NSW)

A meeting, primarily for teachers and ISCAST-CASE members and friends.

Date: Thur 19th July at 7.30pm

Panel discussion title: "The questions students ask: Science and Faith in the Classroom?"

Venue: Main Common Room of New College.

Chair: Dr Barry Newman;

Panel members: Vaughan Brown (Shore); David Ruys (St Andrews Cathedral School); Jim Wright (Covenant Christian School).

ISCAST_CASE Lecture (NSW)

Date: Mon 17th September at 7.30pm

Speaker: Professor Graeme Clark AO, Developer of the Bionic Ear

Topic: "Serving as a Scientist in God's World"

Venue: Main Common Room of New College.

There will be refreshments after the lecture and a donation of \$10 would be appreciated.

For details on NSW events please contact Peter Barry (p.barry@unsw.edu.au; Mob: 0419 243 685), or Lewis Jones (lewis.jones@simeonnetwork.org; Mob: 0418 605 687).

Other News

Look us up on:

 Facebook: www.facebook.com/ISCAST

 Twitter: [@ISCAST_Oz](https://twitter.com/ISCAST_Oz)

 Tune in to our [Podcast](#)

Keep an eye on
the website for
events in 2012
www.iscast.org

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I would like to know more about being associated with ISCAST

Annual Subscription by post: \$15 (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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