

ISCAST is a network of people, from students to distinguished academics, exploring the interface of science, technology, and Christian faith.

Dear ISCAST friends, acquaintances and interested observers,

Lend me your ears as I comment on exciting ISCAST happenings and plans.

A time of transition

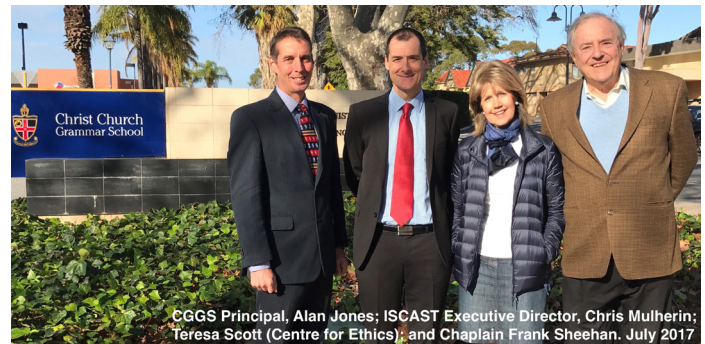
As many of you know, ISCAST is in transition as we step boldly into a public space dominated by increasingly strident secularism. We are on a path to become a significant voice on matters of science (and apologetics more generally) and Christian faith. And we now have a part-time Executive Director (yours truly, and ED for short).

As I seem to be telling people daily and as people confirm, coming to terms with science is essential for a robust Christian faith. Dividing the mind between faith on Sunday and the Western secular technopolis during the week is a recipe for existential and intellectual atrophy. So, as well as things we have done in the past, ISCAST is deliberately aiming at vigorous engagement, in both the church and secular space.

So what are we doing to change perceptions about the credibility of following Christ in an age of science?

The networking circuit

My vow in this first year as ED was to accept all offers to speak, preach, write, and meet with people. No, it's not sustainable but it has enabled me to do a lot of 'networking' (how I dislike that word). And in so many places the response is the same: "ISCAST? That's great ... but, I haven't heard of you."



Snippets

- Above you will see a memento of my recent trip to Perth where I gave 8 talks to Scripture Union, to Baptist youth and young adults, as well as three at Christ Church Grammar. This month I go to Brisbane to be with Anglican school chaplains.
- I have been interviewed on two ABC programs in the last couple of months: on James Carleton's slightly irreverent *God Forbid* and on *The Nightlife*. It was gratifying to have James ask for more ISCAST 'talent' and say "I thought your episode was a beauty; it really made me think about the assumptions I didn't know I was making."
- In July and August I am engaged in a 'church crawl' across Melbourne, preaching in numerous churches on Psalm 19, "The heavens declare: Science, faith and the gospel".
- Garratt Publishing have asked us to propose a volume in their popular series with *A Friendly Guide to Science and Christianity*. It will be an attractive resource, particularly for schools and study groups, presenting a light history and philosophy of the harmony between Christianity and science.
- We are also in conversation with a publisher about an ISCAST imprint so we can easily publish quality books economically. Do you have a book in you?

Future plans

- Our biennial Conference on Science and Christianity, March 23–25 next year, will feature [Jennifer Wiseman](#), senior scientist on NASA's Hubble space telescope.
- In March 2019 we are hatching plans for a visit by Alister McGrath, perhaps for a national apologetics conference.

Meanwhile, don't forget to keep perusing the ISCAST website or 'like' us on [Facebook](#) so you see the latest in news and views. Not to mention our regular book reviews too.

God's peace to all and wisdom too as we seek to engage as Christians in the marketplace of ideas,

Chris Mulherin
ISCAST Executive Director

In this Issue:

- News Items
- Books and Resources
- Event News

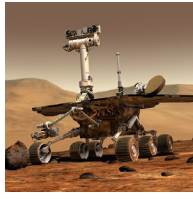
News Items

News about the interface between science and Christianity, and of significance to the ISCAST community. Your submissions are most welcome.



ISCAST Distinguished Fellow Ken Freeman Talks at the World Science Festival Brisbane

On ABC RN's The Spirit of Things, ISCAST Distinguished Fellow Ken Freeman talks at the World Science Festival Brisbane with Rachael Kohn, AC Grayling, and others. [Read more...](#)



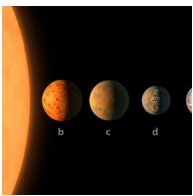
Geologist Jon Clarke Braves Life on Mars

Prior to his 3 appearances at the 2017 World Science Festival in Brisbane, ISCAST Fellow Jon Clarke was interviewed by Emma Griffiths about his Mars experience on ABC Drive. ISCAST even gets a mention! (From 14 min on.) The podcast of this interview is now available. [Read more...](#)



Doppelganger Planet: Astrobiology and Contrasting Christian and Transhumanist Eschatologies from Jon Clarke

Two of the great questions in space science and astronomy are: 'Is there life beyond Earth?' and: 'Are we alone?'. The first question is the province of Astrobiology, the science of life in the universe of which we so far have one example. The second is the subject of the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (abbreviated to SETI). Both have been speculated about since the ancient Greeks, and more recently been the subject of scientific research. [Read more...](#)



Exoplanet Discoveries and Alien Life: A Comment by ISCAST Fellow Jon Clarke

Until 1992 planets beyond our solar system, or exoplanets, were the stuff of speculation and fiction. That year the exoplanets were discovered in perhaps the last place that might be expected: orbiting pulsars. Since then thousands of planets have been discovered. As of February 24th, 2017, 3583 planets belonging to 2688 planetary systems were known. [Read more...](#)



Can Many-Worlds Theory Rescue Us From Boltzmann Brains?

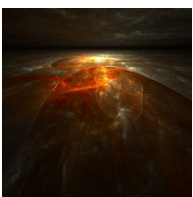
Author
Brian Koberlein

Extract
Can you trust the world to be consistent? Scientists don't have much choice. They need to assume that objective observations of the universe can be trusted. This assumption has allowed us to develop powerful theories about the inner workings of the cosmos, but it has, paradoxically, also shown us the possibility that we might be deceived after all. [Read more...](#)



Interview with Dr Jennifer Wiseman—NASA Astrophysicist and Invited ISCAST Keynote Speaker in 2018

Here's a sneak peak at a woman who we have invited to join us in Australia for a conference next year. Jennifer Wiseman is senior scientist on the Hubble space telescope and (NASA permitting) will join us in March 2018 for our next COSAC—Conference on Science and Christianity. [Read more...](#)



Cosmologists Should be More Skeptical of Dark Matter

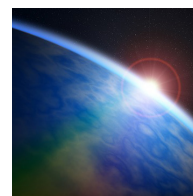
To get computer models to look similar to the Universe around us, cosmologists have assumed that around 96 per cent of matter and energy are in forms that we cannot directly detect. You might think that this would make cosmologists wary of relying on such hypothetical substances. Yet for the majority working today, dark matter and dark energy are every bit as real as the stars and galaxies that we can see. [Read more...](#)



Film Review—Arrival

Reviewed by Darren Mitchell

Extract
Denis Villeneuve's film Arrival is a story of first contact. Twelve identical spacecraft are hovering sentinel-like across the world in seemingly random locations (including one off the west coast of Australia). Later we will learn that the occupants are bearing gifts. However, initially the challenge is how to communicate with the extra-terrestrial visitors - enormous squid like 'heptapods'. [Read more...](#)



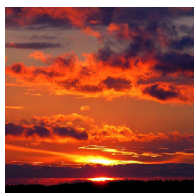
Exoplanets and Theology

Does the discovery of exoplanets threaten established religions here on Earth? A comment by ISCAST

Fellow James Garth. [Read more...](#)

Books and Resources

Books and articles relevant to the interface between science and Christianity.



Book Review— *The Cambridge Companion to Science and Religion*

Reviewed by John Pilbrow

Extract

Peter Harrison, the Andreas Idreos Professor of Science and Religion at Oxford from 2006 to 2011 [ed: now at the University of Queensland and an ISCAST Fellow], has edited a fine collection of essays covering history, contemporary science and philosophical issues central to the dialogue between science and theology.

[Read more...](#)



Book Review— *The Bible, Protestantism and the Rise of Natural Science*

Reviewed by Allan J Day

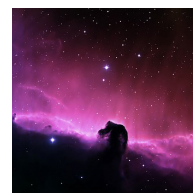
Extract

History doesn't just happen and this is nowhere more evident or relevant than in a consideration of the history of modern science. John Gribben, the popular science writer has just published his new book, *Science: a History 1543–2001* which seems to imply that it just happened, as he describes the people and dates that surround these happenings.

[Read more...](#)

at the limit of science across these disciplines, questions raised by observational and theoretical progress in modern cosmology.

[Read more...](#)



Faith, Hope and Quarks: The Search for God in Contemporary Cosmology

Lecture audio resources and pdfs of PPT slides.

Lecture

Faith, Hope and Quarks: The Search for God in Contemporary Cosmology

Speaker

Revd. Dr David Wilkinson, BSc, PhD, MA, PhD, FRAS

Abstract

The relationship of science and religion is often presented as one of conflict. However in cosmology, where the big question of the origin of the universe is discussed, science seems to raise questions which go beyond its own ability to answer.

[Read more...](#)

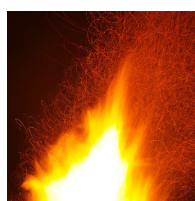


Gravitational Waves with Prof. Tom McLeish

On Saturday 2 April, Prof. Tom McLeish (UK) joined

ISCAST Vic via webinar to discuss gravitational waves.

[Read more...](#)



Are God's Actions Hidden in Chaos? From Bruce Craven

Many physical systems are extremely sensitive

to initial conditions, so that a small unobserved input can produce large consequences later, and moreover can behave in a seemingly random way. Perhaps God intervenes in His creation by such small inputs, without violating the regularities that we call physical laws. The world may be less deterministic, and more open to the future, than many suppose.

[Read more...](#)



War of the Worldviews: Appeals to Beauty and Destiny in an Era of Space Exploration

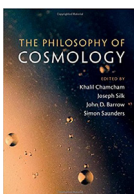
Author

James Garth

Extract

Two decades have passed since the day I saw a remarkable advertisement in *Aviation Week*. It took up a full page and featured a beautiful artist's concept of an elegant, futuristic spaceplane. I can't remember what the purpose of the advertisement was. I was too busy reeling from the existential crisis that the tagline induced: In 200 years, space travel will be routine. You however will be dead.

[Read more...](#)



New Book on the Philosophy of Cosmology from Cambridge University Press

Title

The Philosophy of Cosmology

Authors

Khalil Chamcham (Editor), Joseph Silk (Editor), John D. Barrow (Editor), Simon Saunders (Editor)

About

Following a long-term international collaboration between leaders in cosmology and the philosophy of science, this volume addresses foundational questions



What is Real? Seeking Realities in Understanding Faith: Astronomy, Astrology and the Kingdom of Heaven From Merrill Kitchen

Theological reflection and scientific understanding have been partners in the journey that searches for transcendental meaning in the context of human life experience. In the midst of earthly uncertainties, the observed continuity of cosmic realities has provided religious and philosophical frameworks of understanding from ancient times to the present day.

[Read more...](#)

*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

Victoria



ISCAST Vic: Public Lecture

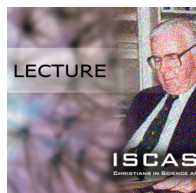
Topic: Has Science made Religion Redundant?
Speaker: Prof. Peter Harrison FAHA

Date: Tuesday, August 15

Venue: University of Melbourne, Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering Building (Theatre G20).

Time: 4.00pm

[Read more...](#)



ISCAST Vic: Allan Day Memorial Lecture

Topic: Religious Origins of Modern Science
Speaker: Prof. Peter Harrison FAHA

Venue: Ridley College, 170 The Avenue, Parkville Vic

Date: Tuesday, August 15

Time: 6.00pm refreshment, 6.30pm lecture

[Read more...](#)



Vic: Public Lecture at the Cathedral

Topic: Are Humans Just Computers Made of Flesh? What does neuroscience say about who I am.

Speaker: A/Prof. Alan Gijsbers,

President of ISCAST

Date: Thursday 17th August,

Venue: St Paul's Cathedral Melbourne, Cnr Swanston and Flinders Streets

Time: 6.30pm

[Read more...](#)

National



COSAC 2018: The Heavens Declare

We are planning to hold the next COSAC (Conference on Science and Christianity) to coincide with the World Science

Festival in Brisbane in March 2018.

Many details are coming together, please add Friday 23 March - Sunday 25 March into your diaries.

Date: Friday, March 23, 2018 - 9.00am to Sunday, March 25, 2018 - 5.00pm

Venue: Brisbane, Queensland

[Read more...](#)

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

www.iscast.org

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Chapter: ☐ Syd ☐ Bathurst/Orange ☐ Melb ☐ Gippsland ☐ SA ☐ Tas ☐ Qld ☐ WA

☐ I would like to know more about being associated with ISCAST

Annual Subscription by post: \$22 (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 community 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 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 \$22 pa and subscriptions can be arranged by contacting the ISCAST office.

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