

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

A plea from the Executive Director



This message is to bring you up to date about plans for COSAC, our March conference in Brisbane on science, faith and apologetics. **Please do take the time to read my plea for your help below**, even if you can't make it to the conference!

A few months ago, I took on the role as ISCAST's first Executive Director. Why? Not for the money or the glory, but because I am convinced that *in an increasingly global and secular scientific culture the cutting edge of Christian engagement is the science-faith conversation*. ISCAST can make a difference in this space. COSAC is part of making that difference: a time when Christians can be encouraged and inspired about the 'big picture' of God's truth revealed in the living Word, the written word and the works of creation.

There are too many people sliding away from Christ as they begin (rightly) to take so-called secular learning seriously while at the same time thinking it is incompatible with Christian faith. And there are too many people who won't even consider faith in Christ because they "believe in science". And there are too many pastors and church leaders who are simply unable to deal with science/faith issues from the pulpit. And all of this is so totally unnecessary!

ISCAST's 11th Conference on Science and Christianity will be a conference to remember. Whoever you are – student, academic, church leader, or interested observer of issues of science and faith – you will be stimulated, encouraged and strengthened in your faith as we ponder together the harmony between biblical faith and knowledge of God's world.

This is not a high-brow, boffins-only conference but a time of real people sharing the reality of being a Christian in a world dominated by a secular mindset. It is a time to learn from others and to encourage others. And, for many, it is a time to grow a faith that will endure the challenges of living in 'post-Christendom'. In that spirit (and even if you can't get to COSAC yourself) I am asking, will you encourage people to attend? If so, what can you do?

- You can advertise the conference in your church: in the bulletin, and/or from up the front. You can download a COSAC flyer here: <http://iscastcosac.org/information-for-participants/promotions/>
- You can personally encourage your pastor or others from your church to attend. And don't forget those young students, some of whom don't even know about the challenges in store as their faith gets challenged in the academy.
- You can write a list of people you know who would benefit from COSAC, and forward the link to the COSAC website (<http://ISCASTCOSAC.org>) to them with a word of encouragement. You might even offer to contribute to their costs.

If you have any queries or any other ideas about how we can reach others beyond the traditional ISCAST circles, I would love to hear from you on 0431 330 380 or at ChrisMulherin@ISCAST.org.

May God give you peace and a meaningful Christmas season with those around you,

Rev. Dr Chris Mulherin
ISCAST Executive Director

In this Issue:

- News Items
- Books and Resources
- Event News

COSAC 2018: "The Heavens Declare ..."

23 - 25 March 2018, Brisbane

Conference on Science and Christianity
Cosmology – Theology – History – Apologetics – Ethics – Philosophy

ISCAST
CHRISTIANS IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

News Items

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



“Science and Supernatural Flourishing” —Andrew Pinsent

This concluding lecture of the 2016-2017 series on supernaturalism considers the surprising but selective revival of aspects of Aristotelian philosophy for understanding the natural world, including complex systems in abstract mechanics. Naturalism, it seems, is back but not for ourselves.

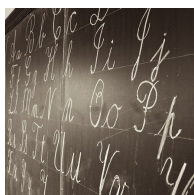
[Read more...](#)



The Future of Truth and Misinformation Online

Experts are evenly split on whether the coming decade will see a reduction in false and misleading narratives online. Those forecasting improvement place their hopes in technological fixes and in societal solutions. Others think the dark side of human nature is aided more than stifled by technology.

[Read more...](#)



Will Technology Take Your Job? New Analysis Says More of Us Are Safer Than We Thought, But Not All

We all want to know how many jobs will be threatened by the rise of robots and technology. You might feel vulnerable if your job is one that could be affected.

But thanks to a new report, 27% of the 160 million people in the United States labour force can breathe easier knowing their jobs are safer than they thought.

[Read more...](#)



The Artificial Resurrection: Genesis and Genetics in *Blade Runner 2049*

Released in 1982, the original *Blade Runner* confronted audiences with a stark depiction of a future that was disturbingly plausible and depressingly tangible. The fact that its pacing was unhurried, focussing on ideas more than characters, and was told through a disorienting hybrid of genres, made it a difficult pill to swallow at first viewing.

[Read more...](#)



Science and Pseudo-Science

Climate change denial, intelligent design, creationism, and anti-vaccines hypotheses:

are these scientific? Most scientists would say that no, creationism is not a hypothesis or a theory with the same scientific dignity that evolutionary theory has (however we define the structure of this theory).

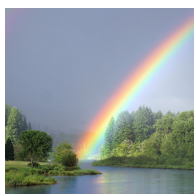
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The New Hyper-Reality of Work

Chances are you are reading this article on some sort of screen – a computer, a tablet, or a phone. But imagine a future where there are no screens, no phone handsets or keyboards, and the only mouse is in the office kitchen cupboards.

[Read more...](#)



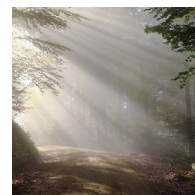
Guest Post: Artistic Molecules

This week as I was demonstrating “Messy Church Does Science”, I extracted someone’s

DNA using salt water, washing-up liquid and

methyated spirits. At the boundary between these substances, a white substance forms that can be drawn out into a thin glistening thread made up of millions of stands of DNA – the twisted double helix.

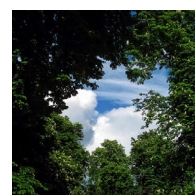
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Address to Synod of the Diocese of Melbourne

This week, the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill is being debated in the Victorian Parliament. Similar bills have been introduced in the past year in other Australian States and been narrowly defeated. A similar Bill is currently before the NSW parliament.

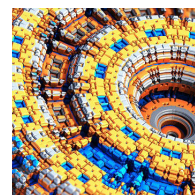
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Universe Shouldn't Exist, CERN Physicists Conclude

A super-precise measurement shows proton and antiproton have identical magnetic properties, writes Cathal O'Connell.

[Read more...](#)



What the Reformation Really Did for Science

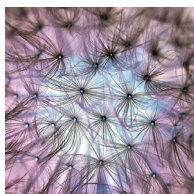
There's something thrilling about how, five centuries ago, the rebel monk Martin Luther defied his accusers. At a council ('Diet') in the German city of Worms in 1521, his safety and possibly his life were on the line. But this – his supporters avowed – was how he concluded his defence before the representatives of the pope Leo X:

“I cannot and will not retract anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. I cannot do otherwise. Here I stand, may God help me.”

[Read more...](#)

Books and Resources

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

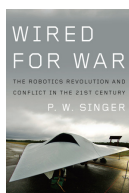


Cosmology, the Origin of Hierarchy?

Author
Lawrie Lyons

Abstract

The ancient Greek world-picture was adopted by 13th century and other theologians who, however, added a sphere for angels and spirits. The entire cosmos was seen to be anthropocentric and arranged in a perfect hierarchical order that was immutable. Man, consequently, should realise in himself that perfect order seen around him. After the collapse of the Roman Empire, new social and political structures were set up to fulfil the universal desire for order. States and the church too showed not only order but also hierarchy. Christ exemplified perfect order and restored order to sinful earth, so that world-picture and religious outlook were synthesised. [Read more...](#)

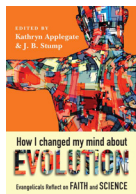


Book Review—*Wired for War: The Robotics Revolution and Conflict in the 21st Century*

Reviewed by James Garth

Excerpt

In *Wired for War*, political scientist and author Peter W Singer (not to be confused with the well-known Australian philosopher and ethicist of the same name) has crafted an expansive, riveting, provocative and at times explosive account of the game-changing revolution currently unfolding in robotics technology and its application to 21st century military and paramilitary operations. Like a high-altitude UAV loitering over a battlefield, Singer provides the reader with a panoramic view of a rapidly-changing technological landscape, frequently zooming in to a multitude of specific development programs and the colourful personalities that are driving them. [Read more...](#)

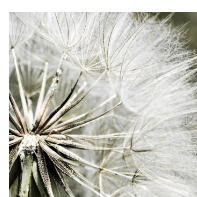


Book Review—*How I Changed My Mind About Evolution*

Reviewed by Michael Smith

Excerpt

How I Changed My Mind About Evolution is a collection of brief personal stories of Christians who have come to accept the compatibility of evolutionary theory with the Bible. The individuals included cover a range of denominations within the evangelical tradition, and have different points of conflict and pastoral considerations along the way. [Read more...](#)



Science, Complexity, and the Natures of Existence

Slides by George Ellis as presented at COSAC in July 2005 outlining:

- The nature of true complexity
 - Bottom-up and top-down action
 - Feedback control systems and information
 - The nature of causality
 - Emergence and the laws of nature
 - The challenge to physics and chemistry?
- [Read more...](#)



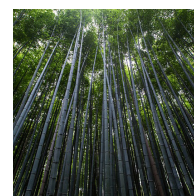
How Useful is Unpredictability? A Mathematician's Thoughts on Gambling

Author
Bruce Craven

Excerpt

This essay started as a meditation, by a Christian, on why gambling is so deeply embedded in human nature, how it may have arisen, and a few things that might be

done about it. Sociologists do not seem to look at these aspects, and psychologists are incomprehensible. Gambling depends on unpredictability, and there is some reason to suppose that an element of unpredictability (at any rate, by humans) is a basic feature of the world, and not only of humans. If so, then there are some implications for the relations between humans and God. [Read more...](#)

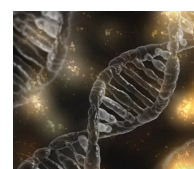


Aristotle's Categories of Cause

Author
L. R. B. Mann

Abstract

It is widely believed that Aristotle originally defined 4 categories of cause. But in one of the two surviving notes, 5 categories of cause were defined: the name proximal cause for the fifth category is proposed. The recent restricting by e.g. Dawkins of causality in evolution theory to only two categories of cause is disputed. [Read more...](#)



Notes on Science and Christian Belief

Author
Prof. Allan J Day

Excerpt

These notes form the basis of one such course in Science and Christian Belief conducted as part of the Ridley College Certificate of Bible and Ministry in Melbourne, Australia. They are intended to give a basic understanding of the issues raised by modern science and of the relationship of these issues to the Christian Faith. They briefly cover the historical background of the development of science and the interaction of such development with religious faith. They also address some of the philosophical issues with respect to religious and scientific knowledge and consider some of the positions that have been taken by various groups with respect to the science-faith interface. [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 Lecture: Making Sense of Me!

Date: Wednesday
29 November at 7.30 pm

Topic: Making Sense of Me!

Reflections of an addiction physician

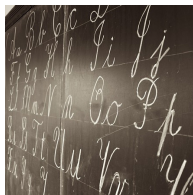
Speaker: Assoc. Prof. Alan Gijbbers

Venue: Catherine Booth College, 100 Maidstone St,
Ringwood Vic

Talk Abstract: Who am I? Am I just an illusion
or perhaps some sort of social construct, defined
by who I relate to and what I do? Perhaps I am
some sort of a soul locked inside a body that rarely
behaves in the way I want it to and often drags me
down dangerous paths I do not want to take.

[Read more...](#)

NSW



NSW Chapter: ISCAST-CASE (Sydney) Lecture

If you missed out on attending
the ISCAST-CASE Lecture
at New College in Sydney on

October 23 this year, visit the ISCAST website to
read about the topic and the presenters.

The speakers were Dr John Collier, BA, Dip.Ed.,
Dip.Bibl.St., Ed.D, FACE, FACEL, Principal (Head
of School) of St Andrew's Cathedral School, who
spoke on *The place of Teaching Science in Christian
Schools* and Dr David Ruys, PhD, BE (Hons), Head
of Science at St Catherine's School, Waverley,
who spoke on *Changes in Science Curriculum
Development and Science-Faith Challenges for
Christian Teachers*.

[Read more...](#)

The ISCAST office will close for Christmas and New Year

Please note that the office will be closed from 12 noon on
Friday 22 December and will reopen on Monday 15 January
2018. During this time, Chris Mulherin (ISCAST Executive
Director) is happy to be contacted on 0431 330 380 or
ChrisMulherin@ISCAST.org.

We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



Other News

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

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those wishing to change their subscription from email to post. You can also register online at [www.iscast.org/
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☐ 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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