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ISCAST BULLETIN



Male Victoria's Riflebird displaying

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Editorial

This issue's cover picture is of a male Victoria's Riflebird, a corvid (member of the crow family) from tropical north Queensland. The male has a wonderful iridescent sheen to its feathers, a blue tail and marvellous yellow gape (if you are reading a B & W copy of this, please visit the IS-CAST website for the image in colour, or my blog www.natural-philosopher.blogspot.com). I took this photo at Chamber's Wildlife Lodge near Lake Eacham on the Atherton Tablelands. It was interesting to see how much damage the tropical cyclone had done. This is nothing compared to the damage we have done, both through land clearing, and slowly, climate change.

The reason I show this image is that it relates to the issue of beauty. To me, this bird is beautiful, elegant and captivating. Yet why should this be? His display is designed to capture a mate, to prove his fitness to provide semen for a female's eggs. He won't take part in the care of the chicks (birds that put time and effort into displaying are after multiple matings). There was no female present when I took the shot, it wasn't even mating season. He was simply practising like a young man preening in the mirror before a night's clubbing.

So why do I find this bird beautiful? Why do we find beauty in anything in the natural world, or in an equation? Do we reduce the beauty when we understand it? John Keats wrote the following in response to Newton's discovery of what gives rise to rainbows, in his poem entitled *Lamia*:

*Do not all charms fly
At the mere touch of cold philosophy?
There was an awful rainbow once in heaven:
We know her woof, her texture; she is given
In the dull catalogue of common things.
Philosophy will clip an Angel's wings,
Conquer all mysteries by rule and line,
Empty the haunted air, and gnomed mine –
Unweave a rainbow*

In the book by Richard Dawkins (no friend of faith of any kind, except in scientism) entitled *Unweaving the Rainbow: Science, Delusions and the Appetite for Wonder*, he writes

My title is from Keats, who believed that Newton had destroyed all the poetry of the rainbow by reducing it to the prismatic colours. Keats could hardly have been more

wrong, and my aim is to guide all who are tempted by a similar view, towards the opposite conclusion. Science is, or ought to be, the inspiration for great poetry.

Whom are we to believe? The problem with the view of the former is that it greatly downplays the human mind, its ability to comprehend and understand, to explain and to wonder in the explanation. The problem with the later view is the exaltation of science and big "R" reason above all else. None of it answers what beauty is.

Is beauty in the eye of the beholder only? In *Simply Christian* by New Testament theologian N T Wright, he notes that natural beauty is only the echo of the voice of God, for the perspective of the beauty of a snow avalanche depends on how close to it you stand. Does the fact that avalanches are (or may be) the result of self-organized criticality add or subtract from the beauty. Such study invokes the beauty of simplicity and complexity—that complex behaviour may arise from very simple laws. Alain de Botton notes in his *The Architecture of Happiness* that beauty in buildings arise from order with variation. In the world of mathematics, the Mandelbrot set demonstrates this same principle, for many coffee table books on mathematics contain images of it.

However, if we view beauty from a purely reductionist stance, it disappears like the proverbial Cheshire Cat. George Ellis' views on emergence here are helpful. Human beings find beauty in nature, in equations, in the stars and in each other because we are able to see the beauty that emerges. Unlike the female Riflebird, I do not see a potential mate but a creature of beauty. Whether we wish to argue for a Platonic realm of beauty, or simply the ability to recognise it when we see it, it is the *imago dei*, the image of God in us that allows us to do this. As a *creationary evolutionist* (to reclaim the concept of creation for we non-literalists), this ability itself is an emergent property, something that Simon Conway Morris hints at in his *Life's Solutions*.

Yet, following Tom Wright, we must also acknowledge that nature is amoral and sometimes savage. Self-organized criticality tells us that the light rain shower and the flash flood, the minor tremor and the city destroying earthquake are on part of a continuum. The most violent events occur less often (thankfully). Beauty may be seen in those things we are not directly threatened by. One

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might say that fear and beauty are also part of a continuum. Do we find beautiful what we fear, or do we need to conquer the fear or the threat before we find something beautiful. It is easy to enjoy a rainforest when you are not lost in it, or fighting for survival within it. As created in God's image, tending it in his name, do we not need to learn that something is beautiful even if we fear it. I know people who find snakes appealing, and although I have the primal fear of them, I know that I need to learn that they too are beautiful in their own way. Beauty may be wonderful or savage.

It is true what Alfred Russell Wallace said about Birds of Paradise (commented upon in a David Attenborough documentary, *Attenborough in Paradise*) that these birds existed long before humans set eyes on them, and their beauty is not for our eyes. I might add that simply because sexual selection has resulted in such beauty, it does not then imply that as God's vice regents on this Earth, that it is not entirely not for us. It is also true that ultimately, such beauty is for God's glory, as well as the creature's good and our wonder.

This at last brings me to consider why it is some of us engage in the scientific endeavour. It is for the love of beauty! I can once recall being counselled by an ordained person (denomination and location withheld) that my desire to study science was simply due to my desire to seek my parent's approval. Sin fed my interests! What rubbish, what arrogance, what theological blinkeredness. Some Christians make a two-fold mistake. Firstly, their doctrines of creation and salvation are so separated that nothing registers on their radar but evangelism, preaching and "Christian things" like prayer, tithing, and so on. The Earth is like space in Newtonian gravity, just a stage where things are played out, unlike General Relativity where it too is a player. Secondly, sin and the fall have extinguished the image of God in people. Perhaps one might say, we are *homo peccator* and not *homo sapiens*, and certainly not *homo scientia* (forgive my pig Latin!)

ISCAST has a continuing role in pointing the church to the value and place of the scientific endeavour in the kingdom of God. I expect, since Jesus was raised from the dead to a physical body, and that there is a *new* heavens and earth, but so too a new heavens *and* earth, that some science will persist into the *eschaton*. What, I am not sure. Perhaps medicine and psychiatry will not

be needed, but physics and astronomy will. Who can tell?

We can share how our faith is expressed in our science, as well as in the way we practice our science and relate to our colleagues. We can be the voice of reasoned and gracious Christian thought in the face of unreasoned and acrimonious debate. Likewise, we can continue to speak to the world, to declare that science does not disprove, disallow to make redundant a God who cares for all that is seen and unseen, has created all that is seen and is unseen, and will bring all that is seen and unseen to its *telos* or end.

Here endeth the lesson, except to say that we are in desperate need of contributions to the Bull. Email me with your thoughts, reflections, news and pictures.

Ed.

Obituary

Bruce Henderson Chote (6/2/1937-27/5/2006) was a gentle, unassuming man from the Essendon area where he grew up and went to school, and later taught as a primary school teacher. He was keenly involved in the Teachers' Christian Fellowship, and joined ISCAST as an Associate to forge a link between ISCAST and the TCF. He was a member of the St John's Uniting Church Essendon, where he was strongly involved in the musical program of the church, leading and encouraging the church choir for decades. He also played the piano and guitar. In recent years when he retired from teaching, he took on a training role with the Council for Christian Education in Schools, helping to train and accredit many Christian Religious Education teachers in the western suburbs.

The thanksgiving service for Bruce's life was held at his home church on Friday 2nd June, and was led by Rev. Wally Johnson and Rev. Swee-Ann Koh. The large church was packed, with people standing around the sides - tribute to the many people whose lives Bruce touched. He had been a very fit man, and his death was both sudden and totally unexpected. His son Philip together with a friend performed the song, 'Blessed be your name...You give and take away... blessed be your glorious name'.
Helen Joynt

From the President

By early November I will have held meetings with Fellows in Canberra, Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane, to 'brainstorm' about the future directions of ISCAST. I have been much encouraged by the feedback so far received. During November I propose to prepare a discussion paper to be circulated amongst ISCAST Fellows with the hope that we can sign-off on key policies at a meeting of Fellows due to take place at the conclusion of COSAC 07.

The 2006 ISCAST AGM will be held on Saturday 28th October prior to the 'brainstorm' session and the NSW Annual ISCAST Lecture. I certainly hope there will be a full muster of Fellows for both meetings and of course for the lecture.

Robert Stening, John White and I were the only Fellows to attend the 2nd Australian Biennial Science and Theology Conference on '*From Resurrection to Return: Perspectives from Theology and Science on Christian Eschatology*' in Canberra last March. Robert presented a paper entitled 'God's Statistical Universe'. Keynote speakers were Bishop Tom Wright from Durham, Ted Peters and Bob Russell. Although this particular conference was organised by the School of Theology at St Mark's/Charles Sturt University, ISCAST was also acknowledged as a participant along with the Australian Theological Forum, The Centre for Theology, Science and Culture at the Adelaide College of Divinity and Flinders University.

The original agreement prepared in 2002 between the four organisations had not, in fact, ever been signed by ISCAST. As the Agreement was in need of overhaul, my offer to undertake preparation of a new version was accepted. The new agreement should be finalised and signed by all four participating organisations by the end of this year, assuming that the Boards of all of the organisations are in agreement.

At an informal meeting during the Canberra conference Robert Stening and I were asked whether ISCAST would consider organising 3rd Biennial Conference proposed for 2008 on Neuroscience, probably in Sydney. Robert has done some preliminary investigation of a possible venue in Sydney.

June saw the 'From Stars to Brains' conference in Canberra in honour of Paul Davies' 60th Birthday. As far as I could ascertain, there were only three ISCAST Fellows

present – myself, Ken Campbell and Barry Richardson. Paul Davies and George Ellis were the keynote speakers. Overall it was a somewhat disappointing conference, it lacked a proper coherence and the presentations were rather uneven. However it provided an excellent opportunity for informal dialogue during coffee breaks, lunchtimes and at the Conference Dinner. I discovered many scientific colleagues of whose interested science-religion interface I had been previously unaware. It was also of interest to meet with and talk to some media players such as Philip Adams and Paul Collins from the ABC. The summing up by Emeritus Prof David Green from the ANU, who clearly identified himself as coming from a Christian perspective, provided a welcome critique.

I recently took part in a most interesting forum at the Balwyn Church of Christ here in Melbourne along with two members of the congregation (who have PhDs in Chemistry and Physics respectively) in an exploration of modern science and its impact on Christian faith. This came about from a request from the minister for someone from ISCAST to take part. It seems to me there are far too few such requests. We need to think of strategies to be more visible. What encouraged me is that there are clearly some clergy who wish to enlarge the horizons of their congregations and to think through the impact of modern science on how we think about reality.

Plans are now well under way for COSAC 07 where the keynote speaker is to be Professor Alister McGrath, Professor of Historical Theology at Oxford. It should be a first-class conference and we are indebted to the Committee in Melbourne for what has already been put in place.
John Pilbrow President ISCAST Ltd

Members of ISCAST will be interested to know that Sir John Houghton, who was our ISCAST lecturer back in 1996 this year has won the Japan Prize for 'contributions to atmospheric science and global warming'.

In a very distinguished career Sir John, who was elected an FRS in 1972, has been a Professor of Meteorology at Oxford, Director of the Meteorological Office of the UK, Co-Chair of the International Panel on Climate Change and Chairman of the Standing Royal Commission on the Environment.
President

An evening with George Ellis

After attending the 'From Stars to Brains' conference in Canberra earlier this year, Templeton Scholar George Ellis found time to pass through Melbourne and address a gathering of Victorian ISCASTians on June 22nd.

It was an informal but immensely interesting meeting. George was as keen to hear from us as we were from him. There happened to be two meteorologists present, Dale Hess, formerly with CSIRO, and myself. George asked us was anthropogenic climate change real? We both agreed that it was, and this led onto a discussion about environmental extremism, genetically modified organisms, nuclear power and waste storage. There is new technology that may be much safer than current reactors. It has even been suggested that waste could be placed into subduction zones and recycled by the Earth!

The discussion then wandered onto many other interesting topics. Two facts of interest. Costa Rica has no army, and can spend money on health and education (it was recognised that they are under the watchful eye of the US). Bhutan has a gross happiness product.

George's passion for peace (from his Quaker background) was coming to the fore, and we all pondered what life would be like if military spending was small and happiness was of more interest than GDP.

More traditionally theological issues were raised, including the Trinity, Christology and the atonement, before returning to issues such as cognition and consciousness.

George pondered how far down the evolutionary ladder (if you'll forgive this metaphor) play and emotions went, noting the behaviour of octopi and the symbolic systems of bees. A couple of us were able to recommend *The Philosopher's God* by Australian academic Raimond Gaita.

It was a marvellous evening, and a reminder of the value of ISCAST in getting together to ponder the marvels of

God's creation, and provide some serious mental stimulation.

On a personal note, I now have an autographed copy of *On the Moral Nature of the Universe*, by Nancey Murphy and George Ellis. One more for the collection. *Ed.*

NEWS

The professor of philosophy at Bond University, Peter Harrison, is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities. He has spoken at ISCAST Qld meetings and now has been appointed to Oxford University's Chair of Science and Religion. Peter Harrison is a believing Christian and a member of the Uniting Church. News of the appointment was printed in "The Australian" (October, 2006). Quotes from the article include:

"Where some see only a conflict between science and religion, he sees also a history of co-operation embodied by such pious thinkers such as Isaac Newton."

"It is important to understand that [science and religion] are separate operations but I don't think this means that they are, as [evolutionary biologist] Stephen Jay Gould would have it, quite discrete universes or 'non-overlapping magisteria'"

"If you say that God created the world, for example, it does seem to me that that's a factual statement of some kind that may have scientific implications, and if it doesn't, you have to wonder what kind of claim it is."

See also *The Bible, Protestantism and the rise of natural science*, Cambridge University Press, 1998 [paperback 2001], ISBN 0 521 59196 hardback, ISBN 0 521 00096 3 paperback



George Ellis enjoys a cup of tea before the onslaught of questions.

Lawrie Lyons

COSAC 2007

What is Real? Conversations in Science and Christianity

The next Conference on Science and Christianity (2007) has invited Alister McGrath to be the main speaker. The conference title is derived from Alister's trilogy "A Scientific Theology" There will be an opportunity for invited responses to Alister's formal presentations as well as original papers pertaining to the conference theme.

The weekend will include optional excursion alternatives for the Saturday afternoon including a viewing of the AFL Grand Final (for those who cannot do without), a geology excursion to the nearby Anglesea cliffs stuffed with fossils, or simply sitting round a coffee table in the foreshores of Geelong. The evening will introduce an inaugural biannual Grand Debate entitled "That Theology Really is the Queen of the Sciences." There will be a presentation from our president, John Pilbrow, formally outlining the future directions of ISCAST as a national institute, times for reflection and worship as well as times just to share and catch up with our peers.

John Pilbrow has set the challenge. "While the past COSACs have been excellent and have done what they were supposed to do—stimulate our thinking and challenge us in our scientific disciplines to consider the impact of these on our faith—the numbers attending have been declining. Whatever the reason for that, I want 200 people attending COSAC '07.

"I want it to be all the things the other COSACs have been so successfully and more! This has got to be a shot in the arm not only for ISCAST but for thinking on science and faith across Australia."

COSAC 2007 venue is the Geelong Conference Centre which is set in the grounds of the Botanical Gardens and is only a short stroll from the Eastern Beach. Brochures and application forms should be in circulation by Christmas. We have already put out a call for papers, with a deadline of 28 March 2007. Anyone wishing to present material related to the topic is encouraged to do so. Provision will also be made for poster presentations.

COSAC 2007 is on the weekend of 28 to 30 September. We plan to start the conference after lunch on Friday. This calls for early flights from interstate that Friday morning. If you expect to come to Victoria by plane, Avalon Airport is a short distance from Geelong and you can get to the conference by airport bus. Tullamarine is also

reasonably near Geelong and Victorian delegates may well be able to pick up interstate on the way to the conference. Book early however as this is the Grand Final weekend and cheap flights will be at a premium.

Consider how you want to be involved. Present a paper or poster, offer to take part in the debate, sponsor a student to attend or simply be prepared to accept our invitation to you to do any one or more of these things.

See you there next year. *Alan Gijsbers on behalf of the COSAC 2007 Organising Committee, and ISCAST (Vic).*

Review:

Hore-Lacy I. *Responsible Dominion: a Christian approach to sustainable development.* Regent College Publishing, Vancouver BC. 2006. 170pp. Alan Gijsbers Chairman ISCAST (Victoria).

Ian Hore-Lacy believes there needs to be a fresh Christian look at the environment. He argues that the environmental debate has been hijacked by the eco-romantics who want to treat the environment like a big national park without the inconvenience of six million people, many of whom live without adequate food or energy. He also argues that even national park management requires human input and hence finance from either private enterprise (his preferred option) or government. Ian firmly believes that God's provision for the world is rich and more than adequate, provided we use these resources wisely. But to do so requires us to maximise our technological skills in areas like genetic engineering, nuclear energy and the like. This is not the rape of the environment, but a sustainable development so that both the poor now, and our offspring in the future, will continue to enjoy the abundant fruits of the earth. Science and technology are seen here as valuable tools for a sustainable environment rather than as causes of environmental degradation.

There are chapters on the story of creation, land use, the fruits of the earth (food, forest products, minerals and water), minerals and energy in more detail, energy choices and a review of contested grounds. In each chapter Ian takes a confident approach that with the right application of technology, God's abundant creation will provide plenty for the needs of all in this generation and

Review: Responsible dominion

generations to come. For instance in his chapter on land use he asks whether it should remain wilderness or can it be responsibly exploited? Ian would argue that wilderness cannot remain wilderness and needs to be tended. We need forests, agriculture, minerals, but we also need to preserve lovely tracts of land. He explores the theological principles behind responsible land use but, not surprisingly, as a former environmental scientist for a major mining company, he suggests that the best way to fund a national park is to have a mine in the corner! Ian makes a good case that the two can co-exist, but I think skates over the positive role of the green movement with its necessary capturing of public consciences to force the mining companies to become more ecologically responsible.

In his chapter on the fruits of the earth, Ian balances the costs and benefits of many of these gifts, namely food, forest products, minerals and water. Agricultural technology with its improved production, storage and transport has enabled the increasing population to still be fed. It has come at the ecological price of salinity, deforestation, desertification, soil erosion, pesticide residues and loss of biodiversity. Positively crop breeding and fertilisers along with irrigation, pesticides, mechanisation and better management has created a massive increase in agricultural productivity. This green revolution has reduced to incidence of starvation in India. Ian claims a similar revolution could help the starving in Africa, except that well-meaning environmentalists have blocked such a move at the World Bank, because they feel that the population growth in Africa would be ecologically disastrous. Likewise our stewardship of forests has to balance our insatiable lust for paper and agricultural land with the need to preserve especially the world's tropical rain forests. Ian suggests that hunter-gatherers may become farmers so that plantations replace native forests, though he admits there is a cost in the loss of biodiversity. Similarly there are costs and benefits to mining, which Ian describes as a trade-off between internationally rigorous environmental standards and the needs of the local people. Rigorous standards are necessary for the credibility of the multi-national company but the increased cost may render a mining project unworkable. Thus local people would miss out on the benefits of the mine, even though they may be happy to bear the environmental cost if it comes with an improved lifestyle. These are two examples of the sort of

Unfortunately Ian stops his doctrine of creation at the end of the second chapter of Genesis.

balanced treatment Ian seeks to bring to these difficult debates.

Unfortunately Ian stops his doctrine of creation at the end of the second chapter of Genesis. Most people do, and they fail to fully grapple with the fall, driven by greed and desire in Genesis 3 and all the evil consequences which arise from that in Genesis 4 and beyond. Avoiding the breadth and depth of the fall tends to create a rather romantic view of what happens in the world. For countering eco-romanticism with techno-industrial romanticism does not fully recognise that unrestrained humans can become greedy, and can care little for the future of their fellow humans, future humans, or the planet. For it is naïve to dismiss the lessons of Chernobyl and to claim that mining companies are ecologically responsible when we see how they exploit the environment in third world countries without the constraints of a strong environmental lobby.

Yet we can also naively demonise multinationals, without recognising that they can also provide some good. We can also unthinkingly romanticise the ecological movement without realising that there are many different power and demonising dynamics behind green romanticism. What is a romantic? Some say it is the opposite of a cynic. Is a romantic an unrealist? We need to keep our heads here and realise the depths of blindness that can go into either eco or techno-romanticism and cynicism. This means that there are no easy answers. Ian's book is a start but some of the chapters are of necessity rather under-developed. It may well be that responsible ISCASTians, taking their stewardship mandate seriously, will engage with Ian in developing more comprehensive answers to the difficult questions of global warming, the energy crisis, water-supply and genetic foods.

I found this book a useful commentary to our recent trip around Tasmania, scene of so many environmental battles. Unfortunately what we saw did not always fit into Ian's rather uncritical view of the mining industry. The devastation around Queenstown is an indictment on mining. The beautiful tranquillity of the unspoilt Gordon River showed the importance of Olegas Truchanas' famous quote calling on humans to "accept the role of steward and depart from the role of conqueror," to accept that "man and nature are an inseparable part of a unified whole," and that Tasmania could be a "shining beacon in

Thinklings Victoria

a dull, uniform and largely artificial world.” But I write this on a computer powered by brown coal electricity. I fly around in aircraft which spew millions of litres of burnt aviation fuel into the stratosphere. I am warmed by natural gas and my food is supplied by diesel-powered trucks. I enjoyed the ready access to the new Lake Pedder, while mourning the loss of that tiny little lake way down in an inaccessible valley below. Ian’s observation that fish farms are to fishing as farming is to a nomadic way of life points to new ways of overcoming human greed which has led to the rape of our ocean’s fish.

This book is meant to be provocative and it is. It is by no means the last word. I would like to have seen Ian engage directly with some of the environmental gurus like David Suzuki, Rachel Carson and the like. Still Ian brings a different, fresh and welcome voice to the environmental discussion. We in ISCAST have a lot of work to do to tackle each of the issues raised more comprehensively, to model a godly and rational debate on these issues, and to be known as people who can differ with integrity, humility and with a strong commitment to our fellow human beings, especially the poor and subsequent generations and to come. We need to know how to live frugally and abundantly to reduce our greed and to improve our care, for the sake of the poor and of future generations. Ian’s book could be a mud-map sketching out a future ISCAST program of tackling environmental issues. He has done us a real service, and our best response would be not only to continue the debate but also to translate our conclusions into meaningful responsible action.

Understanding the Self

Alan Gijisbers

As part of a series on relating neuroscience to theology, I presented a draft of a paper on the nature of the self at an ISCAST (Victoria) Thinklings on August 26. I am grateful for the insightful comments throughout the paper from Dr Michael Wong, a psychiatrist and ISCAST fellow, who has a particular interest in neuroscience and anthropology.

Why is a consideration of the self important? There are various views on the self, from it being simply the vehicle for the perpetuating of the selfish genes (Dawkins) to the self being an illusion (Buddhism) to the self being the key to understanding modernism (Descartes’ “I think therefore I am”). Some see the self as a western cultural con-

struct, “living in the same realm as do their virtues and their vices, beliefs and aspirations, and that is where they should remain.” [1]

As clinicians Michael and I see people with schizophrenia who have a fragmented view of themselves and patients with severe personality disorders which at their core have an invalidated sense of themselves. Part of their recovery is finding their own value and identity. Christians derive who they are from their relationship to God and God’s people, and they are challenged also to find themselves by losing themselves for the sake of Christ and his gospel [2]. Further Christians are often accused of particularly skewed views of human selves, from Augustine’s sense of an inner self [3], to Luther’s “private cave where God and man would regularly meet to sort out their differences” [4]. So once again the story is cast (no pun intended) in terms of the “science and faith in conflict” myth.

We looked at a number of models of the self. VS Ramacahndran’s takes a neuroanatomical approach describing properties of the self in terms of being embodied, passionate, executive, mnemonic, unified, vigilant, conceptual and social [5]. Charles Taylor, a moral philosopher, sees a moral framework as inseparable from an understanding of the self [6]. Taylor’s moral framework consists of the choices persons make about themselves. These choices are not so much about what is right to do but about what is good to be. It is hard to summarise such a closely argued work but broadly speaking Taylor explores these choices as rational (Locke), instinctively good (Rousseau and the romantics), selfish (Schopenhauer) or based on power (Nietzsche).

But the main focus for the evening was on Jerrold Seigel’s three dimensions of the self [7], first bodily or material, secondly relational, social or cultural and thirdly reflective or self-conscious. Seigel then went on to explore whether the self was understood uni-dimensionally (usually in terms of a reflective self-consciousness) or multi-dimensionally as an interaction of all three dimensions. We opted for the latter.

We felt that the time dimension of the self was undervalued in Seigel’s model and that our perception of ourselves in our own narrative history was an important dimension. “A life as led is inseparable from a life as told – or, more bluntly, a life is not “how it was” but how it is in-

Understanding the self

terpreted and reinterpreted, told and retold: Freud's psychic reality." [8] Narratives are usually developmentally framed, they may be in need of reframing, and certainly our narratives are usually told, retold and reframed in dialogue with others, whether that dialogue is formal or informal. We concluded that this narrative needs to be, but often is not, coherent. Nor is the narrative often consistent. We humans are fickle and we are constantly changing our perceptions of our own story. This then raises the big question: by what hermeneutic is our narrative of ourselves reframed? We looked at the processes of denial as a mechanism by which our understanding of ourselves is distorted, for we have difficulty facing up to the full truth about ourselves and our story.

We looked at two psychiatric conditions in which there was a distorted sense of self. In borderline personality disorder, the most common personality disorder seen in addictions, there is a fear of abandonment. The patient suffers from unstable intense personal relationships, an unstable self-image, impulsivity to self-damage, suicidal and/or self-mutilating gestures and behaviour, an intense reactivity of mood a chronic sense of emptiness, an inappropriate and intense anger and stress-related paranoia [9]. The borderline personality disorder is thought to be due to an unstable sense of self, which has not been allowed to develop because of an invalidating environment. Hence therapy is directed at developing a more stable sense of self through mindfulness, self-assertion, setting of healthy boundaries, good role modelling and good relationships.

Patients with schizophrenia can suffer from symptoms of delusions, hallucinations, disorganised speech, grossly disorganised or catatonic behaviour and negative symptoms like affective flattening, alogia, and avolition. Their social dysfunction can be seen in their work, their interpersonal relationships and their lack of self-care. It is thought that at the root of this syndrome is a disintegrated unboundaried self, and a lot of research has gone into finding the neuroscientific basis for this condition.

When we turned to look at who God is we encounter the One who said, "I am who I am" [10] and of whom John said, "The Lord who was and is and is to come." [11] By God's will all things are created and have their being [12]. To quote Barth (though I regret I cannot find its source), "The Great I AM does not doubt his own existence." God says of Godself "I am the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob." [13] And in that revelation we discover

that God is the God of Moses and the Exodus, of David and Solomon, of the prophets and the wise ones, of the Son of Man, and of ourselves when we surrender to God. The first temptation was to be like God, knowing good and evil [14]. Autonomy, the first ethical principle in bioethics actually represents the biggest defiance and the greatest lie we moderns face, for we are actually not autonomous, we are actually subjects to the laws of the society in which we live, and as Christians we are subject to God and subject to one another out of reverence to Christ [15]. True freedom is found in surrender to God's will [16][17]. This is most clearly seen in the obedient suffering of Christ [18].

We covered a lot of ground. By its vast range it was inevitably quite sketchy, but once again there was an enormous gain in integrating what we learn from the many different scientific and philosophical insights with our faith as revealed in Scripture. This integration is then carried through into our daily clinical practice. In this way we honour God whose thoughts we follow, and whom we love in joyful service.

[1] Berios GE, Markova IS. The self and psychiatry: a conceptual history. Ch 1 in Kircher T, David A. The self I neuroscience and psychiatry. Cambridge University Press. 2003:10.

[2] Mark 8:34ff.

[3] Taylor C "In interiore homine" Ch 7 in his Sources of the self. Harvard Press. 1989:127-142.

[4] Berios GE Markova IS op cit p 9.

[5] Ramachandran VS, Blakeslee S. Do Martians see red? Ch 12 in Phantoms in the brain: human nature and the architecture of the mind. Fourth Estate London 1998:227-257.

[6] Taylor C op cit.

[7] Seigel J. The idea of the self: thought and experience in western Europe since the seventeenth century. Cambridge University Press. 2005.

[8] Bruner J 1987, in Craib I, Narrative as bad faith Ch 4 in Andrews M, Day S, Sclaters C et al. Lives as narrative: psychosocial perspectives. Routledge, London. 2000.

[9] American Psychiatric Association. 301.83 Borderline personality disorder. Desk reference to the diagnostic criteria from DSM-IV 1994:280.

[10] Exodus 3:13ff.

[11] Revelation 1:8.

[12] Revelation 4:11.

[13] Exodus 3:6.

[14] Genesis 3:5.

[15] Ephesians 5:21.

[16] Galatians 5:1, An Australian Prayer book. Morning prayer, the second collect for peace 1978:28.

[17] Matheson G. Make me a captive Lord. Hymn 528 in The Australian Hymnbook. Collins 1977.

[18] Hebrews 5:8.

Publications available

Some Booklets Available from ISCAST

The following booklets exploring issues arising out of the interface between science and faith are available for sale:

- **A Seamless Web** a collection of pieces by prominent scientists and thinkers on aspects of the interface between science and faith. Edited by Dr Graeme Findlay \$15
- **God Created the Heavens and the Earth** by Donald Nield, Associate Professor of Engineering Science at the University of Auckland, NZ where he presents “science from a Christian perspective.” \$10
- **Gods Books: Genetics & Genesis** by Graeme Findlay of University of Auckland in which he explores the compatibility of science with the Christian faith. \$10
- **Evolving Creation** by Graeme Findlay of University of Auckland celebrating “.the essential compatibility between natural science and Christian theology.” \$10
- **Genesis1 – 3 Science? History? Theology?** by Dr J A Thompson of Melbourne University. This classic Tyndale Lecture was given in 1966 and is still on ISCAST’s ‘best seller’ list. It is now available in booklet form. \$3
- **Notes on Science and Christian Belief** edited by Prof. Allan J Day. These are the notes Professor Day produced for his Ridley College course on science and faith and are available in hardcopy \$12.50
- **Collected Papers** by Prof. Allan J Day. Professor Day has produced many papers on issues relating to science and faith. These have been compiled into this collection. \$12.50
- Also available is a printed version of Professor George Ellis’ lecture to the Friends of the Church of St John the Baptist, Canberra on Sunday 17 July 2005 on **Science and Religion**. This is available free of charge or make a donation to the work of ISCAST.

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Please indicate the number of each booklet you require, provide your contact details and send this form (or a photocopy) to ISCAST, c/-Stockdale ACS, 58 Koonawarra St, Clayton North, Victoria 3168 or email vic@iscast.org.au or phone 03 9562 6122.

An additional cost of \$2.50 for every two articles for postage and handling will also be applied. Please make cheques payable to ISCAST Limited Vic. You may also contact us to arrange EFT payments.

Closing publications

A little while ago, I received this email from Jocelyn Godfrey from *Science and Theology News*. I had been receiving a copy as Bulletin editor, and found it professional and interesting.

You may recall our past correspondence regarding Science & Theology News (STN). Sadly, after six years of publication, the newspaper is closing its doors, due to loss of grant support from the Templeton Foundation. However, the website www.stnews.org will continue to stay live with all of the archived articles, at least for a duration. We are formulating plans for including very inexpensive banner ads on this page, so if this interests you, please let me know. As of August, the site was still receiving 150,000 unique visitors per month, and 600,000 ad impressions.

You may want to pay the website a visit and look at some of the material. It will be a sorely missed publication. However, the ISCAST Online Journal and Bulletin are going strong!

Likewise, the Evangelical Digest will no longer be produced. Subscribers are asked to contact Lawrie Lyons via the Bulletin to let him know if they want a refund or their money will be donated to ISCAST QLD.

Biography – because scientists are people too!

Dr J Alan Friend, PhD, ThL, Dip Anc Doc Std

My interests may be summarized under the headings of Science and Christianity from my schooldays. I was particularly interested in Chemistry; I had a small laboratory at home, and carried out experiments, some of which would undoubtedly now be banned under some safety regulation or other. I was particularly interested in crystals, their shapes and colours. But I was good at languages, and often regretted that I had to put that interest to one side. Books opened up a variety of other lines of study.

I was particularly indebted to a small book which I remember as “(W. H.) Perkin and (Bevan) Lean.” It was a historically arranged textbook based on the classical experiments which led to the modern understanding of chemistry and physics up to the end of the 19th century, designed to lead students through the historical development of the subject.

During my university degree studies in science, mainly chemistry, mathematics and physics, much of my time was spent in extra-curricular activities of the Sydney University Evangelical Union. This opened up the field of apologetics, in particular the “Evolution and the Bible” question. I think that this led me to read quite widely in the field of developmental biology as it was seen in the 1940s. Joseph Needham’s “Chemical Embryology” impressed me, and I became interested in biochemistry. However, I never took it up seriously as an academic study.

After graduation I spent two years as a Teaching Fellow in the Chemistry Department, then in 1947 I was awarded a CSIR Postgraduate scholarship, which took me to the Colloid Science Department at Cambridge University. Here I was able to expand my interests in both Chemistry and Theology (as a sideline).

During the next two years, I was able to meet members of the IVF Research Scientists’ Christian Fellowship, which was resuming its activities after the interruption

caused by the War. At the first conference that I attended, the chief speaker was the eminent Dutch professor of the History and Philosophy of Science, Dr Hooykaas. The breadth and depth of his knowledge of the subject, and its Christian aspects, profoundly impressed the conference members, among whom were several who later became eminent in their fields, including Donald Mackay, Malcolm Jeeves and Oliver Barclay.

After the return to Australia of this generation of post-graduate students, it was possible to begin a similar work here. I enjoyed sharing in this work until in 1953 I took up a position in the Chemistry Department of the University of Tasmania.



In 1961 I spent a year’s study leave at the University of Reading, and was able to renew my contact with the RSCF. Again, the conferences brought me up to date with what was going on in the field of “Science and Christianity”. In 1964 a further period of study leave, this time at Birkbeck College, gave me further opportunities to work in this field.

In 1966 I was appointed to the new Chair of Chemistry at the Trinidad campus of the University of the West Indies in Trinidad, where I spent nine happy years. My family shared my introduction to a different culture. I was involved with the Anglican Church of the Province of the West Indies, an experience which I found stimulating and thought-provoking.

I returned to Tasmania in 1975 as Warden of Christ College in the University of Tasmania. In 1981 I moved to Sydney to become Deputy Master of New College in the University of NSW. Since then, I have been concerned more with the “Christianity” element of “Science and Christianity”. When ISCAST was founded I was one of the original Fellows, and shortly afterwards became its Secretary. A position, which I held for several years. Now I am glad to watch from the sidelines.

ISCAST

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The views in this Bulletin are those of the individual authors or the editor. They do not necessarily reflect the official views of the ISCAST board.

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The deadline for submissions for the next issue of the Bulletin is January 1st.

Word limit for articles is 1,000 words: for letters, reflections and book reviews 600 words. Exceptions may be made in exceptional cases. Please submit to Mick Pope at bulletin@iscast.org.au