



CHRISTIANS·IN·SCIENCE

PréCiS

June 2006

www.cis.org.uk

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Education Conference **Sat 18th March, Herne Bay, Kent**

Christ Church, Herne Bay was a welcoming venue for the first CiS Education conference, held jointly with the Association of Christian Teachers and Stapleford House. A Rocha was also represented, providing a practical example of a Christian approach to science education.

Ann Holt of the Bible Society gave the day an inspiring start by showing clearly how Christians could and should 'be doing the same things differently'. She recognised that Christians faced a hostile climate in our current society but pointed out how this provided excellent opportunities for Christians to engage in discussion both in the classroom and staffroom. She highlighted the poverty of many current worldviews and their negative impact on education leading to what she referred to as 'a cycle of grief' with its drive for acceptance through achievement. Christians with their gospel of love, and with acceptance based on being a child of God, could reverse this cycle and have a transforming impact on both their school and their students.

Nick Spencer followed, with a critique of the liberalism that pervades our contemporary western world, with its idolisation of individualism, freedom and choice. Choice, he explained, is good and intrinsic to our being human but we should see it as a secondary good rather than a primary one. He showed how freedom to choose did not automatically lead to greater happiness or justice. More important was the tension between liberalism and the gospel. The gospel teaches that what really matters are our relationships, with God and with one another. Psychological studies have shown the subtle way in which relationships built up in infancy are essential for our development as humans. He argued that choices made during our lifetimes (such as watching violent or pornographic images) may subtly lead to our dehumanisation.

As Christians we should be committed to the lifelong process of creating one another, rebuilding our humanity rather than undermining it, as this is where true freedom belongs.

Martin Rogers then brought us into the classroom with a presentation of the Science and Religion in Schools project (see also page 3, Education column). He showed how this was geared to fit with the current emphases on broadening the scope of teaching to include the ethical and religious implications of the science being taught. There are programmes for both primary and secondary schools and they have been written in a way that should appeal to teachers at all levels of experience, providing worksheets and ideas that can either be used as they stand or adapted for local circumstances. He emphasised the importance of developments in IT which enable books to be produced and revised as required rather than having long print runs which may soon be outdated.

After lunch Tom Hartman gave a fascinating lecture on the evolution of birds, showing how feathers develop and how the appearance of birds can be traced through the strange variations in fossil dinosaurs, some of whom appear to have had feathers on their hind legs. He made a convincing case for birds being feathery dinosaurs. Young Earth and Intelligent Design views were also raised.

Four seminars followed. Pete Moore gave an informative introduction to 'Science and the media', which led to a discussion on the best ways to use or create media opportunities.

Tom Kempton described the Charis Project of Stapleford House. This provides teaching material for Key Stages 3 and 4 which can be used to

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Christians in Science leaflets

A CiS leaflet/poster and membership form is enclosed. If you would like more to pass on to friends and colleagues, or to display at your church, contact Ruth.

introduce spiritual and moral ideas into the teaching of English, Maths, Science and Languages. It is particularly relevant in view of the new GCSE syllabuses starting later this year. Frank Grenfell tackled 'Science in the Classroom'. Christine Wright's seminar on Citizenship proved popular. She spoke of the importance of developing critical, collaborative, creative and caring ways of thinking and used the example of a Ugandan Primary school to show the need for global strategies.

We are most grateful to the church for providing a substantial sit down lunch as well as numerous cups of tea and coffee. Nigel Panter, also from the church, ensured that the presentations and sound systems had no hitches. Many thanks to John Ling and all the speakers for a stimulating and worthwhile day.

Caroline Berry

Future CiS Conferences

CiS London Conference

Mind Machines and Majesty – The Boundaries of Humanity

Saturday 4th Nov 2006, 9.30am – 5pm
The London Institute for Contemporary Christianity,
Vere Street, W.1

Speakers:

Prof David Booth; Psychology Dept., University of Birmingham; *"Minds, Mechanisms and Made Free: The scientific study of human life, in gratitude to the Creator"*

Dr Graeme Finlay; Dept. of Medical and Health Sciences. Auckland University, New Zealand; *"Genetics and humanity"*

Dr Calum MacKellar; Scottish Council on Human Bioethics; *"Embryonic, Fetal and Post-natal Animal Human Mixtures: An Ethical Discussion"*

Prof Bill Newsome; Neurobiology, Stanford University, California; *"Boundaries between Choice and Determinism"*

Revd Dr John Searle, OBE; co-author of "Life in our hands"; *"What does it mean to be made in the Image of God"*

Booking form and flyer enclosed

Joint CiS-American Scientific Affiliation Conference 2007

New Frontiers in Science and Faith

Pollock Halls, Edinburgh,
Fri 3rd-Sun 5th August 2007

Speakers include:

Prof Simon Conway Morris

Prof Sir John Houghton

Prof Gareth Jones

Prof Alister McGrath

Prof Joe Perry

Rev Dr John Polkinghorne

Dr Jeff Schloss

New Developments



It has been a busy few months. I spent part of Easter at Word Alive, on the student team, and had the opportunity to give a seminar for the science students. In May I travelled to Hungary, to the European Leadership forum, where I took part in the scientific apologetics track.

I have also been busy supporting new local groups. I attended the first meetings of the South Central (Southampton) and Plymouth groups, and it was encouraging to see so many people who appreciated the events. Next on the horizon is a student group - some students in the north have been working hard, so watch this space.

In July I will be at New Wine in Scotland (CLAN gathering) in St Andrews, on the CiS exhibition stand, so come and see me if you're in the area!

Ruth Bancewicz, CiS Development Officer

Charitable Status

A short Extraordinary General Meeting was held during the Education conference at Christ Church, Herne Bay on April 29th. The meeting was chaired by John Bausor, Caroline Berry acted as secretary and 12 members were present. Dr John Ling proposed that the previously circulated constitution be accepted and this was seconded by Dr Frank Lukey. The motion was passed unanimously. The secretary reported that 70 postal voters had also approved the motion. The details will now be forwarded to the Charity Commissioners.

The process of setting up the company structure is now underway. Once this is done the actual application to the Charities Commission to be become a charitable company limited by guarantee can go ahead. It is hoped that the process will be completed by the end of the summer.

New on the CiS book list

The New Flatlanders – a seeker's guide to the theory of everything, Eric Middleton, Highland Books 2002, £7, review S&CB 17(1) p102:

"The book is written in the style of a conversation, as a series of sessions between the author and several students... It deals with the anthropic principle, evolution, consciousness, miracles, the diversity of religions, chaos theory and evil... The book would be very suitable for giving to a thoughtful person who is seriously concerned about the relationship between science and faith."

Education

The last PréCiS featured a longer than usual article on Gateway Science. Since this issue, the British Humanist Association (BHA) has sought assurances from the OCR examination board in relation to the new GCSE Gateway specification. The BHA campaigns against the expansion of faith schools and of academies controlled by religious interests. In an attempt to represent different perspectives on this discussion, I quote below extracts from a BHA report.

The report notes that the OCR are “happy to commit to reviewing the wording of this part of the Gateway Science (Biology) specification for the next edition”. The BHA also report that the OCR is providing guidance to teachers along the following lines. “Only a creationist interpretation of the fossil record prior to, or contemporary, to Darwin needs to be explained in this context – such that students are able to understand the fundamental departure of Darwin’s work from the religious norms of his time”.

<http://www.politics.co.uk/press-releases/education/schools/schools>

Thank you for those of you who have already sent in short articles to jjling@btinternet.com following last issue’s appeal. We are working hard to communicate Christian perspectives on science and the environment in academically robust and clear ways, your help is greatly appreciated. We have recently had some software problems so if you have sent in an article or an offer of assistance and it has not been acknowledged, we would be grateful if you would resend it, or alternatively contact me on 01227 274395.

John Ling, CiS Education Secretary

Science and Religion in Schools *materials now available*

The Science and Religion in Schools project, directed by Mr Martin Rogers and Prof John Hedley Brooke has been successful in producing two sets of resources for schools - one for secondary age (11-18), and one for primary age children (9-11). Materials consist of a book and CD ROM, and are available from <http://www.srsp.net/> for £15 each.

These have received excellent reviews in trial schools, and we hope that they will have a major impact on the teaching of science and religion in the UK.

The Origins Debate – an interactive learning resource

The John Templeton Foundation has recently given Dr Pete Moore a grant of £350,000 so that he can build an interactive DVD resource that will help people engage with the debate surrounding our origins. The project will be based at Trinity College Bristol, and will create two ‘flavours’ of DVD, one for use in secondary schools and one for use in churches.

“My belief is that many people argue about our origins without really understanding their own point of view, much less understanding the view of people they think are their opponents”, says Pete. The resource aims to help people see the strengths and weaknesses of their own position, before introducing them to others’ views and data.

The grant creates a research assistant post and Pete is looking to recruit someone for 15 months from July. It also gives funds to pay honoraria to a few project advisors. If you are interested in assisting in this project, or simply receiving a newsletter that will keep you up to date with the project’s progress, send an email to origins@petemoore.biz

Conferences

Science and Religion Forum

Mon 11th - Wed 13th September 2006

Dalton Ellis Hall, University of Manchester

Creation and the Monotheisms

Speakers include; Prof Keith Ward, Dr David

Wilkinson, Dr Marwil Izzi Dien,

& Prof Dan Cohn-Sherbok

Further details from www.srforum.org

Christian Academic Network & The Centre for Contemporary Ministry Joint Conference

Wed 13th – Fri 15th September 2006

Westminster College Cambridge

Thinking Christianly, Redeeming Secularity

Speakers include: Tony Lane, Ard Louis, Alan

Storkey, & John Wolffe

www.christianacademicnetwork.org.uk/

Religion, Science and Public Concern: Discourses on Ethics, Ecology, and Genomics

Thurs 26th - Fri 27th October 2006

University of Leiden, The Netherlands

The aim of the conference, organised by the Faculty of Theology at Leiden University, is to bring together researchers interested in interactions between religion, ethics, and science in public discourses. Further details from o.j.p.crapels@let.leidenuniv.nl

CiS Members in Action

Sat 1st July, 'Pilgrims' Travels to Sinai', Association for the Study for Travel in Egypt and the Near East, Oxford.
Prof Colin Humphreys

Wed 5th July, 'Science and Faith: Friends or Foes?' at "Confronting Secularism" Cambridge Centre for Apologetics Summer School 2006.
Dr Ard Louis

Fri 14th July, Schools Bioethics Conference, Bristol
Prof John Bryant

16th-29th July, Several CiS members will be speaking at the Faraday Institute summer course, Cambridge.

28th-29th July, "Does Evolution have any religious significance?" Christian-Muslim Workshop on Science and Religion, Oxford
Dr Denis Alexander

Tues 5th Sept, Science and religion - the contemporary debate, BA Festival of Science, Norwich.
Dr Denis Alexander, Prof Derek Burke, Dr Ard Louis, Prof Bob White.

Wed 6th Sept, "Professional Ethics in Animal Production and Health". Peruvian National Veterinary Congress, Peru.
Prof John Hodges

Media Appearances

On 28th May Denis Alexander was the morning guest on the breakfast show on Radio Cambridgeshire and had a good opportunity to talk about the Faraday Institute and about science and faith. On 31st May Denis was on a panel with Prof Steve Jones (by proxy - pre recorded) plus a couple of young earth creationists, recording three 15 min programmes for Sky Television on creation and evolution.

Please let us know of any events that you are involved in over the next few months.

****New Webmaster****

We are delighted that in response to the advert in April's PréCiS, Dr Peter van der Burgt of the National University of Ireland has volunteered to help with the updating of the website.

****Courses at the Faraday Institute for Science and Religion, Cambridge****

Science, Faith and Society
Sept 22-24, 2006

Science and Religion for Church Leaders
Nov 7-9, 2006

Substantial discounts are available for students and postdocs.

Go to <http://www.st-edmunds.cam.ac.uk/faraday> for more details, or call or 01223 741281

NEW INITIATIVE TO REACH POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS IN THE UK

In the last few decades the number of postgraduate students has grown dramatically, a trend which is only expected to accelerate. A minority of these students treat their postgraduate university as a 9 to 5 job, but a growing fraction continue a student life-style, in communities largely separated from the town in which they live. This is particularly true of international students. These trends bring new opportunities and challenges that don't fit the older "wineskins" of more established undergraduate work. A focused outreach to postgraduate students is needed.

We are excited to announce a new initiative, under the auspices of Friends International, and with the encouragement of UCCF, to help foster more effective outreach to postgraduates. Remi Tohler, who has worked with IVCF reaching postgraduate students in Canada for the last 6 years, is coming to the UK this summer to help pioneer this new ministry.

We hope to emulate the success of our development officer, whose excellent networking has helped release much latent potential within the CiS membership for groups, meetings etc... In fact, there may be significant overlap, because many of you are, or were (or will be) postgraduate students. Your input will be key and we are keen to hear back from you about any ideas, contacts etc. that you may have.

For example, many postgraduate groups suffer from the rapid turnover of student leadership. Faculty or other permanent residents can help provide input and stability. Here in Cambridge Prof John Lister was converted as a postgraduate student, and when, in 1991, he came back as a faculty member in applied mathematics, he and his wife, with the blessing of his church, Eden Baptist, came alongside the small postgraduate Christian group, and helped provide the continuity and nurture that has allowed it to grow and flourish over the last 15 years. In Nottingham, CiS member Dr Mike Clifford, a lecturer in Engineering, has been instrumental in running a small national conference for postgraduate students (www.christianpostgrad.org.uk). We are hoping to see much more of this!

WHAT CAN YOU DO:

- 1) Support us in prayer
- 2) Support us with ideas, contacts, and your time
- 3) Support us with money (We still need to raise the majority of Remi's finances)

For more information, please see the enclosed flier and <http://www-theor.ch.cam.ac.uk/people/ardlouis/postgrad/> or contact me at aal20@cam.ac.uk, 01223-763872

Ard Louis, CiS International Secretary



An interview with Colin Humphreys

Professor Colin Humphreys is Goldsmiths' Professor of Materials Science, University of Cambridge; Professor of Experimental Physics, The Royal Institution; Professorial Fellow, Selwyn College, Cambridge; past- President, Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining; Chairman, International Advisory Board, National Institute of Materials Science, Japan; Director, Rolls-Royce University Technology Centre on Advanced Materials, Cambridge; and Director of the Cambridge – Thomas Swan Centre for Gallium Nitride. He is very involved in publishing and lecturing on science and religion, and was chairman of Christians in Science from 1994-2001.

What have you been doing until now?

After my degree in Physics at Imperial College, I went to the Cavendish Lab in Cambridge where I completed a PhD in Physics. I moved to Oxford and became a lecturer in the Materials Science Department, and from there to Liverpool where I was head of the Materials Science Department. I have been in Cambridge since 1990.

Who have been the most important role models in your life?

In terms of Science and Christianity, the books of Donald MacKay were very helpful, especially when I was at a formative stage. There wasn't much written on science and Christianity from an evangelical viewpoint when I was at University. John Polkinghorne and Oliver Barclay's writings have also been very helpful.

What do you do for fun?

I enjoy travelling, which is a good thing because I spend a lot of time travelling around the world with work! In my spare time I write on science and religion. I have written papers in scientific journals on the date of the Crucifixion, the Star of Bethlehem, etc. My first book was on "The Miracles of Exodus", and my current project is a book on the last week of Jesus' life.

What challenges have you come across as a Christian and a scientist?

I was brought up with a young earth creation viewpoint. This made biology lessons at school more exciting, with all the questions that I, and a friend who came from the same background, were asking! When I went to university I saw the evidence for an old earth, and although I stayed in science, this was a shock to my faith, because so much of it was based on this interpretation of Genesis rather than the gospels.

Also, I have more recently noticed a trend, mainly among biologists and people working on the more sociological side of biology. They are nervous around evangelical Christians, and surprised when they agree with them – for example on the petition from evangelical leaders in the USA urging action on climate change.

How has your faith helped you as a scientist, or vice versa?

My faith has helped me more as a person than in my science, although it does motivate me to look for practical applications in my work. My work on photonic materials has led me to work on the development of LEDs, that if used to replace lighting in homes etc should reduce CO₂ emissions from power stations by about 15%. We are also working on a solution to the lack of clean drinking water in developing countries, by using UV sterilisation. In an unusual way my science helps my faith, when I read the Bible with my scientist's "hat" on. My work on the miracles of Exodus, which I wrote as a scientist looking at the Bible objectively, is an example of this. My current writing on the last week of Jesus' life has involved a lot of work on different ancient Jewish calendars, which were based on astronomy, to address the apparent discrepancy between the gospels regarding whether the Last Supper was a Passover meal or not.

What question would keep you debating till four in the morning?

At the moment, a debate over ancient calendars! Also issues of global warming, and whether we are going to be able to make a difference.

If you weren't a scientist what would you be?

That's hard to say – I wouldn't mind being an archaeologist, reconstructing the past. I wonder if I would become a scientist if I was at school now? I hope so, because science has given me many challenges and much pleasure. However, in the UK, scientists have been given a bad "geeky" image, and people who do well at school seem to be encouraged to do other things, so I might have ended up working in the City! [However Prof Humphreys has been doing what he can to encourage children to take up science, having been invited to give public and schools lectures in Australia and Singapore. In the UK he has been President of the Physics Section of the BA and Fellow in the Public Understanding of Physics of the Institute of Physics and has given talks to many thousands of school pupils and teachers].

News from CiS local groups

Cambridge

The CiS – Faraday Lecture Series in Science and Religion:

Dr Graeme Finlay
(Dept. of Medical and Health Sciences, Auckland University, New Zealand)

"Human Genetics and the Image of God"

5.30 p.m. Tuesday, 7th November 2006

Queen's Lecture Theatre, Emmanuel College

For further details, and previous lectures go to

<http://www.st-edmunds.cam.ac.uk/cis/>

Nottingham

A discussion group meets on the first Tuesday of even numbered months.

Contact Geoff Bagley on 0115 925 8801 or email gbagley@ntlworld.com for more details.

Oxford

Friday, 24th November, 7.30-9.30

St Andrew's Church, Linton Road, Oxford.

Professor Colin Humphreys, Goldsmiths'

Professor of Materials Science at Cambridge

University, will speak on Miracles

Contact Diana Briggs to join the mailing list for future events (diana.briggs@gmail.com).

Irish Branch Plan for the Year Ahead

The third meeting of the Irish branch took place at Whiteabbey Presbyterian Church on Sunday 11th June. The purpose of the meeting was to plan the programme of events for the remainder of this year and the beginning of next, as well as to discuss funding options to facilitate expansion of branch activities. Although the programme has yet to be finalised, it promises to provide an interesting mix of topics ranging from cosmology to socio-biology. The speakers will include both local group members and invited speakers from farther afield. Meetings will be held in September (Belfast), November (Dublin), January (Belfast), March (Maynooth) and will culminate in a one-day conference/AGM in April (Belfast). The exact dates, times and venue for each meeting will be made available shortly.

For further information on the Irish Branch and its activities please contact either Scott Peddie (s.peddie@pattersonpeddie.com) or Martin Brown (martin.oldcross@btinternet.com).

Forming local groups

If you are interested in starting your own CiS local group, please contact Ruth or Caroline (contact details on page 1) for a list of members in your area. You can also request a CiS speakers list. A paper on forming local groups can be found at:

http://cis.org.uk/starting_local_cis_group.htm

or a paper copy can be sent on request.

Central South

Over 400 people attended the inaugural lecture "Beyond Belief? Science and Religion in the 21st Century" given by Dr Denis Alexander at Southampton University on the 8 May. An MP3 of the lecture and discussion is available at www.cis-centralsouth.org.uk

Next Meeting –

Two Christian Views on Origins: Theistic Evolution and Intelligent Design go Head to Head
7.30pm Thursday 13 July,

Highfield Church Centre, Southampton

Principal speakers: Keith Fox, Professor of Biochemistry, Southampton University, and Peter Williams, author and philosopher.

£2 per head including cheese and wine. Priority given to CiS members and guests. Please send SAE & cheque payable to 'CiS Central South', Highfield Church Centre, Highfield Lane, Southampton, SO17 1RL, including SAE, or visit during office hours (9.30-12.00 Mon-Fri). Or e-mail Rob.Heather@gmail.com to reserve tickets and pay at the door.

Plymouth

The first meeting of CiS Plymouth was a lecture by CiS President Prof Sir Ghilleen Prance on "Care for Creation". This was held on 5th June at Plymouth University in conjunction with the University chaplaincy. With about 60 people, and a minority of Christians present, the atmosphere was one of curiosity, with questions covering practical responses, other religions, and end times! Overall there was positive response to seeing Christian concern over environmental issues.

As with other CiS local group events, holding the lecture on campus and advertising it throughout the university meant that many staff and students were able to attend. Dr John Spicer, chairman of the group commented that it had raised a good deal of interest among the colleagues of the organisers!

Contact Matthew Frost at matfr@mba.ac.uk for details of future events.

Submissions for next PréCiS

Items for the next PréCiS should be submitted to Caroline Berry at cberry@pncl.co.uk or 4 Sackville Close, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 3QD

Change of address? Graduated? New e-mail address?

If any of your details have changed, please contact Tom Moffat at:

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