



Emily Sturgess, Development Officer, The King's Centre, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES. Telephone: 07852 310603 do@cis.org.uk
Diana Briggs, Secretary, 5 Northmoor Road, Oxford OX2 6UW. Tel: 01865 420007 diana@cis.org.uk

SOUTHERN CONFERENCE REPORT

Some 150 people attended the annual conference on 1st November in Oxford, celebrating 70 years since the start of CiS. Committee member Dr Rhoda Hawkins reports on our day together back in the autumn.

After an opening prayer led by our chairman **Andrew Halestrap**, the conference started in corporate worship with us singing the hymn "How Great thou art!" **Sam Berry & Malcolm Jeeves** then treated us to a whistle stop tour through the 70 year history of CiS from its beginnings in 1944 as the Research Scientists Christian Fellowship (RSCF). In particular they talked about the key role played by Oliver Barclay and their fond memories of him and others involved in the early days. At the first meeting there was only one senior member but today our membership boasts lab directors, VCs and FRSSs. Another particularly significant meeting was the week-long 1965 Oxford conference with the ASA (American Scientific Affiliation).

Discussions grappling with real issues during the meeting were facilitated by papers being read in advance by the 36 participants (who came from 10 different countries). The meeting led to the book "The scientific enterprise and Christian faith" (Malcolm Jeeves). Today CiS has come a long way since its youthful beginnings and a particular focus now is in reaching out to younger people.

Alister McGrath discussed apologetics in the context of engaging in a scientific culture. He pointed out that in traditional apologetics the focus is on defending ideas. However this ignores the relational, ethical and lifestyle aspects of faith. He went on to discuss the inductive trend in apologetics: using Christianity as a theory to explain what we see. C. S. Lewis said "I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else." Alister expressed his opinion that those of us who are professional scientists have a credibility that someone like him doesn't.

"BIG QUESTIONS, BIG PICTURE"

Student Conference: Saturday 21st February, 2015

London Institute of Contemporary Christianity (LICC)

St Peter's Church, Vere St, London W1G 0DQ

Open to all students, undergraduate and postgraduate

ENTRY: £5 Earlybird, £10 after 23rd January, 2015

- DR GAVIN MERRIFIELD** - Big Bang & Origins
- PAUL ROBERTS** - How does God interact with the world?
- DR CHRIS WILLMOTT** - Bioethics
- DR DENIS ALEXANDER** - Evolution/human origins
- RUTH VALERIO** - Why should we look after the planet?

Submit your **250 word abstract** for a 10-minute talk on "The Big Questions of Science and Faith" for a chance to contribute to the student conference.
Deadline 23rd January 2015.

BOOK ONLINE AT WWW.CIS.ORG.UK/CONFERENCES



He started his talk by emphasising the importance in his own journey of older people passing on wisdom to him. He ended by challenging us to share what we find helpful with each other within CiS and to look out especially for those just starting out.

Tom McLeish spoke after coffee on a wisdom approach to a theology of science, giving us a taster of his new book “Faith & Wisdom in Science”. He considered the relationship between humans and the rest of creation by taking us on a nature trail through the book of Job. Particular high points include Job 5:23 “you will have a covenant with the stones”, the hymn to wisdom (Job 28) and the Lord’s answer (Job 38-40). The nature metaphors in the Lord’s answer have all been mentioned earlier by Job or his companions. Tom described suggesting to colleagues at conferences Job 38-40 as bedtime reading. The questions in the Lord’s answer naturally resonate with scientists. Tom’s opinion is that these questions are invitational. For Tom the problem with “theology and science” is the word “and”. Instead he outlined a “theology of science”.

The morning talks provided much food for thought, inspiring lively discussions over lunch. The buzz of conversations included people catching up with old friends and making new ones. The bookstall was busy with people buying new books, including ones written by conference participants.

At the AGM after lunch, Andrew Halestrap gave an update on CiS matters and outlined the proposal

submitted to the Templeton foundation. He asked for our continued prayers for the current and future work of CiS.

Workshops followed, giving people space to explore science-faith communication in smaller groups. Rodney Holder’s workshop on reading provided book lists, and what to suggest to different people. John Bryant gave people helpful writing exercises to do during his workshop on writing. Pete Moore led a lively workshop on engaging students and young people. Ruth Bancewicz inspired and encouraged people in her workshop on “creative flourishing in academia and beyond”.

Elaine Storkey spoke after tea on human identity and creation responsibilities. She outlined the Christian worldview of life, God, creation and who we are. We are not defined by what we do, buy, consume or by what others think of us. We are created by God, in the image of God, relational, accountable and in need of redemption. With moving stories from her own experience, she brought home to us the reality of climate change deniers and the many religious people who are suspicious of science. Elaine is optimistic that the church can help in addressing climate change issues. She challenged us as scientists to communicate to others about climate change.

Richard Cheetham led us in reflection in the epilogue. He drew out the thread that ran through the day: us communicating to others. Today’s challenge is to communicate with young people, churches and those in society who think science is the only reality. In a moment of silence we considered our own journeys and what God is calling us to do in response to what we’ve heard today. He left us with an image of an emerging butterfly symbolising the potential for God’s work in and through all of us.



Prof Andrew Halestrap leading the proceedings

We finished by praising God, singing the hymn “Great is thy faithfulness”. Following the formal end to the meeting, some people went out for a meal together whilst others

Northern Conference: God loves Science!

Towards a Theology of the Scientific Enterprise

in collaboration with NTC – Nazarene Theological College

NTC, Didsbury, Manchester, M20 8GU

Saturday April 18th 2015, 10 am – 4:30 pm

Speakers & topics include:

Prof David Watts - *Thinking God's thoughts after Him: Absolute and mediate creation; Mathematics and the beauty of God*

Prof Tom McLeish - *Mining Ancient Wisdom for a Theology of Science; Practical consequences of a theology of science*

Dr Althea Wilkinson - *Astronomy and Christian Discipleship*

Join us for engaging talks, discussion groups and networking.
For more information and booking, contact Lee Cook on pa@nazarene.co.uk

headed straight to the train station. We were all left with much to think about and reflect on after a day full of top quality speakers and positive conversations. May God bless the next 70 years of CiS.

Dr Rhoda Hawkins

For audio recordings, visit www.cis.org.uk/conferences/past-conferences/southern-conference-2014

INTERVIEW WITH JENNIFER SIGGERS BY RUTH BANCEWICZ: IMAGINING REALITY

Jennifer Siggers is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Bioengineering at Imperial College London, and a member of the London-wide CiS group. Here, Ruth Bancewicz interviews Jennifer about her experiences of using imagination in both science and faith, excerpts of which are included in Ruth's new book *God in the Lab: How Science Enhances Faith* (Monarch, Jan 2015).

Living in the aftermath of two great cultural movements, Romanticism and the Enlightenment, we have a situation where imagination is highly valued in Western culture (the Romantic influence) but not always recognised as an essential part of science (the Enlightenment influence). Perhaps Jennifer Siggers' reaction to my invitation for a discussion about imagination is typical of this: it took her a while to realise how much she had to say. The creative side of science is often hidden from public view - not deliberately, but because it's not usually part of the write-up.

I meet her on the fourth floor of what was once the Royal School of Mines in South Kensington, just around the corner from the Museums of Science and Natural History. Her office is an inspiring space in a grand corner of London. The windows look out over roofs and domes, and the walls are bare: just a few bookshelves and a whiteboard covered with formulae mark the room out as a place to study.

Jennifer studied maths, specialising in fluid dynamics at Cambridge University. During her time as a PhD student she strayed into some seminars on the medical applications of mathematics, and was firmly hooked. She was keen to work on something practical, partly because she liked to have the extra motivation of solving immediate problems to get her out of bed on a bad day. It's also easier to justify medical research than pure maths, so there are more options for funding. She chose to work on blood circulation through arteries, focusing on the problem of atherosclerosis in heart disease. One of her main research projects now involves studying microcirculation through capillaries in the liver.

When I ask about imagination, she says, "science is very creative and you need to have good ideas... The more you can think out of the box, the better." Sometimes what's needed are ideas that are "a bit wacky", and staring at a blank piece of paper is not always conducive to that sort of thinking.



What helped her to be imaginative? “When I was doing my PhD I used to get these sorts of ideas in places like the shower. Now I tend to get them when I’m going to bed or I’m quite relaxed... having thought about the problem deeply and then stopping thinking about it, going home and doing something different, or even on the way home: that can be the time when inspiration strikes.”

Jennifer also thinks her environment inspires her ideas. Being next door to so many museums and having an office perched among the rooftops are great perks of her job. “It’s impossible to tell whether those things really help or not,” she says, “but I think they probably do. What definitely helps is walking through the park on my way to work, because I tend to arrive in a good mood... That has been tested!”

There are several ways in which scientists use imagination, all of which feed into the process of having ideas. One – and possibly the most important – is visual imagination, which we use to create mental pictures or models. Just before I met Jennifer she had been using mental pictures to help solve an equation. She explains to me how she was breaking it down, using a different physical concept to visualise the effect of each mathematical term. So, diffusion is when things spread out, decay means things drop off, and so on. After adding a new term, she would check the equation to see if it had the effect she had envisaged. It turns out that even mathematics isn’t completely abstract in practice.

Another way in which scientists use their imaginations is in creating parallels or analogies. Some concepts are difficult to describe with words so we have to be good at using everyday examples to illustrate them. Jennifer shows me how the analogy of a swing is helpful for her when she’s thinking about heart rhythms. The swing has its regular rhythm but it gets out of synch and has to be reset (by pushing the swing) every day. Another analogy she uses comes from the human body. “A lot of researchers will think of our blood circulation system as being like a big electrical circuit with a battery, which is the heart sending off signals. So resistance (slowing down of the current) represents how long and narrow the arteries are, and capacitance (ability to store charge) represents their elasticity.”

In every project, she starts off with a list of assumptions and chooses a model to work with, but further down the road she might realise it’s not working. “It could be that we spent a long time getting to that point, and then realise one of our assumptions doesn’t work...” Having to give up a cherished idea can, Jennifer admits, “quite often be a bit heart breaking”, but “it happens absolutely all the time. That’s part of the process.”



For some people, this process of hypothesising and testing – both in and out of the lab – leads them to God. “Science makes much more sense if there is, at some deep level, a truth that we’re pursuing,” she adds. For her, mathematics has its origin in God. Through her work she is “discovering what he’s already put there, and it’s absolutely beautiful.” When she uses her imagination to tackle a problem in bioengineering, she expects to discover something. “The fact that I believe in a God makes me confident that there’s an answer to any scientific question we’re asking. Whether we’ll find it, I don’t know, but there is an answer.”

When it comes to imagination, science can also enhance faith. Jennifer explains how this works for her. “I definitely bring a lot of the skills from my work into things that I do with church. For example, when I explain Bible passages to people, something I almost always do is to make an analogy to try and bring the passage alive to the listeners in a new way. As I do this it helps me to understand the meaning better, because I’ve created an illustration and in doing so had to think about whether it conveys the right meaning. When I do this, I often have to drop a few of them, because I’ve thought, actually that’s not really what it’s like. The story isn’t quite trying to convey that theme. That is very similar to aspects of the process of research.”

Dr Ruth Banciewicz



LOCAL GROUP NEWS

If you live somewhere that does not have a CiS local group but you wish it did, please get in touch with the Development Officer, (emily@cis.org.uk) about starting up a new group in your area. Full event details are available at www.cis.org.uk/events

ABERDEEN

A discussion group runs in Aberdeen. If you would like details of meetings please contact David Ely at aberdeenlocalgroup@yahoo.co.uk.

ABERGAVENNY

If you would like to get involved with the discussion group in Abergavenny, please contact Dr Huw Morgan at jhcmorgan@gmail.com.

BIRMINGHAM

If you would like details of future happenings in Birmingham please e-mail bhamcis@gmail.com or join the Birmingham CiS Facebook group www.facebook.com/groups/ciscbirmingham

BRISTOL

On Friday 30th January the Bristol group will be welcoming Dr Christopher Southgate, speaking on 'The Origin of Life: Scientific and Theological Reflections', 7pm for 7:30 start. Contact Tina Biggs for more information (cmbiggs@googlemail.com)

CAMBRIDGE

For details of upcoming events in Cambridge please go to www.st-edmunds.cam.ac.uk/faraday/Lectures.php.

CENTRAL SOUTH

On 5th March, Central South will welcome Prof Ard Louis, speaking on "God, Science and Evidence". If you would like more information about the group please go to our webpage or e-mail Peter May on petergeorgemay@gmail.com

DUNDEE

Rev Dr Alistair Donald will speak on 'God, Science & Origins' on Mon 26th Jan, at St Peter's Free Church. Email christiansinsciencedundee@gmail.com.

DURHAM

Contact Alan Roberts (a.w.roberts@durham.ac.uk)

for information about future events in Durham.

EDINBURGH

If you would like more details about the group, please email Gavin Merrifield (g.d.merrifield@gmail.com)

GLASGOW

For details of future events in Glasgow please contact Dr Lawrence Osborn on lawrence@lhosborn.co.uk

HARROW

For details of future events in Harrow please contact Revd Lyndon North (revlnorth@aol.com)

IPSWICH

Dr John Ling will be speaking at Woodbridge Exploring issues group on 21st Feb on the topic, "Reconciling the theological idea of design with the scientific account of the formation of the universe." For information about this and other events in Ipswich please contact Dr John Ling (jjling@btopenworld.com).

IRELAND

Details about the upcoming events in Ireland can be found at www.cis.org.uk/ireland

LEEDS

The Leeds group have two events coming up. On Wed 4th February they will be joined by Rev. Professor David Wilkinson, speaking on 'Hawking, Dawkins and God: Science and Religion in the Media'; and then on Tue 10th March by Rev Dr John Weaver, on 'When science becomes controversial: fracking and fuel security; GM crops and feeding the world'. Further details of meetings from John Lockwood at jglockwood1@me.com

LIVERPOOL

Neville Cobbe will be speaking at the Liverpool Anglican Cathedral on Wednesday 11th February. Please check with him nearer the time to confirm details. Contact Neville Cobbe for more information (Neville.cobbe@liverpool.ac.uk).

LONDON

This term the London group will be attending the Bible & Biodiversity event hosted by the Jubilee Centre, on 21st Jan. Full details at www.jubilee-centre.org/bible-biodiversity-london-event/ For more details about the



group contact Anna Pearson on cins.london@gmail.com

MANCHESTER

Please contact the Manchester group secretary, Alma Budd on sec.cismanchester@yahoo.co.uk if you would like more details about the Manchester group, or to be added onto the mailing list.

NORWICH

Please contact info@cis.norwich.org.uk for details about upcoming events in the Norwich area.

NOTTINGHAM

The Nottingham group meets regularly for discussion about science - faith topics. They will meet for a discussion on miracles on Tuesday 24th February. Please contact Geoff Bagley (geoffbagley@me.com) if you would like further information.

OXFORD

The Oxford group has two upcoming events. Friday 23rd January: Professor Andrew Steane (Atomic and Laser Physics) will discuss his new book, Faithful to Science – the role of science in religion. On Friday April 17th, Ruth Bancewicz of The Faraday Institute and Bob Sluka of A Rocha will present an evening on “God in the Lab - how science enhances faith”. For information about the Oxford local group, contact Diana Briggs at diana.briggs@wolfson.oxon.org

READING

The Reading group meets bimonthly in central Reading. The next public event will welcome Prof Keith Fox speaking on ‘Can a Christian be a Scientist?’, at Bill’s Restaurant on Monday 2nd March. Contact Dave Law for details on dave@readingatwork.org

ROYAL HOLLOWAY

For more information from the group at Royal Holloway, or to be added to their mailing list, please contact Oliver Edy on Oliver.Edy.2012@live.rhul.ac.uk

SHEFFIELD

The Sheffield CiS group meets regularly for prayer and discussion during the university term. On Wednesday 25th February at 6:30pm in the Richard Roberts Building (University of Sheffield), Prof Tom

McLeish will be speaking. They will also be joined by Dr Ruth Bancewicz during April. For details about happenings in the Sheffield area or to be added to our mailing list please e-mail shefuni.cisc@gmail.com or join our Facebook group www.facebook.com/groups/shefuni.cisc/ or see their website <http://sheffieldchristiansinscience.wordpress.com>

SOUTH WEST

If you would like details about future events in the South West, please contact Prof. David Huntley (dhuntley@plymouth.ac.uk).

ST ANDREWS

St Andrews are hosting two events this term. Firstly, Prof Tom McLeish on ‘The Science-and-Religion Delusion: Towards a Theology of Science’, 16th February; secondly, Dr Rowan Williams on ‘What is Consciousness?’, 13th April. For more info about the undergraduate group at St Andrews, please contact Dr Andrew Torrance (abt3@st-andrews.ac.uk) or Joshua Sharp (jas29@st-andrews.ac.uk). For more information about the postgraduate group, please contact Dr Rebecca Goss (rjmg@st-andrews.ac.uk).

SURREY

On 22nd January the Surrey group will be joined by Prof Bob White, speaking on ‘Who’s to blame? Disasters, Nature and Acts of God.’ For more details about future events in the Surrey area please contact Joy Perkins at joyeperkins@googlemail.com.

TYNESIDE & NORTHUMBERLAND

For information from the group in the Newcastle area, please contact Bill Clegg at bill.clegg@ncl.ac.uk.

WEST MIDLANDS

The West Midlands Group meets infrequently and people should contact Godfrey Armitage if they are local and interested at g.n.armitage@warwick.ac.uk There is no meeting currently planned.

WORCESTER

Bible and Science Worcester will be joined by Rev Dr Richard Tweedy, speaking on ‘A heretic’s guide to modern cosmology’. Tuesday 20th Jan. For information about upcoming events, please contact Kim Stansfield at kimestansfield@gmail.com.