Dear members and friends of ISCAST,

Recently I received a phone call from a member in a state where there is currently no active ISCAST chapter. He enquired as to how we could support him as there was no immediate fellowship with other Christian scientists in his area. As the secretary of ISCAST I am the person that people contact with these sorts of enquiries.

I replied that we could not provide support to him directly as there simply wasn’t the critical mass of ISCASTians for us to link him to in that area. Having said that, I told him about the other organisations that we knew of there.

After the conversation, I recalled another phone call from a retired scientist living in the country. He had been approached by his local congregation to be their pastor and agreed to shepherd that little flock on their journey in faith.

One Sunday some church members asked him to commend the literature of a young-earth creation group to the congregation. He did so, commenting that there were also other perspectives on the biblical creation story. This created a stir, and his role in that congregation was reviewed by the church leadership. Eventually, he was ‘allowed’ to continue his ministry but his sermons were required to be vetted each Sunday prior to preaching. He was devastated but grateful that he could talk to me about his situation.

We at ISCAST are acutely aware of how passionate some people can be about certain interpretations of the biblical creation stories. ISCAST itself takes no official position on this matter, although the majority of ISCAST members hold the mainstream scientific view that biological evolution occurred over millions of years, and that such a view is compatible with the Bible.

We also recognise that some scientists not only face difficulties with work colleagues who misunderstand or are hostile to Christianity, but they also face pain and loneliness in their own congregations arising from these matters. Such cases highlight that while it is exciting and important to reach out and make a significant public impact, our pastoral role is also important.

Our mission statement identifies four groups of people whom we serve: our members, the church, the wider community, and the international science-Christianity community. Part of this service means ISCAST exists to support Christians in their workplaces and their places of worship. Even if you are remote from any local ISCAST group, we exist to help you insofar as we can.

I am also aware of many well-qualified scientists who feel that they cannot become ISCAST Fellows because they feel they cannot ‘mix it’ with some of our more high-profile members. We do not want to recruit only articulate scientists and academics, well versed in the cut and thrust of public debate; we also want our membership to include those who can support one another, each in our own particular callings and challenges.

God bless each one of you in your vocation, in your faith and in the delight (and challenge) of bringing the two together.

Richard Gijsbers

ICAST Secretary
News Items

**Washington Post features symposium on transhumanism**

As a sign of growing interest in transhumanism, *The Washington Post* recently featured a symposium with several distinguished writers. It may indicate a growing interest in its aspirations, in an election year when a transhumanist, Zoltan Istvan, is seriously running for President. Read More...

**Have you ever seen a three? Mathematics joins the science-religion dialogue**

For the scientist and the mathematician, the question of 'what is real' is very strongly linked to proof. In his Faraday seminar last month, “Is There a Place at the Science-Religion Table for Mathematics,” the mathematician and philosopher P. Douglas Kindschi, pointed out that proofs are the building blocks of mathematics so, historically, maths has had the strongest claim on what is real. Great scientific and mathematical minds of the past have been quoted saying similar things. Read More...

**Space, the brain and natural disasters - challenges in communicating science and faith**

Eleanor Puttock has spent the last few years building up a successful podcast series on science and faith. It’s time to turn the tables and ask her a few questions about her own views on science and faith. Read More...

**Confronting stem cell hype**

The way science is represented to the public can influence understanding and expectations, frame policy debates, and affect the implementation and use of emerging technologies. Read More...

**Neuroscientists create ‘atlas’ showing how words are organised in the brain**

Scientists have created an “atlas of the brain” that reveals how the meanings of words are arranged across different regions of the organ. Like a colourful quilt laid over the cortex, the atlas displays in rainbow hues how individual words and the concepts they convey can be grouped together in clumps of white matter. Read More...

**The death of moral relativism**

Considered by conservatives to be one of postmodern society’s greatest threats, moral relativism may now be a relic of the past. Read More...

**Scientific regress**

The problem with science is that so much of it simply isn’t. Last summer, the Open Science Collaboration announced that it had tried to replicate one hundred published psychology experiments sampled from three of the most prestigious journals in the field. Read More...

**Did we just discover aliens? Scientists aren’t ruling it out**

Aliens are not a thing. We know this, right? Well, maybe. Turns out that, almost despite themselves, some of the world’s leading astronomers are taking seriously the question of whether or not we are alone on Earth. Read More...

**Scientists unveil new ‘Tree of Life’**

A team of scientists unveiled a new tree of life on Monday, a diagram outlining the evolution of all living things. The researchers found that bacteria make up most of life’s branches. Read More...

**Beyond matter: Why science needs metaphysics**

What did you do on your leap day this year? I listened to a talk by Roger Trigg, who is Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at the University of Warwick and a Senior Research Fellow of the Ian Ramsey Centre for Science and Religion in Oxford. Read More...

**Stories of life**

We want you to tell your stories of life and faith. That isn’t easy at the best of times, and to do so in an interesting way is doubly difficult. But a competition like this provides a clear forum for doing just that, and a way for each of us to start thinking about the difference Jesus makes in our lives, and how to put that into words. Read More...

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No access to the internet and want more information? Contact the ISCAST office (see back page) and we will forward the full item to you.

Postage and handling fees apply.
Gravitational waves with Prof. Tom McLeish

On Saturday 2 April, Prof. Tom McLeish (UK) joined ISCAST Vic via webinar to discuss gravitational waves.

The Penultimate Curiosity: Oxford launch

The Penultimate Curiosity / Roger Wagner and Andrew Briggs

Abstract

The Penultimate Curiosity sets out to answer one of the most profound questions about the development of human thought: why is it that throughout the long journey from cave painting to quantum physics what we now refer to as ‘science’ and ‘religion’ have been so closely entangled.

Contextual approaches in the dialogue between theology and science and their implications for understanding the development of doctrine

Author
Edwin El-Mahassni

Abstract

The dialogue concerning Christian theology as a science is not new. However, it is only relatively recently that the importance of the context within which theology is conducted has been discussed.

Inventing the universe: Why we can’t stop talking about science, faith and God

Author
Alister McGrath

Excerpt

We just can’t stop talking about the big questions around science and faith. They haven’t gone away, as some predicted they might; in fact, we seem to talk about them more than ever. Far from being a spent force, religion continues to grow around the world. Meanwhile, Richard Dawkins and the New Atheists argue that religion is at war with science - and that we have to choose between them. It’s time to consider a different way of looking at these two great cultural forces.

Mind, brain and free will—book review

Author
Jim Stump

Excerpt

Richard Swinburne, who was until 2002 Professor of the Philosophy of the Christian Religion at Oxford University and is a Fellow of the British Academy, has examined several important issues at the intersection of contemporary neuroscience with personhood.

Am I significant in the universe, or just an accident?

An article originally published in IDEA magazine, Jan/Feb 2006 / Mike Poole

Falling stereotypes open up paths to cooperation among science, religion

By Elaine Howard Ecklund

Excerpt

Still, we live in an age when a presumed irrevocable gulf between science and religion is perpetuated in the public sphere (despite its inconsistency with what most scientists around the world actually think).
Event News

Dr Graeme Finlay Visit
Dr Graeme Finlay will be visiting Australia in July 2016. He will be speaking at events across the country. Read more...

Dr Graeme Finlay Events

NSW Events
Tuesday 5th July 2016
Dr Graeme Finlay ISCAST-CASE (Sydney)
Lecture 1—7.30 pm

Wednesday 6 July
CPX Interview - 10.00 am

Thursday 7th July 2016
Dr Graeme Finlay ISCAST (Sydney)
Lecture 2—7.30 pm

Friday 8 July
Speaking at the Simeon Network’s “Write” Conference—morning

Saturday 9 July
Speaking at “Write” Conference - morning

QLD Events
Tuesday 12 July
Public talk at Newlife Uniting Church, Gold Coast—7.00 pm

SA Events

Wednesday 13 July
Public GCRI/ISCAST Lecture—evening

ACT Events
Thursday 14 July
Technical talk followed by general talk—7.30 pm

VIC Events
Friday 15 July
ISCAST Annual Lecture—5.30 pm

Other Events

VIC Events
Friday 8 July
Medical Science: Playing God? Presented by Prof. Gareth Jones—7.30pm

Saturday 9 July
An Evening With Gareth Jones—6.30 pm

International Events
Thursday 15 September—Thursday 6 October
History of the Scientific Revolution

Other News

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Twitter: @ISCAST_Oz
Tune in to our Podcast

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

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