Dear friends of ISCAST across this wide, brown land,

Greetings from Melbourne as the silly season—also remembered for the birth of the Saviour of the world—approaches. And welcome to another ISCAST Digest packed with goodies to stimulate the little grey cells and, I hope, to stimulate worship, wonder and praise of the Creator. Let me tell you three things that we have been up to lately.

1. We are planning for ISCAST’s future

In addition to ISCAST’s role as a fellowship of people exploring the science–faith interface, we are increasingly taking on an apologetic or public engagement role. This vital task is driven by the awareness that “the conflict myth” is one of the most significant blocks to taking Christian faith seriously, and ISCAST has the intellectual resources to address the issue. So, this year we have seen Jennifer Wiseman and Denis Alexander giving popular talks around the country; we have organised speakers to address numerous church or school audiences; we have seen ISCASTians on ABC radio and TV as well as in print and online. However, while opportunities abound, we need to match our structure and income to those opportunities. Please pray for the board’s deliberations in our growing pains, and especially for the all-day board meeting on January 19.

2. I have been doing the rounds

One of the privileges of my role is to be invited to speak regularly in schools and churches. Most recently I was in Brisbane at St Margaret’s Anglican Girls School (see here on Facebook) speaking to the year 10s. Staff from Matthew Flinders College on the Sunshine Coast also attended the session as they plan similar events in their region.

Recently, I also spoke as part of the Mustard Schools ministry at Trinity Grammar in Melbourne. One of the challenges ahead is how to multiply these opportunities by building a team of willing and able communicators to offer to schools. In schools I usually speak for about half an hour, often on “Can a scientist believe?” Vigorous discussion always ensues. What a joy it is to have hundreds of young people engaged in such questions!

3. We have launched into book publishing

The first book in a new “ISCAST Nexus” series has been launched (buy it here!) It is provocatively titled *A Reckless God?*—you will have to buy it to understand the title. We have more books in the pipeline for the series including the possibility of an autobiography of a famous Australian scientist (and Christian). As well, I am working on a book for Garratt Publishing; *A Friendly Guide to Science and Christian Faith* is targeted at teenagers and will be published early next year.

Thank you friends for listening so far. Let me finish by commending the work of ISCAST to you and asking for your prayers as well as your hard cold cash. Our shared ministry is crucial and growing, but it can only grow as fast as resources allow. As always, don’t hesitate to contact me with your words of encouragement, criticism or suggestions (ChrisMulherin@ISCAST.org 0431330380).

Kind regards and God’s peace to you this Christmas,

Chris Mulherin, ISCAST Executive Director
News Items

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

ISCAST Patron,
Prof. Graeme Clark, wins the Shambaugh Prize

The Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital congratulates Professor Graeme Clark AC, who was recently announced as the joint winner of the prestigious Shambaugh Prize. One of the most highly respected science prizes in the world, the Shambaugh Prize recognises a remarkable work in the field of otology and related basic research. Professor Clark is the first Australian to have been awarded the prize.

Read more...

ISCAST in Eternity:
“The Science v Christian Conflict is Over”

The Bible Society’s Eternity magazine for November 2018 features a two-page article calling the Christian church to “get along with science” and to move onto the offensive in matters of science and faith. Written by ISCAST Executive Director Chris Mulherin, the article finished with a challenge to integrate science into our understanding of faith.

Read more...

Skeptics Should Stop Demanding Proof Of Climate Change

According to ISCAST Executive Director, Chris Mulherin, “skeptics should stop demanding proof of climate change, because that’s not how science works.”

“Despite the skeptics’ muddying of the waters, climate science is good science, the stakes are enormous, and we proceed with business as usual at our peril.”

Read more...

“Ricoeur and the Third Discourse of the Person” by ISCAST Fellow Michael Wong

Michael Wong is an ISCAST fellow, a psychiatrist and a recent member of the ISCAST board until his move to Hong Kong. As you will see from the book he is also trained in theology and hermeneutics.

Read more...

Techno-scientific Salvation? An Interview with Dennis Alexander

Dr Alexander was in Australia to give the New College Lectures and kindly agreed to “tour” Australia giving talks for ISCAST. ISCAST is grateful to our friends at New College for making the tour possible.

Read more...

Evolution Wars: An Interview with Tom Aechtner

In the interview, Tom tackles the vital and very current problem of, “mass persuasion, why we believe and disbelieve things and how we can get past pointing fingers and yelling at each other.”

Read more...

Truth, Light, Glory: COSAC Sermon

Sermon by A/Prof Alan Gijsbers, ISCAST President, given at COSAC 2018. This sermon discusses questions such as “What is Truth?”

Read more...

Welcome To The Post-Scientific Age by Fergus McGinley

In this follow-up to his previous and provocative article, “Do the heavens declare the glory of God?”, Fergus McGinley critiques “scientific ideology” and attempts to retrieve the soul.

Excerpt: “As much as I try, when I look up at the night sky I don’t see the beauty and charm and thrill of the planets and the Milky Way; rather I see the endless, heartless void of the material cosmos.”

Read more...

Life On Mars

ISCAST fellows James Garth and Jonathan Clarke spoke recently about “Life on Mars” on the Centre for Public Christianity’s “Life and Faith” podcast.

Read more...
Books and Resources ...

Book Review: Thoughtful Theism

A work of calmness and clarity, *Thoughtful Theism* speaks directly to our age’s uneasy relationship to religion. It lives up to its title by modelling an honesty, candour and rigorous commitment to rationality rarely seen in the public square. Fr Andrew Younan displays an impressive ability to make a calm, positive case for theism. Yet his ability to disarm, whilst simultaneously affirming, the strongest contemporary critiques of religion brings a fresh angle to the debate. This book will reward thoughtful adherents and freethinkers alike.

James Garth
Aerospace engineer and Fellow of ISCAST

Read more...

Caring for Creation on the Coast

Excerpt: “It’s been a scorching summer and you may have found yourself down at the beach a few times. But how much do you know about the wildlife that lives on our beaches and in our seas? Last year I was introduced to Sea Watch: a programme that encourages the public to help those who work in the field learn more about the species that use our seas. Exmoor National Park were running a Sea Watch Training Day for anyone interested and had asked Lee Abbey to host it.”

About the author: Jo Greenwood is the Environmental Coordinator at Lee Abbey in Devon, a Christian Conference Centre, where she works within a Christian community to encourage guests and the community to care for God’s creation. She has a BSc in Animal Behaviour and Welfare and has volunteered with the National Trust, Surrey Wildlife Trust, the RSPB, and A Rocha Canada. Jo arrived at Lee Abbey in 2016, initially working on the farm before changing roles in September 2017. In her spare time, she enjoys reading a good book as well as playing the trombone in the worship band and learning the flute

Read more...

Science, Faith, and Students in Australian Christian Secondary Schools


Abstract: This article is based on doctoral research undertaken by the author to investigate perceptions of the science–faith relationship within Lutheran secondary schools and the associated attitudes towards both science and Christianity. A variety of perspectives emerged including atheism, scientism and Young Earth Creationism. Creationism and scientism were found to be associated with negative student attitudes towards either science or Christianity, or both.

The findings of the research emphasise the necessity for Christian school educators and administrators to be well-informed on the topic of the science–faith relationship and aware of the learning and attitudinal outcomes associated with different ideologies and approaches. The author’s PhD dissertation, entitled *Christianity and Science in Australian Lutheran Secondary Schools: Perceptions, Problems and Possibilities*, was accepted by the Academic Board of the University of Divinity, Melbourne in February, 2017.

Read more...

Want to Live Longer? Consider the Ethics

Written by John K. Davis, Professor of Philosophy, California State University, Fullerton.

Excerpt: “Life extension – using science to slow or halt human aging so that people live far longer than they do naturally – may one day be possible.

“Big business is taking this possibility seriously. In 2013 Google founded a company called Calico to develop life extension methods, and Silicon Valley billionaires Jeff Bezos and Peter Thiel have invested in Unity Biotechnology, which has a market cap of US$700 million. Unity Biotechnology focuses mainly on preventing age-related diseases, but its research could lead to methods for slowing or preventing aging itself.

“From my perspective as a philosopher, this poses two ethical questions. First, is extended life good? Second, could extending life harm others?”

Read more...

America’s Clergy are Teaming Up With Scientists

Written by Rebecca Heilwe, this article looks at a program for scientific education among American clergy.

“The [American Association for the Advancement of Science] had begun to wrestle with how they could address the country’s intensifying science-religion divide. The non-profit organization had become attuned to the fact that some Christians—and especially evangelicals—often went to religious leaders, instead of scientists, for answers to scientific questions. The society saw an opportunity: Educate future religious leaders in any and all things STEM.”

Read more...

Do you have an article to submit to Christian Perspectives on Science and Technology?
Contact the editorial team via www.iscast.org/journalpage
Event News

Revised Edition of God and Science in Classroom and Pulpit Now Available

This book will assist in creating a conversation on how to discuss the issues of science and faith, especially creation and evolution, in an open and honest way.

Controversies about science and faith – especially debates about creation and evolution – continue to engage Christian teachers and pastors. How do they deal with such questions and respond with answers that are both informed and intelligent?

This book acknowledges that science can be an uncomfortable topic in Christian schools and churches. The authors recognise that teachers and pastors need a framework for thinking through the hype surrounding these topics so that they can identify the genuine core concerns of people of faith. Written by three highly respected and experienced educators and pastors, the book will assist in creating a conversation and dialogue on how to discuss science and faith in an open and honest way. It will also help teachers and pastors in their ministry of shaping the minds and hearts of members of the Christian community.

Buy the book

ISCAST Victoria Presentation
Friday 30 November

Lecture by Dr Graeme McLean:
"Does physics declare the glory of God?"
This talk continues his discussion from COSAC 2018, and will address some of the logical links between science and Christianity.

Venue:
Andrew Wood's home. Please contact the office for the address.

Please contact ISCAST Vic for further details:
Email: admin@iscast.org
Phone: 03 9254 1045

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