

PréCis

Breaking News



The 2016 Student Essay competition is open. More details can be found on Page 2 or online at www.cis.org.uk/students/essay-competition



Southern Conference

Miracles?

- can a scientist believe in miracles?

**Saturday 22nd
October, 2016**

**The King's Centre,
Osney Mead, Oxford
OX2 0ES**

More details - please see
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CiS Launch events

A central part of the new project, funded by TRT, are a series of 'launch lunches' in universities around the UK that we are hosting. The aim of these lunches is to invite local students and student pastors and introduce them to the work of CiS, familiarize them with our resources, and bring the idea of student CiS groups. Our hope is that we will be able to resource the student pastors to be able to better support their science students, and galvanize the students into forming a student CiS group. The majority of CiS members have their main engagement with us through the 30+ local groups that are already active around the UK. However, we are aware that while these groups are a great place for professionals to connect, they often do not move at the same pace as the student world, nor to the same termly schedule. We think the best model for each university is to

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Oxford launch lunch

have both a local group and a student group, which interact and support one another, but can move at their own pace.

CiS student groups are an ideal place to get to know other Christians who are scientists and to tackle together both the historical areas of perceived tension between science and faith, and the emerging areas that arise with new breakthroughs and technologies. We believe that creating space for these things to be worked through is really important for students, and so we are encouraging the students who attend each event to consider whether they could be the driving force behind getting a group started in their university.

Our first two events have successfully taken place in Oxford and Cambridge. Our inaugural event in Oxford, on 27th April, was a chance for us to bring Oxford students and student pastors together in this format, with about fifteen guests. We had a great time together at The Mitre on the High Street, joined by some local CiS members who were able to share some of their own experiences of being a Christian in science with our guests. We had a buffet lunch together, Andrew gave a short presentation about the challenges and joys of being a Christian in the sciences, then I spoke about all we are doing in CiS at the moment to focus on students, and the benefits of being in a student CiS group. We held a very similar event in Cambridge on 1st June at Emmanuel United Reformed Church, in the city centre. Again, this was a great time bringing students and student workers together, linking scientists from across the city, and inspiring people to engage further with science and faith. We have many more events still to do across the UK, so do pray for us as we organize them, for the people who will attend, and for those who have already come that the seeds that have been planted will continue to grow!

2016 Student Essay Competition

We are delighted to announce the 2016 Student Essay Competition is now open! This year with bigger prizes!

£500 First prize £250 Second prize £100 Third prize.

Please see the full details online before submission. The link can be found at <http://www.cis.org.uk/students/essay-competition/>

Essays should be no more than 1,000 words long, and submitted to the CiS Secretary (secretary@cis.org.uk) by midnight on 30th August 2016.

Don't forget that you can submit essays individually, in pairs or as a group. Good luck!

Understanding suffering in the light of science



Can a robot have a soul?



"Science, Faith and the Student"



Canadian Dayna Nelson on her recent UK Visit

My reason for visiting CiS was to connect with the UK affiliate of the Canadian Scientific and Christian Affiliation, to learn more about Science and Faith and to see how local chapters are run in order to help start one at the University of Waterloo.

I was warmly welcomed by CiS and started my visit at St. Andrews University in Scotland. Dr. Jennifer Wiseman spoke of her fascination with the stars and how that lead her to ponder the magnitude of it and God's place in that.

Next, I attended a talk by Dr. Stephen Williams in Belfast who engaged with the ideas about the Fall. We met the following day where we started discussions about transhumanism, which we have continued. My visit to Oxford entailed a talk by Roger Wagner and Andrew Briggs about the intersection of Art and Science which stirred up questions about how it is that we perceive beauty. It has lead me to ponder the questions of the purpose of perceiving beauty, particularly from an evolutionary perspective. I met Prof. Andrew Briggs, who will be visiting the University of Waterloo and has offered to do an event for us. The next lecture was held at the University of Southampton by Prof Sir Colin Humphreys, whom I met two years ago at our annual conference in Canada. He spoke of whether scientists can believe in miracles. It was concluded that of course there is a place for a belief in both. He further encouraged us to take the mandate to defend our faith seriously.

Lastly I met with Dr. Christina Biggs, who gave me helpful pointers on how to run meetings. In regards to what I found with how the meetings are run, they are run differently, based on what each chapter has decided it can afford to do. The

meetings were all run by faculty, which is different from how ours in Waterloo will be run, as there will be more of a student focus and leadership. I found that the meetings' audience extended beyond the University community, which we hope to do in Canada as well. Some chapters ran their lectures once per term that would pull over 200 people, while others had more frequent meetings that would pull 50 every other week or every month. I have been advised to not burn ourselves out, so we will bear that in mind when discussing how we want to run our chapter.

Overall, I thought it was a tremendous visit, and I want to take this opportunity to thank you for making me feel so incredibly welcomed! It did not go unnoticed. We would be most pleased to receive you in Canada again!

2016 CiS Student Conference Report

On the 20th February, CiS students gathered at St. Luke's Church Centre in Birmingham to attend the Christians in Science Student Conference 2016, entitled 'Science and Society: Science and Faith in Action'.

As Christians we are called to influence society for God's kingdom and this years' conference aptly examined the ways we *all* can do this through the vehicle of scientific study, irrespective of position within science.

The day started with an interesting talk by Dr Cheryl Hunt on the topic of bioethics and specifically genetic modification (GM). Dr Hunt, a theologian from Exeter with a background in



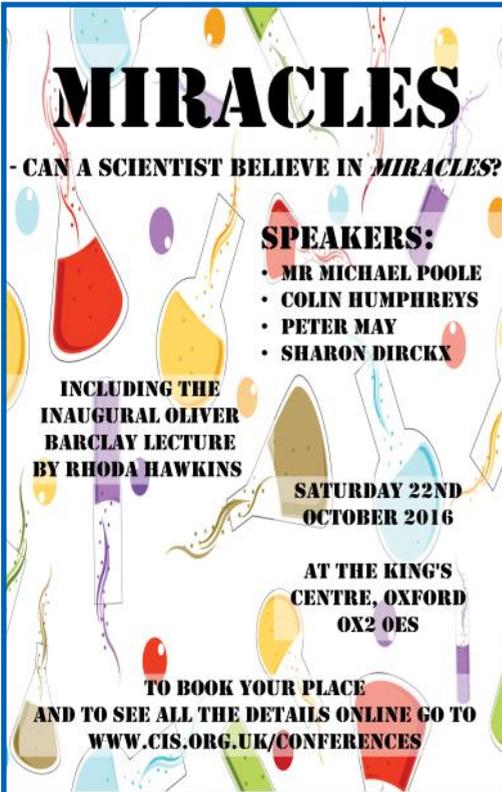
molecular biology, outlined the theory and uses of GM, including the exciting recent development of CRISPR (a novel genetic engineering technique). Interestingly, she described how “*CRISPR does not necessarily add new ethical issues, it just accelerates the need to tackle current issues, as they now could become a reality sooner.*” Cheryl reminded us that it is important to have a ‘*imago Dei*’ perspective when considering bioethics and GM – does a certain GM reflect the image of God or does it show man trying to be like God?

For the second talk, Dr Clare Foster shared a Christian perspective on current health inequalities in the world, challenging us about how we should respond as Christians to this issue. Dr Foster (a Public Health Registrar) detailed the socio-economical determinants of health and the

‘inverse care law’: despite a decrease in need, the wealthier you are the greater your access and provision is to healthcare. The Christian response to the existence of health inequalities, she stated, is centred on ‘loving your neighbour as yourself’ and **Proverbs 31:8-9** – “*Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly, defend the rights of the poor and needy.*” The church is doing great things to reduce health inequality, such as running food banks, community groups and homeless shelters; but it certainly can do more.

This lead on nicely (after a quick tea break) to a talk by Francesca Day, an Oxford Physicist and member of the ‘Giving What We Can’ charity-research foundation, on giving what we can to the poor. She encouraged a radical giving philosophy, highlighting Scriptures such as **Matthew 19:21** – “*If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven.*” She helpfully addressed the questions and decisions faced by Christians when choosing if or how to give money away.

The next section of the day contained two student contributions: two short talks called ‘Astrobiology, theology and society’ and ‘Science and Faith in the life of a believer’ by Jamie Boulding (University of Cambridge) and Anna Pearson (University of Oxford), respectively. The first talk discussed Astrotheology and the impact of the potential existence of extra-terrestrial life on our understanding of the incarnation of Jesus. The talk contained a thought-provoking quote by John Polkinghorne: “*If little green men on Mars need saving, then God would take little green flesh.*” Jamie usefully outlined how Christians should have a constructive, yet simultaneously critical, engagement in the search for extra-terrestrial intelligence.



MIRACLES
- CAN A SCIENTIST BELIEVE IN *MIRACLES*?

SPEAKERS:

- MR MICHAEL POOLE
- COLIN HUMPHREYS
- PETER MAY
- SHARON DIRCKX

INCLUDING THE
INAUGURAL OLIVER
BARCLAY LECTURE
BY RHODA HAWKINS

SATURDAY 22ND
OCTOBER 2016

AT THE KING'S
CENTRE, OXFORD
OX2 0ES

TO BOOK YOUR PLACE
AND TO SEE ALL THE DETAILS ONLINE GO TO
WWW.CIS.ORG.UK/CONFERENCES

Anna then looked at some common issues faced by scientists who hold a Christian faith, giving her own perspective on this. Should we 'stick our heads in the sand' when faced with science and faith issues? Or can we as Christians righteously engage in these issues? Anna commendably encouraged us all to do the latter and prayerfully work through questions about how science and faith fit together. She then briefly explored the false dichotomy that exists between science and faith and more explicitly between scientific and Christian endeavour, giving the exhortation that irrespective of our vocation, we should view it as an opportunity to glorify God, pointing to Colossians 3:23 – "*Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters.*"

After a nice lunch break, which gave us time to chew over some of the issues raised, Emily Sturgess (CiS Development Officer) gave us an encouraging update on all things CiS, including the CiS local groups, student essay competition and the new student web magazine. There are certainly lots of opportunities to get involved! Exciting times are definitely ahead with all the free resources CiS have produced: new 'being a Christian in...' booklets for Christians working or studying in science, the 'thinking about...' leaflets on a range of science and faith issues and of course the new CiS App.

Dr Mike Clifford (an associate Professor from the University of Nottingham) gave the penultimate talk on sustainable engineering, exposing how we as humans are addicted to technology and how we are over-using the earth's available resources. He gave an interesting quote from Madeleine



Somerville writing about sustainability in the Guardian, who said "*Yes, you recycle. But until you start reducing, you are still killing the planet.*" Mike showed us some new sustainable technologies being used in the developing world and then challenged us to consider whether our research fits into the sustainable agenda and what we could live without.

The final talk entitled 'futurology and what it is to be human' was given by Dr Pete Moore, a science communicator. He showed us how humans strive for technology that enables biological enhancement, yet all current human enhancements (which aid the body after injury or disease) are less than the healthy human original. It was refreshing to be reminded of what an amazing feat of creation the human body is and how we are 'fearfully and wonderfully made' (Psalm 139:14).

At the end of the day's talks we were offered the time to discuss questions raised over the course of the day in small groups. This was a useful time and provided the opportunity for all present to share their opinions on questions such as: 'How does our Christian understanding of humanity shape our view on research into human genetic enhancement', 'What can churches do to reduce health inequalities?' and 'Is my life sustainable?'

Overall, this was a highly intellectually stimulating day. Everybody who attended was able to grapple with issues faced by Christian scientists within society. We left with practical ways in which we as Christians can display our science and faith in action and how we can use our God-given positions within science to positively impact society.

The day ended with an enjoyable meal out in a Birmingham restaurant, where networking continued and friendships were grown. Can't wait for next year! - report by **James Ashley**

LOCAL GROUP NEWS



If you wish to start a Local Group in your area, please get in touch with the Development Officer, (do@cis.org.uk). Details of events are available on the new CiS App and at www.cis.org.uk/events.

Below is a catch up on what has been happening in some of the local groups, as well as upcoming events

ABERDEEN

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

BIRMINGHAM

If you would like details of future events in Birmingham please e-mail cis@guild.bham.ac.uk or join the Birmingham CiS Facebook group at www.facebook.com/groups/cisbirmingham.

BRISTOL

In 2016 we launched the “Mind” themed series, with Rev Prof Alasdair Coles “*What can neuroscience tell us about faith?*” and then in March 2016 Professor Glynn Harrison spoke on “*Ego Trip: does the self-esteem movement promote, or impede, human flourishing?*” Glynn argued very convincingly that the answer was in

the negative. We would recommend this theme to other CiS groups to consider. In June Dr Lisa Goddard gave an excellent and highly informative talk on “*The Cognitive Science of Religion: Are we born to believe?*”

Friday 30 Sept, at 7:30pm Dr Ian Holyer, Senior Lecturer in Engineering, University of Bristol, on “*Computers and Life*”. Tyndale Baptist Church, 139 Whiteladies Rd, Bristol BS8 2NR.

Wednesday 16 Nov, at 7:30pm Professor Keith Ward, Emeritus Regius Professor of Divinity, University of Oxford, “*Why Stephen Hawking is nearer to God than he thinks*”. St Mary Redcliffe Church, 12 Colston Parade, Avon, Bristol BS1 6RA.

For more information please contact Tina Biggs (cmdbiggs@googlemail.com)

CAMBRIDGE

For details of events in Cambridge please go to <http://www.faraday.st-edmunds.cam.ac.uk/>

CENTRAL SOUTH

For information on meetings please contact Peter May on petergeorgemay@gmail.com

DUNDEE

For more information on future events please contact christiansinsciencedundee@gmail.com.

DURHAM

For more information on meetings please contact Alan Roberts (a.w.roberts@durham.ac.uk)

EDINBURGH

For more details about the group, please email Gavin Merrifield (g.d.merrifield@gmail.com)

GLASGOW

For details of future events in Glasgow please contact Prof Paul Younger on paul.younger@glasgow.ac.uk

HARROW

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

IPSWICH

For information about future events in Ipswich please contact Dr John Ling (jjling@btopenworld.com).

IRELAND

Prof Colin Humphreys (Cambridge University) has agreed to give the 2016 Walton Lecture in the fall, in venues in Cork, Dublin and Belfast. Dates and locations to be confirmed.

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

LEEDS

Tuesday 27 Sept, at 7:30pm (refreshments) for 8pm start. Ruth Bancewicz, Faraday Institute, University of Cambridge, will speak on "Wonders of the living World: Biology and Belief". An introduction to the new Test of Faith series of Bible Studies at the Sanctuary, South Parade Baptist Church, Kirkstall Lane, Headingley LS6 3LF.

Further details of meetings please contact John Lockwood at jllockwood1@me.com

LIVERPOOL

The Liverpool group urgently need volunteers to step forward to take on leading this group. Neville Cobbe did a wonderful job leading, but has recently moved to Ireland. If a replacement isn't found, this group will close. Why not talk to a few friends to help out and enable this group to keep moving forward.

Please contact the Development Officer (via email on do@cis.org.uk). To discuss further or to volunteer.

LONDON

In March, Christians in Science London held our inaugural day conference: "Wisdom in an Age of Science", at St Andrew's Undershaft church in the city of London. Prof Tom McLeish, Rev Dr Andrew Sach, Dr Jennifer Tweedy and Rev Mel Lacy took us through the topics of the theology of

science, what it means to be wise, mission in the workplace, and engaging the minds of the next generation. 30 people attended the conference, with a large mix of students and professionals, and of Christians and those who are investigating Christianity. We also sold several books by Tom McLeish, Andrew Sach and Benjamin Chang throughout the day.

The conference was generally deemed a success, with many attendees asking about future events and a potential annual conference series.

For more details about the group contact Benjamin Chang on cins.london@gmail.com, or visit the website <https://cislondon.org>.

MANCHESTER

The Manchester Group has met 3 times in the past academic year, considering topics as diverse as "Is Faith Delusion?", "Can a Christian believe in Heaven and Angels?" and "Evolution and Creation - what's all the fuss about?".

We have had speakers both from Manchester and from further afield. Numbers attending can be affected by traffic congestion due to major football matches – of which we have a lot! – but are generally 25-45 people, and the discussion can be quite lively!

For more information, please contact the Secretary on sec.cismanchester@yahoo.co.uk.

NORWICH

Monday 18 July, at 7:30pm Daniel De Haan, Cambridge Neuroscience/Theology Dept on "*Have neuroscientists disproved freewill? Or misunderstood it?*" Trinity Meeting Place, Holy Trinity Church, Essex St. Norwich NR2 2BJ.

Monday 19 Sept, at 7:30pm Dr Peter Bussey, University of Glasgow on "*Quantum Spirituality - is there such a thing?*"

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

NOTTINGHAM

For further information, please contact Geoff Bagley at geoffbagley@me.com.

OXFORD

For more information, please contact Diana Briggs at diana.briggs@wolfson.oxon.org.

READING

The Reading group meet bimonthly in central Reading. Please contact Dave Law for details at dave@readingatwork.org.

ROYAL HOLLOWAY

For more information please contact Oliver Edy at oliver.edy.2012@live.rhul.ac.uk.

SHEFFIELD

The Sheffield CiS group meet every fortnight at the University of Sheffield in the Hicks Building Lecture Theatre 11, for prayer and discussion during the university term. For details please email shefuni.cisc@gmail.com or join their Facebook group www.facebook.com/groups/shefuni.cisc

SOUTH WEST

For more information on events in the South West, please contact Prof David Huntley at dhuntley@plymouth.ac.uk.

ST ANDREWS

For more info about the undergraduate group please contact Dr Andrew Torrance (abt3@stinformation.andrews.ac.uk), Joshua Sharp (jas29@st-andrews.ac.uk) or Laura McCullagh (ism4@st-andrews.ac.uk). For the postgraduate group, please contact Dr Rebecca Goss (rjmg@st-andrews.ac.uk).

SURREY

April 2016, Dr Andrew Sims spoke to us on “*Is Faith a Delusion? Is Religion Good for your Health?*” It was a lively meeting - well attended, with several new visitors, psychologists and nurses, fielding interesting questions. Many of the visitors were keen to attend again. Next in June,

Dr Ruth Bancewicz spoke on “*Wonder in the Living World - Biology & Belief.*” In connection with it, Joy Perkins hopes to launch a Photography Competition, with an Exhibition at the local gallery in Croydon.

For more details please contact Joy Perkins at joyeperkins@googlemail.com.

THREE COUNTIES BORDERS

At our inaugural meeting last Autumn, Dr Rodney Holder spoke on “*Big Bang Big God*”, which attracted an audience of more than 150 people. The second meeting was held in February when Prof Keith Fox spoke on “*Genes and Identity*” which on a very inclement evening attracted some 125 people. Our first year finished in June when Martin and Margot Hodson spoke about “*Sustaining God's Earth*”.

So far we have been successful in attracting church goers (scientists and non-scientists) and will continue to do so in our programme for 2016/17. This commences with a lecture by Prof John Wyatt on Nov 15th, at St Peter's Church Frimley (more details in the next PreCiS).

In addition we are exploring the idea of Science, Faith and Ethics Workshops as a means of attracting non-church going scientists, engineers and technologists to our Group.

For more information please contact John Russell at chynoweth.jw@gmail.com.

TYNESIDE & NORTHUMBERLAND

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

WEST MIDLANDS

For information on The West Midlands Group please contact Godfrey Armitage at g.n.armitage@warwick.ac.uk.

WORCESTER

For more information on Worcester events please contact Jim Smith on jgsmith29@aol.com.