

PréCis

**Save the
date**



**2017 Southern Conference
Saturday 21st October
The King's Centre, Oxford
OX2 0ES. More details in
the Summer PreCiS.**

2017 Northern Conference

***'Playing God?
Research, ethics and
practice in modern
medicine'***

Saturday 13th May

Church of St John the
Evangelist,
Kingston Park Avenue
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE3 2HB

For more details see page 5



CiS Student Conference 2017 Report

By Julia Morris

PhD Student, University of Sheffield

This was my very first CiS Student Conference and I was feeling a little nervous as I stepped out of the cold and rain into the King's Centre. My feelings of trepidation quickly dissipated as I was warmly welcomed by Emily Sturgess. She helped me sign in and then directed me to a table that contained much needed coffee. I was soon chatting to another student also helping themselves to coffee. Before we knew it, registration was over and we were being called into the main room.

Emily corporately welcomed us to the conference entitled '*A Theory of Everything*' and opened up with prayer and an encouragement for us to foster an environment of openness and respect. She then handed

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over to Naomi Brehm, the Undergraduate Student rep on the CiS committee, who introduced the speakers and encouraged us to pray for them before and after each talk.

The first speaker was Professor Tom McLeish of the University of Durham. His dynamic talk was entitled '*A Medieval Theory of Everything: Lessons For Modern Challenges to Science and Religion*'. Tom spoke passionately and reminded us that we, as scientists, are natural philosophers. He stated that being a genius and theologically informed is great! He walked us through the lives and work of the natural philosophers; De Luce, Grosseteste, Aristotle and Augustine. Tom finished his talk by presenting Job 28, the Miner's Prayer, stating that, like a miner unearths treasures from beneath the earth, science also deeply sees. Tom's talk was really accessible, funny and engaging and I liked his humility, stating that he is a professor in one discipline but a student in others.



Dr Rhoda Hawkins of the University of Sheffield then spoke about '*Order and Disorder*'. Although I was familiar with the second law of thermodynamics, I haven't studied any physics since my GCSEs. I was slightly concerned that I wasn't going to follow it all. However, Rhoda did a good job of making her talk accessible to all present. She started off by clearly defining 'disorder' using really helpful animations. Rhoda walked us through examples of order and disorder in nematic liquid crystals phases, microtubule polymerisation in plant cells, quantum mechanics and astrophysics. She gave reference examples of order and disorder in the Bible and introduced the concept of 'open theism': the idea that God

is omniscient and omnipotent but limits himself.

Just before lunch we had a really animated talk from Zach (Kuin Tian) Pang, a PhD student with a background in mechanical engineering and bioengineering, and is now trying his hand at molecular biology. His talk was entitled '*Science and Faith in Singapore*'. He gave us a broad overview of the views to science and religion in Singapore and then presented a social media based study he had conducted. It was really amazing to hear his views on the subject and his enthusiasm to share of his revelations of the intrinsic link between science and Christianity. His passion in sharing the gospel was infectious. During lunch it was great to have the opportunity to personally speak with Zach, other PhD students and undergraduates.



After lunch Jon and Nay, representatives from the Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship (UCCF), spoke about the Science network for Christian Union members. This is a network that encourages CU members to think of science and their faith as interconnected.

Tom McLeish then promoted his newly-released co-authored book with David Hutchings, '*Let There Be Science*'. I was privileged to buy my copy and to have it signed!

It was interesting to be provided with an update on the students and young professionals by Emily. She pointed us to the broad range of resources provided by CiS and informed us of some courses available at the Faraday institute.

Next up was Dr Neville Cobbe who spoke on *'Chance and Necessity: On the Natural Philosophy of Modern Biology'*. Through his engaging presentation, Neville demonstrated that evolution has a structure and a pattern, indicating that the evolutionary process has constraints. He showed us some striking examples of convergent evolution from a molecular to whole organism level. Neville used scripture (Colossians 1:17, Hebrew 1:14) to reason that God is behind natural law. He finished his presentation up with a sentence that has stuck with me ever since *"our existence is contingent on God's providence"*; we are not here merely due to chance.

Chris Oldfield finished up the day by sharing a more philosophical view on *'The Theory of Everything'*. He reinforced that we are all studying natural philosophy. He began his talk by sharing his journey to philosophy to date. He walked us through the definitions and explanations of 'everything', 'existence (ontology)', 'explanation (metaphysics)' and finally 'theories'. "What there is, and what scientific theory is, are two very different things".

I didn't quite know what to expect of the CiS Student Conference 2017, however, it left me feeling really inspired and enthusiastic. Thank you to the organisers, speakers and delegates – it was great to be in a room full of brilliant minds who love Christ.



Students - during a coffee break

Interview with Meric Srokosz

Merich is a current member of the CiS Board of Trustees and has been a CiS member for many years. He is married to Anne and they have 4 adult children and 2 granddaughters. Merich has a BSc in Mathematics (1976) and a PhD



Merich Srokosz

in Applied Mathematics (1980) both from Bristol University. He also has a BA in Theology from the University of Gloucestershire (2005).

Merich is currently working for the National Oceanography Centre (NOC), in Southampton.

When did you become a Christian and how did that happen?

I became a Christian at University in 1975. I had arrived at University fairly agnostic in my views, as I wasn't really sure what I believed. At that time in the UK, there was growing influence from eastern religions. I started questioning "What is the meaning of it all?"

I met some Christians whose faith seemed to make a difference in their lives. I was invited to a meeting to hear David Watson speak. David was a vicar, leading missions at various universities throughout the UK at the time. I attended one of those missions in Bristol, after which I read a book written by him. I prayed the prayer at the end of the book and became a Christian.

Which aspect of science is your main point of interest?

My main area of interest is oceanography, although I started out as a mathematician. I completed my Ph.D on theoretical modelling of wave power devices in 1980.

I'm currently responsible for the Rapid Climate Change programme, which is looking at changes in the North Atlantic circulation and its effect on climate in the regions surrounding the North Atlantic.

When I started out, I was mainly doing maths on my own, but over the years this has changed. I now work with teams of people at sea with different scientific skills, such as biologists, physicists, chemists and geophysicists. We work on various oceanographic problems, which require interdisciplinary study, such as the effects of turbulent mixing supplying nutrients necessary for phytoplankton growth.

In the office, I work with the satellite data on computers, analysing the data and linking them to observations made at sea and to theoretical modelling.

What challenges have you come across in the science-faith world?

One of the main challenges is personally integrating what I believe as a Christian, with what I do as a scientist. On one level I feel that is very straight forward. I feel God called me to be a scientist. Therefore I have a responsibility to link what I understand scientifically, to what I believe as a Christian. I consider Oceanography to be fairly uncontroversial in terms of my faith, although on the climate side of things it can still be controversial for some people. I have been involved in assessing climate change for the last 20 years. I often find that non Christians are willing to accept that we humans are changing the climate, whereas some Christians do not accept the scientific facts. I find that sad.

At times, I find that scientific colleagues challenge me on things like evolution and creation. People often presume Christians just believe in 6 x 24 hour creation. Sometimes I have to get over that hurdle, before we can discuss anything else.

What do you do for fun?

My wife, Anne and I enjoy walking, going to the theatre or travelling. Anne is a



Meric and Anne Srokosz

geographer so we often take a holiday in areas of geographical interest like the Great Ocean Road in Victoria, Australia; Papua New Guinea; the Grand Canyon, Bryce Canyon or Yellowstone in USA. We visit places that are quite spectacular and it makes you realise how wonderful God's creation really is.

I worked as Associate Director of the Faraday Institute for Science and Religion from 2012 to 2015. I now find it a relaxing change from my oceanography research, to focus on science and Christian faith issues together.

What book or books have you found most helpful as a Christian?

Very early in my Christian life, I came across a gentleman called Donald MacKay who was a scientist and a Christian. He wrote a number of books on science and faith issues, including "The Clockwork Image - A Christian Perspective on Science". I still have this book. It cost me 40p to buy.

More recently I have read "The mission of God's people" by Christopher J. H. Wright. This is a good book for provoking thought about how we should interact with the world around us - for example looking after this wonderful world God has created for us. "Surprised by hope" by Tom Wright is another book that I have read recently and found helpful in thinking about how we should live now in the light of God's coming new creation.

What makes you go "WOW"?

I go "WOW" at so much of God's creation. Once we were out at sea in

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CHRISTIANS · IN · SCIENCE

cis.org.uk



Northern Conference 2017

Saturday 13th May

Church of St John the Evangelist

Kingston Park, Newcastle upon Tyne

PLAYING GOD? RESEARCH, ETHICS AND PRACTICE IN MODERN MEDICINE

Programme, with speakers and topics:

10:00 *Registration and refreshments*

10:50 *Welcome and introduction*

11:00 **Carol Jagger** - The challenges of ageing

11:40 **Robert Taylor** - "Power, Sex and Politics": mitochondrial disease and its prevention

12:20 **Rhoda Hawkins** - Order and disorder (Oliver Barclay Lecture)

13:00 *Lunch*

13:50 **Ray Middleton** - Ladder4Life: combining mental health innovations to help people with complex needs

14:30 **George Proud** - Is modern health care for everyone?

15:10 *Refreshments*

15:40 **John Wyatt** - Ethical questions in medicine today

16:20 *General discussion*

16:50 *Close*

Eventbrite registration closes at midnight on Friday 12 May,

Go to Eventbrite website - goo.gl/uKHJCb

You can turn up on the day without prior registration; the same fees apply.

Booking in advance helps with catering!

New CiS members please note – If you have joined CiS within the last 12 months, either as a student or a standard member, you are able to attend your first day conference "**free of charge**". The provision of lunch is not included in this offer. Please contact Bill Clegg (bill.clegg@newcastle.ac.uk) directly to register, and he will let you know how to pay for your lunch.

the North Atlantic, in a force 11 storm. Our research vessel is not very big, and we were bouncing through 12m high waves. A pod of pilot whales, including some baby whales, were swimming around the ship. They were so much in their element, body surfing and frolicking about in the breaking waves. It reminded me of Psalm 104 vs 26 *“Ships sail over the ocean, and playing there is Leviathan, the great sea creature you made.”* The whales just seemed to be having fun. That scene had so much WOW factor in it for me.

Another time, I was working near Madagascar and I saw flying fish. I always thought flying fish leapt out of the water and went straight back in, but these were like stones, skimming across the water's surface a number of times.

Meric aboard a research vessel



How long have you been involved with CiS?

I probably joined about 40 years ago, but I lapsed for a while in my 30's due to family and work commitments. I found it hard to maintain the involvement, as I had little spare time with a young family. I “rejoined” in my 40's and have been very involved since then.

If you could have a chat with a scientist from the past, who would it be?

I think it would be James Clerk Maxwell. (*James Clerk Maxwell - 13 June 1831 - 5 November 1879*) His electromagnetic theory is fundamental to so much of modern life. Computers, televisions, the internet, mobile phones, everything electronic that we use today, all depend on his theory.

He was obviously an extremely brilliant scientist and a Christian. It would be interesting to go back and chat with him and

ask things like “How did he put his science and faith together”? He didn't write anything very specific on the topic, as far as I can find out. He was clearly a very interesting character.

Where would you like to see CiS in five to ten years' time?

I guess the real challenge for CiS is to engage with younger scientists. This is what we are working on.

I feel we are engaging with students as they may have more “time” at that stage. But it is keeping that engagement through PhD, post-doctoral studies and into their early career, when they have other demands on their time, that is the challenge. I'd like to see an age profile for CiS that covers all age groups equally. Presently we are skewed towards the older end of the spectrum.

As a CiS Trustee, I see that as what we are aiming to do. We'd like to have younger people in the position to take on the “mantle” in five to ten years' time or so.

Science and faith issues will continue to be discussed in 10, 20 or even a 100 years' time as science is always changing. There will always be new things that come up. Evolution has been a big issue, but there are many new areas of challenge ahead - robotics, AI, human enhancement and genetic engineering, for example. We need younger people prepared to tackle those issues for their generation.

What advice would you give to a 20 year old student today?

Keep going with God and integrating your science and faith. Don't neglect the issues but engage with them. I find some scientists park them to one side rather than face them. I think in the west we increasingly live in a science dominated culture. We need to engage with people on these topics and keep our faith and Jesus relevant.

2018 Oliver Barclay Lecture Winner

CiS is delighted to announce the winner for the 2018 Oliver Barclay Lecture as Dr Jona Foster, Department of Chemistry, University of Sheffield. Jona will present his lecture for the first time at the Southern conference on October 21st.

Details about submitting nominations for the 2019 Oliver Barclay Lecture will be in the summer PreCiS.

LOCAL GROUP NEWS



If you wish to start a Local Group in your area, please get in touch with Emily, our Development Officer, at do@cis.org.uk

Details of all events are also available on the CiS App and on our website www.cis.org.uk/events.

ABERDEEN

This group needs a new leadership team, to enquire please contact Emily on do@cis.org.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

Discussion groups – first Friday of every month. Friday 16th June at 7:30pm, “*Wonders of the Living World: Biology and Belief.*” Speaker: Dr Ruth Bancewiz. No need to book – just turn up. Refreshments provided including homemade cake and tea. No entrance charge, but opportunity to give donation, suggested £4, to cover costs. Venue: Alma Church, 29 Alma Rd, Bristol BS8 2ES.

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

CAMBRIDGE

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

DUNDEE

Wednesday 19th May at 5:15pm, The Big Questions of Science and Religion – TV film premiere – “*Searching for a New Science.*” Presented by project originator David Strachan

(Tern TV) and producers David Malone and Mark Tanner. Venue: Physics Lecture Theatre A, University of St Andrews
Monday 8th May at 5:15pm, “*Reflections on Christian-Muslim Relations.*” Speaker: Prof Mona Siddiqui. Venue: Main Physics Lecture Theatre University of St Andrews

For more details on Dundee events please contact christiansinsciencedundee@gmail.com

DURHAM

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

This group needs a new leadership team, please contact Emily on do@cis.org.uk

EDINBURGH

This group needs a new leadership team, to enquire please contact Emily on do@cis.org.uk

GLASGOW

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

HARROW

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

HUDDERSFIELD

This is a new CiS student group at Huddersfield University. For more details please contact hadassah15ezekiel@hotmail.co.uk

IPSWICH

For more information about future events please contact Dr John Ling (jjling@bopenworld.com).

IRELAND

Details about the upcoming events in Ireland can

be found at www.cis.org.uk/ireland or contact Dr Peter van der Burgt (peter.vandenburgt@nuim.ie)

LEEDS

Further details of meetings please contact John Lockwood at jglockwood1@me.com

LONDON

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

MANCHESTER

Wednesday 3rd May at 6:00pm "*The Interstellar Church of Tomorrow*" Speaker: Dr Gavin Merrifield will consider extra-terrestrial intelligence, artificial intelligence and Christianity. Venue: Oxford Room in St Peter's House, Oxford Road, Manchester. (For those who came to meetings last year, this is downstairs in the same building.)

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

NORWICH

For more information please contact info@cis.norwich.org.uk

NOTTINGHAM

This group needs a new leadership team, to enquire please contact Emily on do@cis.org.uk

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

For more details join their Facebook group at www.facebook.com/groups/shefuni.cisc or email shefuni.cisc@gmail.com

SOUTHAMPTON

Thursday 4 May 2017 AT 7:30pm, God and Stephen Hawking: whose design is it anyway? Speaker: Prof John Lennox. Venue: Lecture Theatre A Building 46 (Physics A) University of Southampton.

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

SOUTH WEST

For more information on events in the South West, please contact Prof David Huntley at

dhuntley@plymouth.ac.uk

ST ANDREWS

Wednesday 19th April at 5:15pm, The Big Questions of Science and Religion – TV film premiere – "*Searching for a New Science.*" Presented by project originator David Strachan (Tern TV) and producers David Malone and Mark Tanner. Venue: Physics Lecture Theatre A, University of St Andrews.

Monday 8th May at 5:15pm, "*Reflections on Christian-Muslim Relations*". Speaker: Prof Mona Siddiqui. Venue: Main Physics Lecture Theatre University of St Andrews.

Undergraduate group please contact Dr Andrew Torrance (abt3@st-andrews.ac.uk), Joshua Sharp (jas29@st-andrews.ac.uk) or Laura McCullagh (ism4@st-andrews.ac.uk).

Postgraduate group, please contact Dr Rebecca Goss (rjmg@st-andrews.ac.uk).

SURREY

Tuesday 8th August, doors open at 6:00pm for 7:00pm start, "*Science and the Historicity of the Bible : the Exodus, the Long Day of Joshua and the Resurrection.*" Speaker: Sir Colin Humphreys, CBE Venue: Christ Church, between 861-863, Brighton Road, Purley, Surrey. CR8 2BN.

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

THREE COUNTIES BORDERS

Please contact John Russell at chynoweth.jw@gmail.com for more details.

TYNESIDE & NORTHUMBERLAND

Saturday 13th May - CiS Northern Conference 2017 - see page 5 for full details.

For information on Newcastle events, please contact Bill Clegg at bill.clegg@ncl.ac.uk

WEST MIDLANDS

For more 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

**Reminder - Book your ticket for
the CiS Northern Conference
Saturday 13th May 2017
Go to Eventbrite - goo.gl/uKHJCb**