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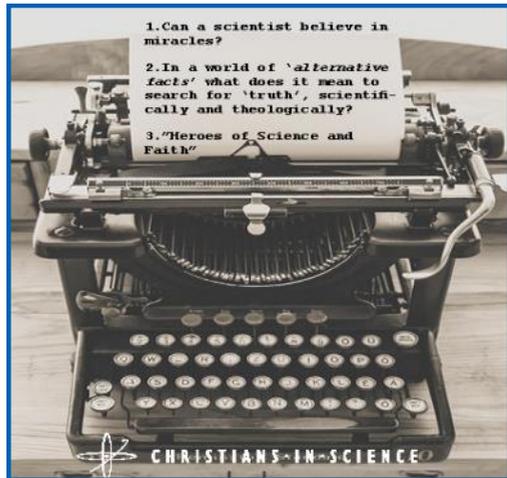
Mentors needed



Our mentoring scheme is successfully up and running, but we really do need more volunteer mentors. Please contact Emily on do@cis.org.uk for details.

*A small amount of your time
could be of great benefit
to a student*

2017 CiS Student Essay Competition



Southern Conference

**Saturday 21st
October, 2017**

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

**More details - please see
page 6**

Each year, CiS hosts an essay competition for students to enter, either individually, in pairs or as a group.

The essay competition is designed to encourage promising young thinkers and writers to explore different science-faith topics.

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

Deadline is midnight on 30th August 2017. Further details for the competition can be found at www.cis.org.uk/students/essay-competition/

Interview with the winner of the 2017 Oliver Barclay Lectureship, Dr. Jonathan Foster

Firstly, congratulations Jona, on winning the 2017 Oliver Barclay Lectureship. What will be the topic of your lecture?

I hope to speak about a chemist's perspective on the science and faith dialogue, about how the philosophy of chemistry is perhaps different to that of biology or physics. I'd like to talk about chemistry's role in the story of our origin - the origin of life - how inanimate matter became alive.

What was the impact, or importance, of being involved with CiS when you were a student?

CiS has definitely helped me a lot in terms of understanding my faith. I was first attracted to CiS by the then President of the Durham CiS Student Group, Clare, who is now my wife. I was particularly encouraged by the opportunity to chat with eminent scientists, who clearly have deeply-held Christian beliefs. Understanding their perspective on things often helped me to form my own views.

Why did you choose chemistry?

The thing that I really enjoy about chemistry is that you can be creative, and invent new things in a way that you perhaps don't so much in other sciences. It's not that I have to discover a new species, planet or law. I can have an idea for a completely new type of molecule or material that has never existed before... and work out how to make it. It's also very practical and you have something physical you can hold in your (gloved) hand to show for your work. Chemistry bumps up against so many other sciences and I love working with people from other disciplines to apply new techniques to better understand the materials I make and develop new applications.

I'm currently working with biologists to use the materials I make to help diagnose disease and with physicists to make solar panels.

Who have been the most important role models in your life?

My parents are my main role models in terms of my faith. I have always been encouraged to have a very questioning faith and to reach my own decisions about what I believe. At the same time, I am someone who can easily over-think things and get myself tied up in knots. Seeing the example of my parents and their faith helps me believe and trust in God even when I don't understand everything. I am also inspired by my wife Clare, because she is very much a "doer" and gets on with things. She is very practical about her faith, in terms of helping people and the way she approaches issues of science and faith. I think that in CiS, as in life, we need more "doers" than "thinkers".

You became a father last year, how are you finding the experience and what would you like to pass on to Joseph?

Life changing. Much harder work and much more interesting than I expected. I've definitely learnt a lot about unconditional love, both when he wakes up at 3 am for the 10th time and when he gives me a hug when I get home from work.

As Joseph grows, I would like to show him how to live as a good Christian and a good



Jona, Joseph and Clare Foster

scientist, demonstrate that those two things can go together. I want to give him room to question and to doubt, and the space to work things out for himself.

How has your faith helped you in your career?

I have always involved myself in curiosity-driven science and that is largely due to the incredible sense of wonder that I have of the universe around me. The more I understand about

creation, the more amazed and wonderful, I think it is - and therefore the more wonderful, I think God is.

What has been the most interesting thing you have discovered or worked on in your career?

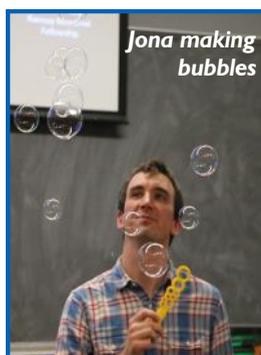
I've only had a couple of "eureka" moments in my scientific career. Much of my research has been into making new types of gels. The nice thing about gels is that you know when it's worked because you have something which is 99% liquid, but behaves like a solid. One of the things gels are useful for is loading up with drugs and allowing them to be released slowly into the body.

During my post-doc at Cambridge I had an idea for a completely new type of gel which would allow two similar drugs to be released at different rates. I had two students who together spent a year trying everything we could think of to get this to work, but we always ended up with a liquid with a clump of solid at the bottom. On the last day of the final students project, in a last ditch attempt, we tried it at ten times the concentration I thought we needed... and before my eyes it formed into a beautiful gel. YES! It took more than 18 months to finish the paper and we were nearly beaten by another group doing a similar thing. It's one of the discoveries I'm most proud of and it's been very satisfying to see other groups around the world take up the idea and develop it. It's also a telling tale about the amount of time and work it takes to turn an idea into reality, and how long one eureka moment has to sustain your curiosity before the next one!

You have done a lot of interactive presentations on science and faith for God and the Big Bang. What would be your favourite or most exciting demonstration and why?

My latest demos have been based around bubbles. My favourite demonstration recently was to a group of Year 3 kids, I knew I was onto a winner when I blew a single bubble and

they all went "Ooooh!"... There is something about the beauty of a bubble that seems to evoke this sense of wonder in all of us whatever our age. I went on to make giant bubbles, cubic bubbles, bubble



volcanoes, and juggle bubbles. I encourage the students to think scientifically about why bubbles are the shape and colour they are, how we can investigate the way they behave, and how we can play with their structure to change their properties.

I also try to show how far from diminishing our sense of wonder, understanding a bit about the science of bubbles should increase our sense of awe about the world. For example, if a soap molecule were the size of a beach ball, then they would form a bubble the size of the earth. This shows just what a feat of engineering a bubble really is! It would be quite impossible to create a structure on this scale if we had to assemble the parts one by one. I use this principle of "self-assembly" in my own research, designing molecules that stack together in different ways to create different structures and materials.

I have also helped develop a practical session for students called Chemistry Cluedo. It's a "who dunnit" in which the students have to use kitchen chemistry to identify the murderer. For example they use chromatography to identify a poisoned pen from stain on the victims shirt and extract the DNA from a strawberry found at the crime scene. I try and use the process to highlight how being a scientist is like being a detective in that we have to put together different pieces of evidence to understand what is going on. We need to apply the same approach to questions of faith, but to do this we also need to consider other types of

evidence such as testimony from witnesses and understanding the motivation of those involved. I think doing this in a fun and practical way, really helps get these messages across.

What makes you go "WOW" outside of work?

I love climbing. I love the sense of freedom you have half way up a mountain. You know that not many people have been where you are. You have this beautiful view of the world stretched out in front of you. What an amazing creation we have! How awesome is our God!



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

I would like to chat with Dmitri Mendeleev, the Russian chemist who invented the Periodic Table of Elements in 1869. He managed to make sense of the whole of chemistry in such a neat and iconic way and reveal the beauty and order behind the building blocks of the visible universe.

Whilst other scientists had previously attempted to group known elements by their properties, the genius of Mendeleev was to leave spaces for elements that had not yet been discovered and predict their properties based on those nearby. I'd love to know what gave him the conviction to do this years before the proton or electron had even been discovered. The idea for the table apparently came to him in a dream after having worked on it for 3 days straight and by all accounts he led a truly remarkable life so I think he would be fascinating to chat to.

What challenges, if any, have you come across as a Christian and a Scientist ?

Working at different universities and in different departments, I have always been open about my faith and pleasantly surprised by how many of my colleagues were also Christian. I've

always managed to find a group of scientists who wanted to meet up for fellowship or prayer or bible study. I've made some great friends this way and always found it so encouraging and supportive to be surrounded by likeminded people.

In my experience "conflict" often occurs because scientists have a "Sunday school" understanding of what Christianity is, and Christians often have a "high school" understanding of what science is. If you bring both groups of people to an equal level and engage with them, often those perceived conflicts resolve themselves.

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

I got so much out of CiS as a student, both as an undergraduate and as a postgraduate, I would want that opportunity to be available to everyone, whichever university they are attending. I would like to see the growth of CiS at universities. I think the key challenge is continuity because the turnover of students is so fast. You may have someone very enthusiastic about running/forming a group, but within a year or 2 they will move on. We need to find a way to maintain the local CiS student groups otherwise we will always need to be re-seeding the group.

I think it is very important that we really support and equip those who are enthusiastic enough to organise things. I like our current resource packs we give to new groups. I think that for undergraduates, it may feel overwhelming to organise a speaker, particularly if they don't know them personally. It may be helpful to have a local or central person to suggest names of suitable contacts.

Here at Sheffield university, Rhoda Hawkins and I are members of staff. We've been trying to support the undergraduates. Rhoda has been very good at encouraging people to think about succession and plan for it.

CiS Northern Conference 2017

Report by Bill Clegg, a Tyneside & Northumberland CiS local group leader

This year's Northern Conference, on Saturday 13 May, returned to its 2013 and 2014 venue in the well-equipped modern building of the Church of St John the Evangelist, a Local Ecumenical Partnership in Kingston Park on the edge of Newcastle upon Tyne; this is familiar territory for me, as it was my church for 17 years before I moved up the Tyne valley in 2010. The kitchen facilities made it easy for us to provide refreshments, and a large M&S store across the road supplied the sandwiches for our lunch.

The conference theme was "*Playing God? Research, ethics and practice in modern medicine.*" It tackled a number of issues that are very much in the public view currently, including reproductive technologies, mental health problems, challenges of an ageing population, and the state of the NHS – not at all specialist and esoteric subjects! One of the reasons for the choice of theme was the international reputation of Newcastle as a centre for medical research and its clinical applications, and we were able to draw on expert local speakers to address the issues from a committed Christian perspective.

Carol Jagger, Professor of Epidemiology of Ageing, started off the programme with a talk on "*The challenges of ageing*", arising from rising life expectancy and the increasing proportion of elderly people. She presented

evidence to dispel some popular myths about getting older, showed some alarming inequalities across the UK (and noted that policy decisions are largely made by people living and working far away from the most disadvantaged regions – political and economic factors were inevitably raised and discussed many times during the day), and went on to discuss how we might address some of the true problems, particularly as Christians with scientific understanding.

Rob Taylor, Professor of Mitochondrial Pathology, led us next even further into controversial territory as he discussed "*Power, sex and politics: mitochondrial disease and its prevention*". Mitochondrial donation is better known through tabloid headlines as "3-parent babies", and Rob's talk provided some context to the science, regulatory process, ethics, and other aspects of the often heated debate on this newly licensed therapy. He addressed some of the ethical questions that have been asked, and balanced these with the hope offered to those suffering the consequences of complex disorders associated with chronic morbidity and mortality without any currently known therapeutic cure.

Rhoda Hawkins, a Physics Lecturer at Sheffield University, gave her Oliver Barclay Lecture, already delivered at the CiS Southern and Student Conferences, with the title "*Order and Disorder*". The talk encompassed a wide range of scientific areas and Christian theology, and addressed the question "Is God in control?" Among the scientific applications, medical topics arose through consideration of stochastic (random) processes including genetic mutations and their impact in cancer, and some of these points were picked up by later speakers.

Ray Middleton is directly involved in front-line mental health services, particularly for personality disorders, and currently works in

The second edition of *Connect*, our online student magazine is available at www.connect.cis.org.uk

This issue has many great articles about the Environment, written by students. There is an interview with Prof Sir Ghillea Prance and photos from around the world.

a Lottery-funded “Fulfilling Lives” programme based at Mental Health Concern on Tyneside. He began his talk on “Ladder4Life: combining mental health innovations to help people with complex needs” by saying he had just submitted his PhD thesis on which he has been researching part-time alongside his therapeutic work. He told several stories about how mental health problems have been addressed in the last 200 years, including his own personal experience of recovery from trauma and addiction through a new-found Christian faith. “Ladder4Life” is an approach he has developed to help others with such problems.

George Proud was formerly a Newcastle consultant surgeon with special interests in organ transplantation and endocrine surgery and has also served in ordained Anglican ministry. His additional interest in medical and surgical history provided a background for his talk asking “*Is modern health care for everyone?*”, in which he described the huge development from simple procedures 200 years ago, through the introduction of anaesthetics, antiseptics and antibiotics, into powerful but often expensive modern medical techniques. Today’s NHS faces serious financial pressures, and decisions have to be made on priorities and cost-effectiveness; these problems are exacerbated by increasing life expectancy and so the NHS is, to some extent, a victim of its own success. The question “What can realistically be afforded?” is now a serious one in the UK and western world in general, but in most of the world there is simply no hope of ever providing anything like comprehensive health care for all.

John Wyatt, Emeritus Professor of Neonatal Paediatrics at University College London and a Senior Researcher at the Faraday Institute in Cambridge, is a recognised authority on

medical ethics. To avoid too broad an approach, he chose to speak on “*Ethical challenges at the beginning of life – embryos, genomics and reproductive technology*”. He drew together a number of strands that had been spun during the day and explored how we might respond to their complex and troubling ethical challenges from the perspective of the historic Christian faith. This in turn raised questions of what it means to be human, and what kind of society we wish to build.

There was lively and constructive discussion after each of the talks, during the breaks, and in a final session before the day concluded. It was a most stimulating, informative and challenging event for the mixed and largely non-specialist participants. All the speakers are to be thanked and congratulated for their magnificent contributions. The talks were recorded and should be available to a wider audience through the CiS website in due course.

2017 CiS Southern Conference

The Penultimate Curiosity - how science swims in the slipstream of ultimate questions

Saturday 21st October

**The King’s Centre
Oxford OX2 0ES**

Speakers:-

- ◆ Andrew Briggs ◆ Pablo de Felipe
- ◆ Jennifer Wiseman ◆ Pete Jordan
- ◆ Roger Wagner

For more information please see our web site –

www.cis.org.uk/conference

Or contact our Executive Officer, Mary Browett,

on eo@cis.org.uk

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



LOCAL GROUP NEWS

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

ABERDEEN

We are looking for volunteers to organise events a couple of times per year or run a discussion group. Please contact Emily, our Development Officer on do@cis.org.uk to discuss.

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/ciscbirmingham

BRISTOL

Discussion groups – **NB** there is no meeting in August and the Sept meeting will be Friday 8th Sept. Discussion groups will then return to the first Friday of every month.

Friday 29th Sept at 7:30pm, “*Debates in Bible Archaeology*”. Speaker is Prof Alan Millard. Venue is Tyndale Baptist Church, 139 Whiteladies Rd, Bristol BS8 2QG

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.

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

Monday 9th October at 5:15pm, “*What Do Scientists Think about Religion?*” Speaker: Elaine Howard Ecklund in the Main Physics Lecture Theatre, University of St Andrews. For more details on Dundee events please contact christiansinsciencedundee@gmail.com

DURHAM

This group needs a new leadership team to organise events a couple of times per year or run a discussion group. Please contact Emily on do@cis.org.uk

EDINBURGH

We are looking for volunteers to organise events a couple of times per year or run a discussion group. Please contact Emily, our Development Officer on do@cis.org.uk to discuss.

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 (revlnorth@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@btopenworld.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.vanderburgt@nuim.ie)

LEEDS

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

LONDON

For more details on events for CiS London contact Benjamin Chang on cins.london@gmail.com

MANCHESTER

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

NORWICH

Monday 6th November at 7:30pm, "Caring for the weakest: Ethical challenges in managing sick and premature babies." Speaker: Dr Amanda Ogilvy-Stuart, Clinical Director of Rosie Hospital Cambridge and Senior Member of St Edmunds College Cambridge. Venue: Trinity Meeting Place, Essex St, Norwich. NR2 2BJ

For more information please contact sfnorfolk1@gmail.com

NOTTINGHAM

We need someone, or a couple of people, to take on the role of organizing the local meetings for CiS Nottingham. Please contact Emily, our Development Officer on do@cis.org.uk to discuss.

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 Simon Peatman at simon.peatman@sky.com for more information.

ROYAL HOLLOWAY

For more information please contact Oliver Eddy 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

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 on dhuntley@plymouth.ac.uk

ST ANDREWS

Monday 9th October at 5:15pm, "What Do Scientists Think about Religion?" Speaker: Elaine Howard Ecklund in the Main Physics Lecture Theatre, University of St Andrews.

For more details on the 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.

Tuesday 21st Nov, doors open 6:00pm, 7:00pm start, "*Cosmology, Stephen Hawking and God*" Speaker: Rev'd Dr Rodney Holder. 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

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

WEST MIDLANDS

For more information on events 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