



PréCis

Northern Conference

*Stewards of
creation: Christian
perspectives on the
environment*

See page 3



Volunteers needed at Cheltenham Science Festival and New Wine in Peterborough this summer!

Cheltenham Science
Festival: 4th - 9th June

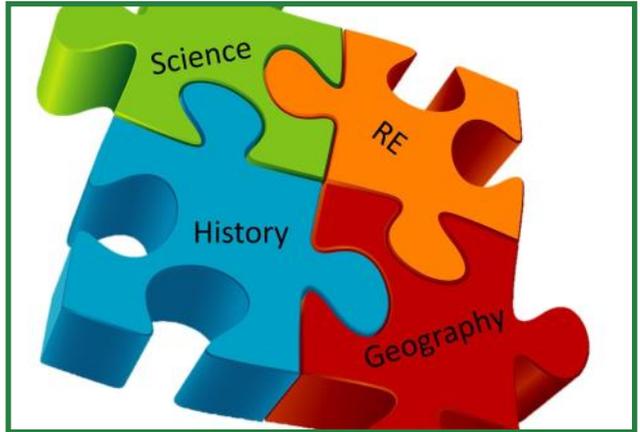
New Wine

Week 1: 27 July - 2

August

Week 2: 4 - 10 August

If you're interested
please contact Abigail
for further information
abigail@cis.org.uk



Developing Science and Religious Education in schools

Professor Berry Billingsley leads the LASAR (Learning about Science and Religion) team. Established in 2009, LASAR investigates school students' perceptions on science and religion and develops workshops and other material to capture their interest in this area. However, Berry has been interested in the relationships between science and religion in education for many years. Her PhD took 8 years of research, interviewing university students to discover underlying reasons for the widespread perception by young people that science and religion conflict. This is some of her journey.

TRT end of grant survey

Each CiS member will be emailed a link to an online survey in April. Please complete as soon as possible. This is an important condition of the TRT grant.

Thank you

While interviewing university students for her PhD, Berry discovered that their perceived challenges surrounding science and religion had developed as the students travelled through school - about 75% of university students interviewed already felt there **was** a conflict between science and religion.

The university students felt that schools taught each as separate subjects. The science teacher taught science and the Religious Education (RE) teacher spoke on religion, but the two areas never mixed. They were learning to compartmentalise the topics.

Students often felt that science teachers would give “what to think” or the “right” answers to questions. Their perception was that they shouldn’t ask questions that were “off topic” for a class. In science lessons, they spoke in the language of certainty; for example, when the universe began and there was a big bang. In RE, they felt the language was one of options; you could believe what the Jews believed, or what Christians believe, or you could believe what the scientists believe. The thoughts were

“out there” for you to choose between. This may not be what the science or RE teachers were saying, but this is what the university students felt they had “heard” at school.

Building on her PhD, Berry leads the LASAR project, which has since inspired the development of God and the Big Bang (GATBB). This is an initiative which sends Christian scientists into schools to give talks and run workshops on their work and faith. Berry and her team have found that it is transformative to put a scientist in front of students who is willing to discuss and encourage questions about science and religion. This is often the first time the students have encountered someone who seems to them to welcome and encourage their questions about how science interacts with religion, and interviews reveal that they can feel “blown away” by the experience. On occasion, Berry did find that some students had a science teacher who was happy to discuss questions that have a religious aspect, but in the main, the person who they perceived as a scientist was their science teacher – someone in turn who seemed to them to be uncomfortable about discussing how science relates to wider questions of meaning and purpose.

Berry and her team were also finding the separation of science and religion went back even further than secondary school years. The LASAR project revealed that many 10 year old primary

Continued on page 4



2019 Northern Conference
**“Stewards of creation:
Christian perspectives on the
environment”**

Saturday 18 May
St John’s College, Durham

10:30 am to 5 pm

Speakers and topics (titles of talks to be confirmed)

- ◆ Carmody Grey (Durham): *a theological basis for creation care*
- ◆ Jonathan Leake (Sheffield): *sustainability*
- ◆ David Manning (Newcastle): *use of mineral resources*
- ◆ Darren Evans (Newcastle): *nature conservation*
- ◆ Nicholas Higgs (Bahamas): *suffering and the human condition* (Oliver Barclay Lecture)

Cost: £25 including lunch and refreshments; £15 for students

**Bookings will be available via Eventbrite
from late March**

school students were already accepting science and religion as separate subjects. Berry also found that this compartmentalisation of areas of enquiry applied to more than just science and religion. Some 10 year olds thought you couldn't mix science and history in a lesson – because they are separate subjects. One child said there was no need for geography in the timetable as geography is about facts but science already covers all the facts – so no need for geography. Another child explained you wouldn't put science and religion together in a lesson “because they're opposites”.

At primary school, students may have a topic such as studying a river, but it is often content knowledge; everything they need to know about the river. They often don't have an awareness of what each discipline they study has brought to their understanding of a particular topic or question. Berry found this way of thinking resonated with the attitude of the university students she had interviewed many years previously.

What can be done to help solve this problem? One approach that works well is to ask scientists, theologians and other scholars who are comfortable with discussing how science and religion relate to go into schools to invite and answer students' questions. Another development that is showing great promise is to embed cross subject discussions within the education system.

For example, both the science and RE teachers could jointly teach a class.



The latest LASAR project is called the Epistemic Insight Initiative, based on a need for students to understand all aspects of BIG questions. How can science, religion, history, and many other areas of enquiry help us to formulate answers to these fundamental questions about life and the nature of reality? If these are our answers now, how might they change as we make progress with advancing the frontiers of knowledge?

From the early years of her PhD spent trying to understand the problem by interviewing higher education students about their experiences of what happened in schools, Berry is now once again working with higher education students. The Epistemic Insight Initiative is working with trainee teachers who first learn about the pressures and barriers in schools that LASAR has uncovered and who then help to innovate and research teaching strategies designed to make education better.

The Initiative is investigating how we can



QUESTIONS

in Science and Faith

Cambridge Summer Course, 30 June - 4 July 2019

How do we know what we know? Where have we come from? Are we nothing more than...? How does science respond to ethical challenges?

Think through these questions with the help of internationally renowned experts in the company of participants from all over the world as well as exploring the beautiful city of Cambridge.

Communicating Big Questions in Science and Faith

Wednesday 3rd July 2019, Cambridge

This day-long workshop is aimed at all who would like to become more effective scientific communicators, with a specific focus on exploring and communicating the interactions of science and religious faith in exciting and engaging ways with young people, media and the general public.

Part of the Faraday Institute Summer Course – come to the whole course or just the workshop.

In collaboration with Christians in Science – bursaries available for CiS student members.

www.faraday.cam.ac.uk



embed a way of thinking in schools whereby instead of only teaching students how to answer questions that are presented and framed by the boundaries around single subjects, there are also opportunities to think BIG and engage in epistemological discussion that bridges across subjects. If we can achieve that, then asking questions and talking about science and religion together may come quite naturally to school students in the future.



Prof Berry Billingsley

Biography:

Berry Billingsley is Professor of Science Education and leads the LASAR (Learning about Science and Religion) research team at Canterbury Christ Church University. Berry is also a CiS Trustee.

Her interests include Epistemic Insight, young people's engagement in science, artificial intelligence, Big Questions bridging science, religion and the wider humanities and the communication of science and technology news in the media.

An Oxford physics graduate, her first career was with the BBC where she produced and presented television and radio programmes including BBC World Service's 'Science in Action', BBC TV's 'Tomorrow's World' and BBC Education's 'Search out Science'. She then travelled to Australia, to become a senior project manager with the Department of Education.



For more about the Epistemic Insight Initiative including forthcoming conferences and events for schools, please email [Berry berry.billingsley@canterbury.ac.uk](mailto:berry.billingsley@canterbury.ac.uk) and visit www.epistemicinsight.com

For more information on LASAR or GTBB projects, please see their website - <http://lasarcentre.com/> or <https://www.templetonworldcharity.org/projects/god-and-big-bang>

Urgently Wanted CiS Membership Secretary

CiS is looking for a new membership secretary to take over from Fran Armitage, who has been doing a great job in this position for many years.

This is a voluntary and rewarding position, and involves maintaining the membership database, looking after membership renewals and payments and communicating with members as necessary throughout the year. In addition, there are four committee meetings per year in London.

The position would suit someone nearing retirement or wanting a part-time voluntary role with a variable schedule. It usually takes up to 5 hours a week, but can rise significantly for a few weeks in February/March prior to the renewal of annual subscriptions. You can be based anywhere in mainland UK. Familiarity with data-bases, spreadsheets, mail-merge and social media essential.

For more details, contact secretary@cis.org.uk for information in the first instance.

If you wish to start a Local Group in your area, please get in touch with Abigail, 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.

BRISTOL

Discussion groups – first Friday of every month.
Friday 21st June, 7pm: *Our Fragile Planet - Beliefs, values and commitments*. Speaker: Revd Dr Chris Sunderland. Location: Redland Church Hall, Redland Green Rd, Bristol BS6 7HE
For more information, please contact Christina Biggs - cmbbiggs@gmail.com

CAMBRIDGE

For details of events in Cambridge please go to <https://faraday-institute.org>

DUNDEE

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

HARROW

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

HUDDERSFIELD –students

For details please contact Omololu Fagunwa on fagunwaomololu@yahoo.com.

IPSWICH

For more information about future events please

LOCAL GROUP NEWS



contact Dr John Ling - jjling@btopenworld.com

IRELAND

For details on meetings please contact Dr Neville Cobbe - neville.cobbe@yahoo.co.uk

LEEDS

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

LONDON

For more details about the London group please email cins.london@gmail.com

MANCHESTER

Wednesday 1st May, 6 p.m. to 7.15 p.m: "God, Science and Curriculum". Speaker: Hannah Malcolm . Location: St Peter's House, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9GH

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

NORWICH

Monday 24th June, 7:30 - 8:45 pm: *Children are the Future: Exploring Science and Faith with Young People*

Speakers: Lizzie Henderson and Steph Bryant (Faraday Institute for Science and Religion, Cambridge)

Location: The Meeting Place, Holy Trinity Church, Trinity Street, Norwich NR2 2BJ

Please contact sfnorfolk@gmail.com for more details.

OXFORD

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

OXFORD - Students

For details please contact Matthew Patterson - matthew.patterson@physics.ox.ac.uk

READING

For information on Reading events please email Dave Law at cisreading@yahoo.com

SHEFFIELD

There is a monthly meeting for staff at Sheffield University, on the 1st Wednesday of every month at 11am, in "Coffee Revolution" in the Students' Union. Please contact Dr Rhoda Hawkins on rhoda.hawkins@sheffield.ac.uk for more detail.

SHEFFIELD - Students

For details please contact Rory McBride - rmcbride1@sheffield.ac.uk

SOUTH WEST

For more information on events please email cissouthwest@gmail.com

SOUTHAMPTON

For information about the group please email Peter May (southampton@cis.org.uk)

ST ANDREWS

For details on the Undergraduate group please contact Dr A Torrance (abt3@st-andrews.ac.uk), Joshua Sharp (jas29@st-andrews.ac.uk) or Laura McCullagh (lsm4@st-andrews.ac.uk). Postgraduate group, please contact Dr Rebecca Goss (rjmg@st-andrews.ac.uk).

SURREY

For details on meetings, please contact Joy Perkins at joyeperkins@googlemail.com

SURREY HEATH

Tuesday February 12th, 7pm: "*Chaos, Chance and the Character of God*". Speaker: Professor Paul Ewart .

Venue: St Paul's Church, Camberley

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

TYNESIDE & NORTHUMBERLAND

Hosting this year's CiS Northern Conference

"Stewards of creation: Christian perspectives on the environment"

Saturday 18th May.

Location: St John's College Durham

For information on the conference please see our website - www.cis.org.uk.

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

UCL - Students

If you would be interested in helping to run this group, please contact Abigail, our Development Officer to discuss - do@cis.org.uk

WEST MIDLANDS

For more information please contact Godfrey Armitage on g.n.armitage@warwick.ac.uk

WORCESTER

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

YORK

For more information please email christiansinscienceryork788@gmail.com

Reminder - Annual CiS Membership renewal

All membership renewal notices are posted during February, March and April. If you have any questions please email Fran Armitage, our membership secretary, on membership@cis.org.uk

Prompt responses to the reminders would be much appreciated.