



NEW ZEALAND
CHRISTIANS
IN SCIENCE
TE KĀHUI
WHĀKAPONO KI NGĀ
KAIPŪTAIAO O TE MOTU

MacLaurin Chapel
18 Princes Street
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NZCIS.org

Greetings everyone,

First of all, thank you so much to all of you who have already joined NZCIS. We have a good mix of scientists, theologians, students, and associates. We hope you will all consider joining from the website. Your contribution and membership help us enormously with the work we are doing.

Auckland

We launched in Auckland on March 29th at Maclaurin Chapel. Some 60 people attended from a variety of backgrounds. We had six speakers, including Dr Bethany Sollereeder who had come out from England to represent the Templeton Foundation. Beginning a new enterprise can be somewhat daunting, but this task has been made so much easier through



the initiative of the Rev. Dr Carolyn Kelly, chaplain at Maclaurin Chapel at the University of Auckland. Last year, before the grant even got off the ground, she and Nicola organised an MOU between the relevant governing boards. This enables Nicola to have an office there, and to be an honorary chaplain.

We are hoping that the NZCIS/Chapel relationship will allow mutual support and synergy in serving the student population at the UoA. So far, the relationship has been invaluable on both sides. Rev. Carolyn has been wonderfully supportive of this new endeavour, and that has made the entry into the University so much easier.

We want to make sure you know that in Auckland we have started student discussion, focused around the Faraday Institute's DVD *Test of Faith*. We have begun with small numbers but very encouraging conversation. Emma Belcher and Andrew Saunders have been leading much of this discussion. They plan further events in second semester, at the medical and engineering schools. We



are very grateful for their contributions and for their encouragement of this enterprise. Andrew is a past TSCF president and was Vice-principal of Selwyn College before resigning to do educational consultancy work. Emma, who has ties to the Venn Institute, has just finished a Masters in Philosophy but has a background also in anthropology. She hopes eventually to do a PhD overseas. Both are also now honorary chaplains.



Upcoming events

In terms of more public events we have now finalised plans for the **Winter Lectures** to be held at Maclaurin Chapel—a joint NZCIS/Chapel series. These will be at 5.30pm at the Chapel, on Wednesdays, August 9th, 16th, 23rd, and 30th. Lecturers will be well known in the field of science and faith: Jeff Tallon will speak on *Dark Energy/Dark Matter: A physicist looks at Psalm 139*. Helen Bichan, a Wellington psychiatrist, will speak on *Fungi and the Kingdom of God*. Graeme Finlay, one of the co-directors and lecturer in scientific pathology, will speak on *Genes and the Genesis of Humanity*. Lastly, Ruth Barton, historian at the UoA, will give a lecture entitled *Between Science and Religion: Whose Theology, Which Philosophy?*

Details are on the website. These events are free.

This will be followed in September by a **national conference**, *God of Wonder: Science talks with theology*. The keynote speaker will be Professor **Christopher Southgate** from Exeter University. He is the author of *The Groaning of Creation*. Keep an eye on the website for the events during that week. The conference will start on Friday night, September 22nd and go all day on Saturday 23rd.



There will be a special emphasis on students, with student panels and workshops available. Other speakers will include John Stenhouse, Graeme Finlay, and Ruth Barton. More details to follow.

Registration will be available from the website very soon.

We are, however, tasked with supporting science students and scientists in other institutions as well. We hope to put on events next year that will draw in more students studying science at the 3-4 other universities around Auckland. Carolyn Kelly and Nicola hope to put on a short theology course on three Saturdays that gives basic theological knowledge for students studying other disciplines, including science. Andrew Saunders is very keen also to involve students in their senior year of high school.

Christchurch, Wellington and Hamilton

Talks and preliminary discussion groups have been organised in Christchurch, Wellington, and Hamilton. Christopher Southgate will also feature in events in both Wellington and Christchurch, so please watch the website for more information. The Wellington Theological Consortium is helping us financially with Christopher Southgate's visit, and is organising the events in Wellington on September 17-19th.

In Wellington, on October 7th we are planning a day seminar at St John's Church in partnership with A Rocha and the Otago Centre for Public Theology to mark 50 years

since the publication of Lynn White Jr.'s rebuke of Christianity ("The historical Roots of the Ecological Crisis") in *Science* in 1967.

If you live in these centres please see the website for more information about events and find the contact person for your region. If you have any ideas about events, or would like to promote an NZCIS discussion group in your area, please contact us and we will be happy to help.

Dunedin

In Dunedin we had a launch in mid-May. Dunedin has strong historical traditions in both the sciences and in theology at Otago University. It already has a core of people, especially



Grant lecturing at the Dunedin Launch

in the sciences, promoting cross-disciplinary discussion. Professors Grant Gillett and Gareth Jones have been particularly active. Professor John Stenhouse has already done a great deal of historical work on Christians in the sciences in New Zealand. He is teaching a course next year on Darwin. We hope to draw to your attention some of his work in the coming year. Grant Gillett launched us in Dunedin with an excellent talk on the soul.

You can find this on the website. An oversight committee is being formed in Dunedin and we hope to have a part-time worker on the ground there in the coming year. We are planning with the relevant people and departments for discussion groups, a lecture series, and a possible course in the summer of 2018/19. Please go to the website for more information.

The website



Jake Martin, as most of you know, has been the inspiration behind the grant from the Templeton World Charity Foundation Inc. He is the one who wrote the grant and spearheaded the organisation. He is now in Cambridge (although sometimes in Singapore) doing a PhD in Chemistry (really in carbon as it relates to environmental waste abatement). But from this perch he has been extremely busy on the website. Keeping a website active is a lot of work as most of you know. You can go to NZCIS.org to find blogs, links to videos, discussion and suggestions for reading. We are also doing a series introducing the members of our Advisory Board.

One of our active bloggers is Dr Zachary Ardern, well known in Auckland circles for his vigorous defence of faith. He is doing a post-doc in biology in Germany, but again, still finds time to blog. So please do go to the website to hear from Zachary.

The people

We continue to be very grateful to a wide group of people for all the help and support that has allowed us to launch. Special thanks to the **Advisory Board** members, Professors Jeff Tallon, Peter Munro, Neil Broom, Andrew Schelling, Grant Gillet, Gareth Jones, Philip Pattemore, Carolyn King, George Seber, and Helen Nicholson. We are very grateful for your endorsement and look forward to an ongoing relationship with all of you. Many of you have been involved in launch activities so far. We are grateful to all the members of our little **Governing Board**, especially Jake Martin, and Zachary, and also Dr Phil Church, who is acting as our accountant. We are very grateful for his support and expertise in biblical studies and financial matters. Rev. Dr Carolyn Kelly has provided a home for the organisation and invaluable support and endorsement, opening doors and offering contributions and encouragement, especially for Nicola. Dr Graeme Finlay has worked away at advocacy in the background as he is also juggles an extremely busy life as senior lecturer. His latest book, **The Gospel According to Dawkins**, is now available. Jake is juggling the website and PhD studies. Emma and Andrew are donating their time while they tackle other tasks and callings as well. In the other centres we thank Rev. Greg Hughson and Professors Gareth Jones, Grant Gillett, Murray Rae and Paul Trebilco in Dunedin for initiating and organising the launch activities. In Wellington thanks to Dr Sean Devine, Professor Jonathan Boston, and the Rev. Dr John Dennison, the Anglican chaplain, for their support. We thank also Professors Philip Pattemore and Stephen Chambers for their work in Christchurch. Thanks so much to all these people and to those in the other centres who have hosted and welcomed NZCIS. We look forward to working further with all of you!

Joining NZCIS

We would also like to make a plea that you **join**. For waged workers, the fee is only \$30 a year. For the unwaged and students, membership is free. Membership allows us to communicate with you more easily and it brings you back to the website and to Facebook.

Your membership fee and/or donation also help to augment the work we are doing throughout New Zealand. If you would like to talk to us about more significant contributions, and to have your logo on our website, please get in touch with Nicola. We are looking for **development funds** to further support work with students and conference attendance. With more people on the ground there is a huge amount of work that could be done with senior school students and running niche conferences and discussion groups. So please let us know if you can contribute.