

Greetings from New Zealand Christians in Science.

This semester has seen a flurry of activity with NZCIS in several locations.

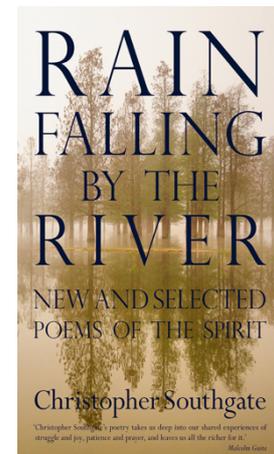
The highlight of the last semester was the **God of Wonder Conference** in Auckland on Election Day. We hosted Prof. Christopher Southgate from the University of Exeter, who spoke on the glory of God in creation. Southgate's work was a direct



Prof. Christopher Southgate

follow-on from his previous work on evolutionary theodicy. Chris also presented two other lectures, on Theodicy and on the Origins of Life, which is the subject of his new Templeton Grant. The conference included a rich array of papers from local speakers, as well as one from Dr Luke Barnes, a Sydney-based physicist who has written a book on the fine-tuning of the universe. Most of the participants stayed for discussion over pizza after the day's proceedings.

Chris also spoke twice in Wellington, on the Origins of Life, at a Victoria University Religion Department Seminar and on Evolutionary Theodicy at a public lecture at Victoria. He also gave a lecture in Christchurch. In both Auckland and Wellington, Chris interacted with interested students for discussion around these topics. In Auckland that location was a local pub, in an event organised by the Roman Catholic tertiary chaplaincy. Thanks to Maclaurin Chapel, the Auckland Catholic Tertiary Chaplaincy, The Wellington Centre for Christian Studies, Victoria Religious Studies Dept., Rev. Dr John Dennison, Prof. Jonathan Boston and the Anglican Chaplaincy at Canterbury for their partnerships in this visit.



Chris is also a poet and we were treated to a poetry reading in Auckland

In August we put on the **Winter Lectures** in partnership with Maclaurin Chapel here in Auckland. We had good audiences for a very diverse range of topics. First off was Prof. Jeff Tallon on cosmology, which was well received especially by the dozen science students from Kingsway School who attended. A significant number of people learned a great deal about dark matter and dark energy, and found out that the universe is a lot more interesting than they had imagined. Next was a composite

session from Nicola, Rev. Dr Carolyn Kelly and Assoc. Prof. Jenny Salmond on Spirituality and Water. Dr Graeme Finlay presented a very popular talk on comparative genomics and its implication for phylogenetics and theology, and lastly we had a fascinating talk on types of theology leading to different understandings of the science/faith boundary, from historian Dr Ruth Barton.

In Otago there have been two **NZCIS lectures** (four will be given each year) on “The Evolution of Morality” (Nicola) and “Should Scientists be Interfering in God’s World?” (Prof. Gareth Jones).

In **Wellington** we were hosted at St John’s Church by the Centre for Theology and Public Issues of Otago University, where we held a conference with them and with A Rocha to mark the 50th anniversary of **Lynn White Jr.**’s critique of Christianity in relationship to the ecological crisis. Prof. Jonathan Boston gave the keynote address on *Laudato Si’*. This was well attended with good participation and at least a dozen workshops. This conference was repeated in Hamilton a few nights later. Thanks to Dr Andrew Shepherd of A Rocha, Dr Derek Woodard-Lehman of the CTPI and Dr Nick Goodwin and the Anglican Chaplaincy at Waikato for their help in organising these events.

Alongside these events we have been trialling **student discussion** in a number of different forms. There were two series this semester in Auckland, at the medical school and the engineering school, led by Andrew Saunders and Emma Belcher. Small groups of students, pizza and enquiring minds led to some deep discussions. Some of us also took part in the Jesus Week panels at the medical school on science and faith, and theodicy.

Thanks so much to everyone who made this first year a success. Thanks to Jake Martin for his continuing work on the website. A very big thank you in particular to Rev. Dr Carolyn Kelly at Maclaurin Chapel for her ongoing support, and to Andrew Saunders and Emma Belcher for their stunning voluntary work with NZCIS. Thanks also to Joshua King for his help liaising with students at Auckland University.

What’s up for next year?

So far we are planning:

- A seminar for high school teachers in Semester One
- Ongoing student discussions in a number of different centres
- Lectures on Easter and Art, Music and Science, with Maclaurin Chapel in March
- Prof. Jennifer Wiseman from NASA in April
- Seminars interacting with the latest book (and visit) by Richard Dawkins and Lawrence Krauss in May (in a number of different centres)

- Winter lectures on the mind/soul and faith in Auckland
- A book discussion with staff in Auckland
- Lectures and student discussion in Otago
- A course in science and theology in Otago in the summer of 2019

We are also very interested in **your ideas**. Please let us know what you think we should be doing. You can recommend speakers as well as topics. If you are in Wellington or Christchurch and would like to host a discussion, please let me know. Graeme and I are also available for talks and seminars.

And please also do **JOIN** us at **NZCIS.org**. Membership helps fund activities around the edges of the grant and helps us to keep in touch with you. Keep an eye on the website also, for ongoing **blog content** and to keep up with events. “Membership Only” content will soon be available on the website, together with information on accessing the UK journal *Science and Christian Belief*.

We are particularly interested in reaching students. Please pass this newsletter on to a science student you know.

Donations for the ongoing work of NZCIS are also always welcome. Several unfunded projects next year need support:

- Air fares for a seminar on Dawkins in various centres
- A part-time worker on the ground at Otago and/or other centres
- Infographics on evolution

Lastly, we have appointed two new **Advisory Board Members**, Assoc. Prof.



Jenny Salmond, School of Environment, University of Auckland, and Dr Mere Roberts, a biologist of Ngati Apakura and Ngati Hiairo and Pakeha descent, who taught in medicine and biological sciences at the University of Auckland.



All the best, and blessings for the Christmas season,

Nicola Hoggard Creegan
Graeme Finlay