



# Newsletter

of the

## ASA & CSCA

volume 56 number 3



## Focus on ASA/CSCA/CiS Annual Meeting 2014



Photo credit: Black Hills Photography Company

### *From Cosmos to Psyche*

I had the pleasure of attending this year's annual conference at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario. We gathered together as members of the American Scientific Affiliation, the Canadian Scientific and Christian Affiliation, and Christians in Science (UK) to discuss matters of science in relation to Christian faith. The title of this year's conference was *From Cosmos to Psyche* and its theme scriptural text was Colossians 1:17, "All things hold together in Christ."

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*We're Moving!*

*ASA New Contact*

*American Scientific Affiliation*  
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## The Director's Corner



The word heard most often in describing our annual meeting in Hamilton, Ontario, this year was “community.”

As you can tell from this issue of the newsletter, the talks at our meeting were intellectually stimulating, generating much discussion. (Visit our website to hear the recordings of the talks.) But what impressed most attendees was the sense of community. The personal dynamics of sharing with one another, caring for others, and praising and worshiping God together were far beyond mere academics.

The word for this coming year is “moving forward.” On many fronts, we are building on our foundations and moving forward to new territory.

In September, our ASA offices are moving to a professional office complex in the neighboring town of Topsfield, MA. We are purchasing a furnished office condo that will entail significant cost savings for us. These offices are seven miles closer to Boston than our current office.

Our new mailing address and telephone numbers are announced on the front page of this newsletter.

Our website and email addresses will remain the same. See the August 5 NewsNote for more information.

We extend a very warm welcome to Hannah Ryan, the new Student and Early Career Scientist representative to the ASA Executive Council. She succeeds David Buller whom we graciously thank for two years of valuable input. Hannah attends the University of Colorado in Colorado Springs after graduating from Westmont. You'll learn more about her in a future newsletter.

At their meeting in Hamilton on July 24, the ASA Executive Council also reviewed the financial report for the past fiscal year. We praised the Lord for a strong financial turnaround from the previous year. You can see the financial report from our home page.

Local chapters are an excellent way to move forward with more frequent personal interactions. Two new local ASA chapters were formed at the annual meeting and will be announced in the next NewsNote. The connections established at our annual meeting can be best sustained through local chapters. Check our homepage to see if there is one near you. If so, join it. If not, start one!

As you can see, we are moving forward in many ways. We are delighted to have you as part of our network. Pray with us for God's blessings on all these endeavors in the coming year.

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Both aptly captured the content and spirit of the conference.

It was my first time attending the annual gathering, and I had been looking forward to going for several months. I was not disappointed. The conference was intellectually stimulating and personally edifying. It was well-organized, offered an impressive range of topics, and provided several opportunities for attendees to connect with new people or reconnect with old friends.

Three things struck me as being especially significant. First, the talks (the plenary and the break-out sessions) were excellent, not only in content but in spirit and demeanor as well. I was deeply impressed by the combination of knowledge, wisdom, and humility that the presenters demonstrated, both in delivering their papers and in their interaction with their audiences during Q&A sessions. The conference embodied the kind of ethos that the ASA/CSCA/CiS exist to serve and promote.

Further, the conference provided a wonderful opportunity to make new contacts and to develop ongoing relationships. Whether chatting with a colleague over coffee or a meal, or participating in one of the social activities, opportunities for connecting with others abounded. A constant buzz of conversation reverberated in the hallways and gathering areas between sessions, during breaks, and at mealtimes. Conference organizers planned several events to facilitate interaction, which were great, including a meet and greet, outdoor events, and an opportunity for students to meet and spend time with the plenary speakers.

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## Welcome, New Members!

April–June 2014

Allen, W. –Vancouver, WA  
 Andrews, Justin –Cedar Park, TX  
 Balan, Nicole –London, ON  
 Barlow, Lael –Edmonton, AB  
 Bates, Alison –Avon, IN  
 Beaver, Bruce –Butler, PA  
 Beck, Ashley –Palmyra, PA  
 Besler, Katrina –Port Coquitlam, BC  
 Brooks, Michael –Dothan, AL  
 Bulsink, Philip –Ottawa, ON  
 Canady, Taryn –Abilene, TX  
 Cavazos, Alejandra –Mexico City, Mexico  
 Coles, Alasdair –Cambridge, UK  
 Dubland, Edward –Vancouver, BC  
 Ede, David –Stillwater, OK  
 Edmerson, John –Cincinnati, OH  
 Floyd, Marvin –Houston, TX  
 Grabow, Wade –Seattle, WA  
 Green, Laurie –Vancouver, BC  
 Guiao, Dario –Mississauga, ON  
 Hübner, Jamin –Rapid City, SD  
 Hayhoe, Doug –Toronto, ON  
 Hayhoe, Katharine –Lubbock, TX  
 Hernandez, Maria –Los Angeles, CA  
 Hildahl, Jade –Apple Valley, MN  
 Jasperse, Nathan –Thousand Oaks, CA  
 Johansen, James –El Segundo, CA  
 Klinck, Joel –Ancaster, ON  
 Lowe, Lindsay –Aurora, CO  
 MacKenzie, Hugh –London, UK  
 Meyn, Larissa –Leduc, AB  
 Middleton, J Richard –Rochester, NY  
 Milliern, David –Bloomington, IN  
 Munson, Brittany –Goleta, CA  
 Nelson, Galen –Denver, CO  
 Padgett, Alan –Saint Paul, MN

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## PSCF Special Announcements

### Now with Kindle and ePub editions!

The September 2014 issue of *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* is now available online for members and subscribers only. We are pleased to provide both Kindle and ePub editions of *PSCF* in addition to the pdf formats. The complete version can be downloaded in any of those three formats. If you have a Kindle device of any kind, click on the [Kindle (mobi)] link. If you have an ePub reader device or if you have the free ePub reader plug-in installed in your browser, click on the [epub] link. Give us your feedback so we can provide the best quality in these formats.

### Print vs Electronic

If you only need an electronic version of the journal, sign in and go to Manage Profile and then to Edit Bio. Scroll down to “Mail Printed *PSCF*?” and select NO.

### Use *PSCF* for Discussion

If you have any comments or questions about any article in *PSCF*, post it on our *PSCF* Discussion Forum. Each issue is a valuable resource for use as a discussion basis in your local chapter meeting or other gathering.

### Call for Papers: The Image of God and Lab Rats

Animals are more like human beings than any other part of creation, yet human beings are described uniquely as being in God’s image. What are the implications of such similarity and difference for lab rats, pets, hunting, factory farming, vegetarianism ...? In her essay posted on the ASA and CSCA websites, Keri McFarlane asks how animals are distinct from humans. Do animals possess rationality and the capacity for consciousness? Should animals have rights? And then she begins to explore the practical implications. Her essay is not intended as an exhaustive discussion, but rather as an invitation to engage some of the essential questions. Readers are encouraged to take up one of the insights or challenges, or maybe a related one that was not mentioned, and draft an article (typically about 5,000–8,000 words) that contributes to the conversation. These can be emailed to her at [Keri.McFarlane@kingsu.ca](mailto:Keri.McFarlane@kingsu.ca), and she will send the best essays on to peer review. For full consideration for inclusion in a future theme issue, manuscripts should be received electronically before 30 November 2014.



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And finally, in attending the conference, I felt honored to be a part of something that transcends myself—my life, my interests, my personal networks and areas of influence—something that God is doing amongst Christians in the sciences across numerous professional fields, geographical locations, and denominational affiliations. It was a glimpse of the kingdom of God at work, present amongst colleagues and friends who love God and love exploring God’s world.

The conference proper took place from Friday evening until Monday

noon. Megan Best gave the first plenary address, which addressed bioethical and social questions related to euthanasia (a timely topic, given current events in Quebec and other places!). She exposed harmful misconceptions about euthanasia and offered an incisive critique of its popular approval. Advocating palliative care and hospice within a broader holistic, Christian perspective, Best challenged the church to demonstrate care not only for the dying, but also for the disabled and the elderly. As she poignantly put it, “Once you accept the idea that some

lives are not worth living, where do you stop?”

The second plenary address was given by Don Page on “The Optimal Argument for the Existence of God.” It is a complex and intriguing argument that attempts to account for the goodness of God and the seeming imperfection of the world (e.g., human suffering) by appealing to God’s love of elegance. Beginning with the assumption that the world we have is, in fact, the best possible world (the one with maximum value), Page suggests that “if the mathematical elegance of the universe were



Photo credit: Emily Ruppel



Photo credit: Black Hills Photography Company



Photo credit: Black Hills Photography Company





Photo credit: Black Hills Photography Company



Photo credit: Black Hills Photography Company



Photo credit: Robert Mann

appreciated by a sentient Being outside the universe, that might increase the value of the world to a maximum, despite the sufferings within it.” In fact, given the amount of suffering in the world, it may well be that “the world may maximize value only by including an omniscient, omnipresent, omnibenevolent Creator God whose appreciation of the elegant universe he created overbalances the intrinsic sufferings within the universe.” Page acknowledged that he is still thinking through theological implications and invited biblical scholars and theologians to dialogue with him.

Barth Netterfield gave the third plenary address, which directly followed the Saturday evening banquet. His title was “Astrophysics: The Heavens Declare the Glory of God.” Filled with lively explanations, illustrations, and personal stories, Netterfield’s lecture was informative and entertaining. Probably my favorite part was hearing Netterfield tell the story about how his research team almost lost a satellite (and six years worth of work) when its parachute release failed and winds dragged it almost 200 kilometers across Antarctica. Yet against all odds of finding it, his team (miraculously?)

recovered it! Netterfield closed his address with a challenge to his fellow scientific colleagues to seek first God’s kingdom (not ours) and to make his name great (not our own). The challenge was appropriate—provocative and inspiring without being preachy.

Alasdair Coles gave the fourth plenary address entitled “Broken Brains and Christ: What We Can Learn about Faith from People with Neurological Diseases.” Drawing on his knowledge and experience as a neuroscientist, clinical and laboratory studies, and

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## Select Symposia Sessions: From the Chairs

*While space unfortunately doesn't permit us to print reviews of each parallel session, here are a few highlights to give a sense of the range and depth of content covered at this year's meeting!*

### Emergence and Information

The emergence and information stream began with a standing-room-only crowd for an introduction to emergence and a mini-debate on biological information. Then talks relating emergence to theology, cosmos to psyche, humans to machines, and simulations to evolution were followed by a "concluding" panel discussion. Clearly more needs to be done to define information and to define emergence before the relevance of these fields to matters of science and Christianity can be more clearly perceived.

One of the panelists (Arnold Sikkema) suggested that recognizing and theorizing about information not as a separate metaphysical entity to "matter and energy" but as something with physical, lingual, social, biotic aspects (à la Dooyeweerd), each of which have their own irreducible numerical aspect, might bridge the gap between ID and non-ID approaches, each of which acknowledges that information is not some kind of absolute but is found within a particular context.

Emergence remains a topic replete with mystery. How should we define, describe, analyze it? Is it possible even in principle to simulate it, to arrive at a mechanism? Are "weak" and "strong" emergence categories useful? Does emergence describe ontological or only epistemological realities? Are there laws of nature "kicking in" at different levels? Would the properties of living things be fully described if we could know and compute all the physics exactly? Does

self-organization somehow introduce something "new"? The conversation continues.

### Physical Sciences

In the Saturday afternoon session, the area of physical science was extended to some broader considerations, including archaeology and history. Colin Humphreys presented a brief but effective summary of his book about how an account of the events of Holy Week can be achieved that is internally and historically consistent. With the help of experts from the areas of astronomy and ancient history, he has proposed a unique date for the Crucifixion that has been acclaimed as very significant by others. The occurrence of a lunar eclipse on the same evening is remarkable.

Christina Biggs gave some considerations of how God interacts with people, and David Robbins showed a collection of interesting archaeological material on ancient floods in the Middle East.

Hugh Ross made some stimulating suggestions on how the Genesis stories may be related to the scientific account, a subject that is of concern to many who are grappling with these issues.

### Christian Women in Science

Lynn Billman's presentation showed data from ASA memberships confirming that, since CWIS was launched in July 2013, the percentage of women members in ASA has increased from 18% to 22%—a total of 401 in July 2014 compared to 320 in June 2013. At the end of its first year, CWIS has 118 members. Lynn also shared the latest statistics from

the National Science Foundation about women and science/engineering degrees, jobs, and salaries, and from a 2014 study about perceptions from scientists and evangelical Christians.

Gayle Ermer's presentation showed the challenges a typical Christian college (Calvin College) faces in trying to attract and retain women in engineering degree programs. She shared data that shows that Christian colleges appear to have lower percentages of women earning engineering degrees than secular colleges, and discusses ways Calvin is working to improve this situation.

Janet Warren's presentation delved into the concept of sin from a particularly female perspective, and how it affects women seeking education and careers in nontraditional fields. She has a fascinating set of biblical references and argues that women's tendencies toward extreme self-abnegation (setting aside oneself for others) can be understood as to be sinful.

### Technologies to Improve Quality of Life

The general theme in this session was that helping "the poor" (where "poor" could mean disabled or financially, resource, or educationally poor) isn't as straightforward as it might at first seem. Hand transplant surgery carries with it complex ethical issues that bring out the best and the worst in medical teams vying to be the first to complete a successful operation. Using agricultural waste could prove to be a valuable source of income and useful for water purification as well as for meeting the needs of industry, but shipping costs

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Porter, Chris –Dallas, TX  
 Ramsier, Caleb –Alliance, OH  
 Rossomme, Elliot –Mechanicsburg, PA  
 Salisbury, John –Scotts Valley, CA  
 Shoemay, Jessica –Surrey, BC  
 Sikkema, Nadine –Langley, BC  
 Smibert, Barbara –Ancaster, ON  
 Smith, Natalie –Folsom, CA  
 Sparks, Emily –Abilene, TX  
 Spillman, Richard –Fircrest, WA  
 Stump, James –Mishawaka, IN  
 Talley, Abigail –Lubbock, TX  
 Tindol, Victoria –Abilene, TX  
 Van Benschoten, Andrew –Menlo  
 Park, CA  
 Vidlock Granley, Kathy –Parker, CO  
 Waks, Christopher –Princeton, NJ  
 Yamaki, Shanni –Honolulu, HA  
 Young, Michael –Mequon, WI  
 Zook, Christina –Tewksbury, MA  
 Zook, Larry –Tewksbury, MA

## Upcoming *God & Nature* Themes

### Fall 2014:

History of Science and Christianity

### Winter 2015:

Knowledge and Information

### Spring 2015:

Animals and the Image of God

### Summer 2015:

Questioning

*Submit all inquiries and submissions to: [emily@asa3.org](mailto:emily@asa3.org)*

## Member in Glory

### **Kenneth A. Lincoln**

On Thursday, May 29, 2014, Ken Lincoln died at 7 a.m. in Santa Barbara, CA. Ken was a long-time Fellow of the ASA, joining in 1963.

Ken was born at home in Oakland, CA, where his father was in the insurance business, but spent the rest of his life on the San Francisco Peninsula. Ken was a Boy Scout, attaining the honor of becoming an Eagle Scout.

Ken spent two years at San Jose State College, joined the US Navy, and then spent twelve years at Stanford University where he received his PhD in physical chemistry. While studying for his graduate degree, he did research for Kaiser Aluminum Corp. He then went to work at the Navy Lab in San Francisco, and finally to NASA at Moffett Field, retiring from there in 1995.

It was significant that the Jupiter Galileo spacecraft Ken worked on when he began at NASA in 1970, arrived at the planet after he retired. At the onset, most of his time was spent researching heat-shield materials for the probe, that part of the dual spacecraft designed to plunge into the dense atmosphere of Jupiter. He was also part of the team that managed the design of the probe and accommodation for the six on-board instruments.

Steve Contakes writes:

*I will remember Ken for his faithful and diligent involvement in the ASA as part of his service to Christ, his kind and encouraging spirit, his care for others, and his encouragement of us younger folks to continue the work that he and others of his generation had taken up from those who started the ASA.*



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insightful literary works (his interactions with Dostoyevsky's *The Idiot* were fascinating), Coles led his listeners to consider deeply the relationship between the brain (and brain dysfunction) and spiritual experience.

As part of his stimulating lecture, Coles described his work with epileptics who experience "mystical seizures" (intense emotional and religious experiences inducing a sense of personal significance and a "cosmic" connection). Such phenomena raise all kinds of questions concerning God's interaction with our brains. For instance, how can we know if such experiences represent a genuine encounter with God? Coles's response was that science simply cannot tell us this (there is no scientifically objective measure for God encounters). The best we can do, as Jesus suggested, is to evaluate the fruits of such experiences borne out in their lives.

The final plenary address was given by Jeffrey Schloss on "Evolution, Moral Cognition, and the Question of Human Exceptionalism." Schloss explained and evaluated common proposals about how morality evolved in human beings. He argued that while human morality evolved through an evolutionary process, it is not (yet?) fully accounted for by natural selection. Moreover, human beings are in some sense unique among the world's creatures, yet we also bear a close kinship with them. Schloss's presentation was thoughtful, humble, and fun.

Each plenary session included a Q&A time, inviting participation from the audience. Listeners were attentive and asked insightful and important questions. Some were science-based questions. Many others concerned

implications for Christian faith, vocation, personal and social ethics, and discipleship in Christ.

In addition to the plenary talks, there were over 80 thoughtful presentations given in four parallel sessions (grouped thematically). These papers were well-attended and generated lots of interest and discussion amongst attendees.

Preconference events on Friday afforded attendees excellent opportunities to participate in organized trips to Niagara Falls, the Niagara Escarpment and Gorge, or McMaster University (campus tour). There were also two, day-long seminars: one led by John Walton on seeing "Genesis through Ancient Eyes;" the other led by Stephen Freeland on "Progress and Challenges in Understanding Life's Origins." Both seminars were well-attended and provided the opportunity to gain new perspective, to raise questions, and to discuss implications for Christian faith.

Most of the talks given at the conference are now available for listening or downloading from the ASA website.

To those of you who participated in this year's conference, whether by

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and other complexities threaten to undo the good work already started in these areas. Education is a powerful tool, and appropriate technologies promise to "do a lot with a little." Perhaps education will allow people to come up with their own solutions rather than needing outside intervention.

Providing energy for the world's growing population was considered in three presentations with very different starting points. A sustainable future seems to be

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presenting, organizing, administering, or simply by attending, thank you! And to those who were not able to participate this year, I encourage you to make next year's annual conference a priority in your plans. You will be glad you did.

~ Patrick S. Franklin  
PSCF Coordinating Book Review Editor;  
Assistant Professor of Theology &  
Ethics, Providence Theological Seminary  
(Manitoba, Canada)

possible, but only if those who are using more than their fair share of resources are prepared to make significant changes to their personal lifestyles. Will the church be bold enough to present a distinctive witness to consumer society? While fracking might promise to provide more gas in the short term, will the benefits be shared with those who have no mineral rights? Sustainably harvesting and using wood as a fuel might be a more appropriate solution, especially for the 2.6 billion people who cook on wood-fired stoves.