We are delighted that Kenneth R. Miller has accepted our invitation to speak at ASA 2019 on Saturday evening, July 20, 7:30 pm, as part of our Annual Meeting. This lecture is open to the public and we would love to fill the seats of Corey Auditorium at Wheaton College. If you live in the Wheaton area and/or have friends, colleagues, or members of your church who are NOT attending our meeting but would be interested in attending the lecture, tickets can be purchased in advance for $10/person by visiting www.asa3.org ($15/person at the door). Doors will open at 7:00 pm.

Kenneth R. Miller is Professor of Biology at Brown University. He serves as an advisor on life sciences to The NewsHour, a daily PBS television program on news and public affairs, and is a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). Miller is coauthor, with Joseph S. Levine, of a series of high school and college biology textbooks used by millions of students nationwide. In 2005 he served as lead witness in the Kitzmiller v. Dover trial on evolution and intelligent design in Pennsylvania.

He is the author of several popular books, including Finding Darwin’s God: A Scientist’s Search for Common Ground between God and Evolution, and most recently, The Human Instinct: How We Evolved to Have Reason, Consciousness, and Free Will. His honors include the Public Service Award of the American Society for Cell Biology, the Public Engagement with Science award from AAAS, the Stephen Jay Gould Prize from the Society for the Study of Evolution, the Gregor Mendel Medal from Villanova University, and the Laetare Medal from Notre Dame.
Executive Director
Leslie Wickman

Dear friends –

I hope you’re enjoying spring! Here in California we’re in the midst of what’s being called a “Super Bloom Apocalypse.” These abundant super blooms of wildflowers happen after particularly wet winters, on average about once per decade (even though we had another one just two years ago). Wildflower aficionados are saying this is one of the best ever, and the colorful blossoms can even be seen from space! The photo below was taken from a NASA T-34 airplane over the Antelope Valley in Southern California.

Speaking of God’s creativity in nature, are you one of the 200+ attendees who have already registered for our 2019 Annual Meeting at Wheaton College in July? If so, we look forward to being together with you as we focus on the theme of “Exploring Creation” by listening to some thought-provoking lectures, participating in interesting workshops, and going on some unique-to-Chicago field trips. If you’re not already signed up, please check out the meeting details and register soon at this link: https://network.asa3.org/mpage/ASA2019. As I mentioned in our last newsletter, we’re making a special effort to invite attendees from underrepresented disciplines, so we’d love to have your help in spreading the word to your friends and colleagues in the humanities and social sciences.

Exciting things are happening in local chapters across the US and Canada! For example, in March, I participated in the first annual Conference on Science and Faith (COFAS) at Arizona State University (read more on p. 3). With an audience of about 250 attendees (largely ASU faculty and students), the conference was sponsored by both Protestant and Catholic organizations. It was tremendously encouraging to see speakers and attendees alike from across the spectrum of denominations engage questions of science and faith together on a secular campus.

We hope to create more of this type of event at other secular campuses in the future, so please let us know if you might be interested in helping organize one near you.

On Easter weekend, our special guest on our monthly KKLA Science & Faith radio show was biologist Cahleen Shrier from Azusa Pacific University who talked about her research on “The Science of the Crucifixion.” If you missed the live show, you can listen to the podcast at this link: http://apologetics.com/radio/?sermon_id=239.

As you know, the ASA’s mission spreads most effectively through the efforts of our members. If you have an organization or group you’d like us to help reach out to, or if you’re interested in getting a chapter started in your own community, please let us know. We’re here to help.

That’s it for now. Enjoy the newsletter, and I hope to see you somewhere soon!

With gratitude,
Leslie

Gordon Student Chapter Meeting

By Liza Antonelli and Bridget Mellon

On April 10, 2019, the Gordon College student chapter hosted a lecture given by Craig Story titled “The God of Christianity and the G.O.D of Immunology: Creation through a Random Process.” Craig is an ASA Fellow, a biology professor at Gordon, and a leader of faith-science courses for pastors through a BioLogos-funded project. In his lecture, Craig used the mechanism of antibody gene rearrangement to illustrate that the randomness we see in biological processes is not in conflict with the sovereignty of God. His talk was based on his article published in the December 2009 issue of Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith. The lecture was attended by nearly 100 ASA members and Gordon College students, and was followed by a brief time of discussion.

Gordon’s student chapter has a number of exciting events planned for the fall semester. To start the year, we will be hosting a movie night for students, followed by a discussion. In September, we will host a lecture, followed by a roundtable discussion, a concept which will encourage conversation among ASA student members and more-experienced members. In October, we are excited to be hosting Mr. Darwin’s Tree, a one-man play about Darwin’s impact on science and religion. Throughout the semester, we also hope to continue our outreach efforts at local Christian high schools.
The Conference on Faith and Science
By Ben Sanders

The Conference on Faith and Science (COFAS) took place at Arizona State University (ASU) in Tempe on March 22–23, 2019. The theme was “Pursuing Science and Christian Faith for Human Flourishing” (see www.azccs.net/cofas). What an extraordinary gathering of 250 university students, faculty, and professionals from around Arizona in conversation with leading professors from the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom!

On Friday evening, after worship, scripture, and prayer (which started each session), the history and philosophy of science and Christian faith were compellingly summarized by Stephen Barr, President of the Society of Catholic Scientists, and Leslie Wickman, Executive Director of the American Scientific Affiliation (ASA).

On Saturday morning, Georgia Dunston (Howard Univ.), Don Page (Univ. Alberta), and Everett Worthington (Virginia Commonwealth Univ.) shared inspiring stories from their work in science as followers of Christ. Breakouts focused on (1) biology, (2) engineering, (3) ecology, (4) history, philosophy, theology of faith and science, (5) physics and astronomy, (6) psychology and social sciences. Additional track speakers were Andrew Briggs (Univ. Oxford), James Buizer (Univ. Arizona), Greg Cootsona (California State Chico), Fr. Paul Gabor (Vatican Observatory), Philip Kurian (Howard Univ.), and Jonathan Lunine (Cornell Univ.), with responses from ASU and Grand Canyon University (GCU) faculty.

Lunch allowed unhurried conversations. In the final plenary session, track leaders gave summaries so that all could “listen in” on the breakout discussions. COFAS concluded with pastoral blessings. Many denominations were represented at the conference, a beautiful experience of Christian fellowship and an affirmation of Christians pursuing science and faith together for human flourishing.

Note: COFAS was sponsored by the Arizona Center for Christian Studies, by Christian student organizations and faculty at ASU, GCU, the University of Arizona, and the University of Mary, and by the ASA and Veritas Forum (www.veritas.org). COFAS was made possible through the support of an award from the Conversations in Community project of the Office for Science, Theology, and Religion (STAR) Initiatives at Fuller Theological Seminary (www.fuller.edu).

Beyond Conflict: Science, Faith, and the Big Questions – BioLogos Conference
By Stephen O. Moshier

The 2019 BioLogos Conference, Beyond Conflict, convened in Baltimore in late March. Over 400 attendees heard plenary talks by Francis Collins, John Ortberg, Justo Gonzalez, Richard Mouw, and others. Several key speakers have strong ASA connections, including Collins, Bethany Sollereder, Jennifer Wiseman, Deborah Haarsma, and Jeff Hardin. Naturally, due to the shared interests of ASA and BioLogos, many ASA members attended the conference in Baltimore. The ASA book and information table was managed by Sy Garte and his wife Aniko Albert, Vicki Best, and Steve Moshier; they engaged in many conversations with delegates at the meeting.

Theological talks covered areas of doctrine of creation, public witness in faith-science dialogue, the problem of animal suffering, and bioethics. Scientific talks focused on exoplanets and extraterrestrial life, human embryology, and creation care. In fact, every presentation explored connections between scientific discovery and Christian theology. Presentations were followed by audience small-group discussions and brief interviews between the speakers and BioLogos representatives, including questions submitted by the audience via a very useful conference smart-phone app. Author Rebecca McLaughlin (Confronting Christianity: 12 Hard Questions for the World’s Largest Religion) shared insightful words between many of the plenary talks, drawing the audience into deeper connections to practical faith and living.

Workshop speakers dove into special topics that are familiar in the science-faith nexus, promoting new books or reporting on various studies and public outreach. One well-attended workshop presented a conversation between special creationist Todd Wood and evolutionary creationist Darrel Falk, discussing their book, The Fool and the Heretic. John Walton, Larry Funck, and Steve Moshier offered a review of the new textbook Understanding Scientific Theories of Origins, which was funded by a BioLogos Evolution and Christian Faith grant. One evening featured a tour of the National Aquarium, located along the Baltimore Inner Harbor and just a short walk from the conference venue.

The overall format of the BioLogos conference shared similarities with a typical ASA annual meeting: plenaries, workshops, parallel sessions, worship, fellowship, and field trips. Notably, the BioLogos audience heard similar presentations by many of the same speakers at previous ASA annual meetings. This illuminates some important distinctions and mutual interests of the two organizations. ASA is an organization of STEM practitioners and professionals engaged in science-faith dialogue. BioLogos is an organization devoted to promoting a positive relationship between modern science and Christian faith. It is only natural that ASA will be the place where new ideas in this nexus will be raised and sharpened by presentations at our meetings or in our journal Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith. BioLogos is taking those messages to a wider audience of pastors, educators, and laypersons.
ASA Ohio Chapter Holds Third Meeting
By Dana Oleskiewicz, David Winyard, and Ronald Myers

On Saturday, April 13, 2019, the Ohio Chapter of the ASA held its third meeting at Northwest Presbyterian Church in Dublin, just outside Columbus, Ohio, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. There were fourteen people in attendance, including several members who were at the fall 2017 and spring 2018 meetings at Mount Vernon Nazarene University. There were also a couple of first-time visitors to an ASA event.

The meeting began with introductions, administrative matters, prayer, and two hymns “Great Is Thy Faithfulness” and “All Glory Laud and Honor,” along with special music offered by ASA Ohio Chapter Vice President David Winyard.

Dillard Faries, who taught physics at Wheaton College, spoke on the “Amazing Grace of Quantum Physics.” His presentation began with descriptions of the paradoxical behavior of waves and particles, phenomena that were debated at length by Albert Einstein, Niels Bohr, and other great twentieth-century physicists. Quantum phenomena have been proven experimentally, so it is necessary to accept natural paradoxes as integral features of reality. Faries concluded by presenting nine theological applications of quantum physics. The morning session ended with lively discussions of quantum physics and its place in God’s creation.

After lunch and fellowship, Dana Oleskiewicz, ASA Ohio Chapter president, spoke on “Environmental Stewardship and Citizen Science to Strengthen Faith Communities.” Drawing on her work for the Water Management Association of Ohio and reflecting on her difficulties with Christians that were hostile to science, Oleskiewicz described several examples of how citizen science—collaborative work by scientists and nonscientists to plan and execute environmental assessments—can build understanding and trust. She went on to present examples of churches that participate in science activities, work that ultimately affirms the harmony between faith and science while promoting understanding of science and its benefits.

Meeting participants then discussed how difficult it is to entice churches to be interested in science matters, and what might be done to overcome such difficulties. This dialogue launched into a sharing of ideas for possible meeting topics as plans got underway to organize a fourth chapter meeting in fall 2019.

DC Chapter Meeting with Bethany Sollereder
By Mike Beidler

On March 30, 2019, at National Presbyterian Church in Washington, DC, the ASA’s DC Chapter conducted its quarterly meeting, which featured guest speaker and ASA/CSCA member Bethany Sollereder, a postdoctoral fellow in science and religion at the University of Oxford. Bethany works alongside Oxford’s internationally renowned Chair of Science and Religion, Professor Alister McGrath.

After graduating from Regent College (Vancouver, Canada) with an MCS in interdisciplinary studies, Bethany continued her studies at the United Kingdom’s University of Exeter and received her PhD in theology. Specializing in theology concerning evolution and the problem of suffering, Bethany wrote her first book, God, Evolution, and Animal Suffering: Theodicy without a Fall, which was recently published by Routledge, a leading academic publisher in the humanities and social sciences.

As a follow-up to her book, her ASA talk focused on the theme of evolution and animal suffering, and whether animal suffering can truly be a part of God’s “very good” evolving creation. Presupposing a paradigm in which God created through evolutionary means, there appears to be a requirement that one must accept that God allowed (and continues to allow) suffering, death, and competition as part of his creative, teleological toolbox. However, rather than the usual lecture format, Bethany engaged the diverse audience of ASA members and host churchgoers by first unpacking some of the theological options and then, using a workshop format, encouraging us to think through and work toward piecing together the goodness of God in light of an oftentimes violent creation. Her thoughtful and pastoral talk sparked considerable discussion both during the meeting and, by some accounts, well after.

I had the pleasure of meeting up with Bethany again in the UK over a free May weekend during the course of a two-week business trip. Taking the rail from London to Oxford, I spent an evening with her and other Oxford fellows to discuss issues of science and faith, sipping an ale at Eagle and Child (the famous watering hole of the Lewis and Tolkien-led Inklings), and experiencing the unique opportunity of visiting the Oxford village of Risinghurst, where Bethany has resided for the last few years. There I toured The Kilns, C. S. Lewis’s house from 1930 until his death in 1963, where Lewis wrote all of his Narnia books and other literary classics. It was a memorable time that served as a great bookend to our earlier discussion about theodicy, which Lewis himself attempted to tackle in his 1940 book The Problem of Pain, arguing that human and animal pain are insufficient excuses for rejecting belief in an omnipotent and omnibenevolent God.
InterVarsity Student Interview
By Hannah Eagleson

The ASA continues to partner with InterVarsity’s Emerging Scholars Network to expand the student/early career track at the Annual Meeting. We launched our early career track in 2017 with a generous grant from Fuller Seminary’s Science and Theology for Emerging Adult Ministries program. Our support for students includes providing lodging and meals scholarships to attend ASA for the whole conference. This past summer in Boston we also pioneered a one-day package for local students and early career scientists to get a taste of what we do at ASA, and we were delighted by a large turnout with of highest student registration ever. We interviewed an MIT grad student about her experience.

1. What were some of the highlights of the day you attended the ASA conference last year?

Besides the obvious (the talk and musical performance by Francis Collins, the nice dinner and walk around the beautiful campus with friends), I enjoyed the casual conversations with some long-time members of ASA. It was interesting to hear their story of how they got involved with ASA and what they did/are doing in their careers and life—I actually wish there had been a bit more opportunity for that. I also appreciated that most of the people at the conference were very friendly and engaging.

2. Has attending the Annual Meeting encouraged you as a Christian in science during the rest of the year? Did you discover any new ideas or conversations or networks/communities that you continued to engage with?

It definitely broadened my perspective on origin of life, evolution, interpretation of the Bible, and community of believers. I think it continues to influence my thoughts. There was a very broad range of theological views, and I think it’s better that we share a community than that we are isolated from each other.

3. Have you connected with the local Boston ASA chapter at all since coming to the conference last year?

Yes, thanks to Hannah Eagleson (ASA/InterVarsity ESN liaison), a collaboration was initiated between the Harvard and MIT InterVarsity graduate Christian fellowships (GCF). There were two events jointly hosted by Harvard GCF and the Boston ASA chapter this Spring. I attended both of them and enjoyed/benefited from them. After seeing what it’s like, I’m trying to have the MIT GCF also host similar events in the future.

4. Was the student one-day package helpful for you? If so, how?

Yes! Coupled with the geographical proximity and manageable time-commitment, it definitely encouraged me to attend. It looked like a great deal financially as well, and indeed it was! Also, I think the package helped several others to attend. It was really nice that I could come with my friends. Thank you again for the support and flexibility!

5. How can you imagine the Annual Meeting, and/or the ASA more broadly, being a part of your future career in science?

I am grateful for the network of Christians in science and humbled by the diverse perspectives they bring. I’m not sure what definitive role it will play in my future career, but I find myself mentioning ASA to my friends in grad school. I feel there’s some cautious sentiment, both in my friends and in myself, about bringing my faith too explicitly into my scientific endeavors or public career front. To speculate, this sentiment may come from an understanding of faith as a solely private and personal matter. However, our faith being in the Lord over the whole universe, I feel it should permeate all areas of our lives, including our scientific endeavors, and cannot be an entirely private matter. Though I believe it should be, first and foremost, deeply rooted in a personal relationship with the Lord, it would be strange if something so important to us does not impact other areas of our lives. To conclude my still-developing thoughts, ASA will always be in my mind as I try to discern God’s calling for my future career in science.

CSCA Upcoming Events
By Bob Geddes

CSCA members are looking forward to attending the ASA Annual Meeting at Wheaton College this July. For those CSCA members who are attending (and any wayward Canadians from elsewhere), there will be a CSCA lunch meet up at noon on Sunday. We will likely gather in the northern-most corner of the dining hall. We can be identified as the group apologizing to each other for being late for lunch, plus shouting “sorrys” to the rest of you because of our marvelous health care.

The CSCA is also looking forward to another important meeting in the fall. We are happy to be a co-sponsor for a conference at Northeastern Seminary in Rochester, New York, on October 25–26, entitled “God’s Wisdom and the Wonder of Creation: Exploring the Intersection of Scripture, Theology, and the Sciences.” Other co-sponsors are the Canadian and American Theological Association (ATA), the ASA, BioLogos, and Northeastern Seminary. The keynote speaker is William P. Brown from Columbia Theological Seminary. The Call for Papers and general conference information is on the CSCA website: csca.ca/cata2019. As the event is relatively handy to the active southern Ontario CSCA membership, we are hoping for a strong participation. The event itself is overseen by J. Richard Middleton at Northeastern, who was a plenary speaker at the national CSCA meeting last May in British Columbia.
ASA & Gordon College Sponsored Birding Trip to New Zealand

By Charles Applegate

What better way to learn about creation diversity than to travel half way around the globe to New Zealand? That is what nine Gordon College students and fifteen faculty, friends, and ASA members discovered in March by participating in a trip sponsored by Gordon College and the ASA. The tour was managed by Kuraka New Zealand, a company specializing in education and conservation. Janel Curry, Gordon College Provost and ASA Fellow, organized this amazing adventure to provide a unique educational prospective as Gregory Keller, professor of conservation biology, guided us as his students in bird identification studies. Keller tabulated 84 species of birds observed by the group over the course of the 9-day trip. Several avid birders in the group were thrilled to add most of these birds to their life lists.

Arriving in Auckland, we traveled to Matakana, Mount Maunganui, and Rotorua on the North Island, visiting multiple nature and cultural locations by bus. Sites visited included the University of Auckland Marine Research Centre and Laboratories, Goat Island Marine Reserve, Tiritiri Matangi Island Sanctuary, the Australasian Gannet Colony at Muriwai Beach, Miranda Shorebirds Centre, McClarens Falls Park, Sanctuary Park Creation Care Project, Kaituna wetland restoration project, Te Puia Maori Arts & Crafts Centre and Geothermal Park, and Kiwi Encounter at Rainbow Springs. Then we flew to Dunedin on the South Island to visit Orokonui Sanctuary, the Royal Albatross Centre, and nearby beaches to view seals, sea lions, and endangered yellow-eyed penguins.

The tour theme was Creation Care with an emphasis on birding. Our guide, Doug Farr, who is the Founder and Managing Director of Kuaka New Zealand has a rich knowledge of sustainable land use practices of the Maori people. He instructed us on the importance of consensus building among multiple stakeholders, including governments, local Maori, conservation citizen groups, and industry. We also learned that conservation efforts on a local scale have far-reaching benefits that extend beyond the borders of that effort.

Experiencing diversity in God’s creation, we were also blessed by the intergenerational conversations and connections with the ASA members and Gordon contingent. While there were many highlights of this special trip, Christian fellowship was at the top of the list!
Robert Carlstrom was born on August 21, 1926, and passed away on January 22, 2019, in Huntington Station, New York. He joined the ASA in 1959 and was a faithful, supporting member until his death. He was active in his church and worked for Sperry and Grumman.

Elden Whipple was born on New Year’s Day in 1931 and passed away on April 5, 2019, at the age of 88. He earned his PhD in physics, specializing in space physics, particularly in charged particle interactions in space. In 1955 he married June Marie Lewis and they raised three children, making their home in Washington, DC (1956–62), Bowie, Maryland (1962–65), Boulder, Colorado (1965–75), San Diego, California (1975–94), Bothell, Washington (1994–02), and Palmer, Alaska (2002–2019). June preceded Elden in death by two years. While in Bothell, WA, he served as program specialist for a NASA satellite launch, Cluster96, which launched on June 4, 1996. Elden and June were active in their church wherever they lived, particularly with Bible Study Fellowship. Elden was a member of ASA for forty years.
The American Scientific Affiliation has, from its inception, helped its members and the Christian community grapple with topics that are not the sole purview of science. Hard questions at the intersection of faith and science call us to think not only in the so-called “hard sciences” but also in theological, philosophical, and sometimes historical or social science paths. Much as the Apostle Paul reminds the Church that we are all members of one body, and each member makes unique contributions, this workshop is designed to assist participants in developing their own unique contribution to the faith and science conversation through relationships with others.

Workshop content draws from a growing panel that includes Jeff Schloss, Jennifer Wiseman, Michael Murray, James Peterson, Gayle Woloschak, and Geoffrey Fulkerson, along with expertise borrowed from AAAS Dialogue on Science, Ethics, and Religion (DoSER) and the Carl F.H. Henry Center for Theological Understanding. The workshop, moderated by Walter Rogero, will be practical in orientation: exploring the benefits of cross-disciplinary collaboration and sharing stories that explicate “best practices” as embodied in the experience of our panelists, including how to create and develop the relational element that is at the heart of the best collaborations. In addition, the workshop will allow participants to begin making preliminary plans for their own cross-disciplinary work and to discover how the ASA can partner in this process. Time will be allotted for those who wish to “pitch” their ideas to the group.