Lookin’ for God’s Image – In all the right places?
In what ways are humans made “in God’s image”? That and related questions attracted 199 conferees to Trinity Western U., Langley, BC, July 23–26. Most were members of ASA and its international counterparts, Canadian Scientific & Christian Affiliation and Christians in Science (UK), with some coming from as far as Hong Kong, Norway and New Zealand.


After all the discussions of how the two might be interrelated, closing speaker David Cechetto drew a laugh when he stated diplomatically, “The mind and the brain are connected to each other in some way. That’s as bold as I’m going to get for the rest of the day.”

Jeeves Advocates “Open Mind, Not Empty Mind”
The opening plenary speaker was Malcolm Jeeves, emeritus prof. of psychology at U. of St. Andrews and past president of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. Jeeves observed:

Many of my favorite hymns reinforce the view that we have a separate thing called a soul. This is the view that was challenged by Francis Crick, and quotes from him are used all around the place these days to show that neuroscience challenges this belief about what constitutes the Imago Dei.

For example, Crick wrote in the April 13 New York Times: “In the fullness of time educated people will believe there is no soul independent of the body, and hence no life after death.” Had Crick been aware of what conservative biblical scholars have been saying for decades, he would have known that the Scriptures do not teach that we have a separate part of us called a “soul” but that we are “living souls.” Thus the idea that the possession of a soul is what constitutes the

Continued on p. 3, Jeeves

Cechetto Explores “Renewing Our Minds”
Closing plenary speaker David Cechetto is prof. in the Dept. of Anatomy & Cell Biology and director of Medical Electives Overseas at the U. of Western Ontario. He is a researcher in the Stroke and Aging Group at the John Robards Research Institute, working largely on the visceral and autonomic inputs to the cortex. His subject was “Renewing Our Minds: More than a Metaphor.”

Starting with the Scripture, “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of the world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind,” (Rom. 12:2) he asked, “What does modern neurological research say about this concept of renewing our minds?” He answered, “It’s absolutely phenomenal, the … advances that have occurred the last ten years … And yet, of the billions of neurons that are in the brain, you could take any one of them and spend your lifetime studying it, because they’re that complex.”

In a summary he called “Neuroscience 319 in Two Minutes,” Cechetto said the brainstem is where information arrives from outside the body and is relayed by reflexes. He noted that a surgeon can transplant a heart into the chest cavity … and that heart will beat

Continued on p. 3, Cechetto
The 59th annual meeting of the American Scientific Affiliation is history and from the lips of many it was another great meeting. You will read more about that in other parts of the newsletter. We had 199 registrants. Just think, if you had been there we could have had 200. Hopefully, you will be coming to Messiah C. next year on Aug. 5–8.

The conference theme will be Alternative Energy Resources, Conservation, and the Environment. This is an extremely important issue for the 21st century. As usual we will have a variety of subjects beyond the theme in separate sessions, so there should be something for everyone. Look for more information on our web site.

We plan to continue our exciting new program of scholarships for student and early career scientists again next year as long as donated funds last. Twelve fantastic scholarship people attended this year’s meeting and gave posters or papers. In order to encourage scholarship winners to return, ASA Council voted to allow recent, previous winners a second scholarship which would fund half their room, board and registration. This program starts with the Messiah C. meeting. If you wish to give a gift above and beyond your usual gift to ASA for this purpose, it would certainly be welcome. It is an investment in the future of ASA.

Many thanks to Susan Daniels who completed her tenure on Council as Student and Early Career Scientists’ representative. Susan and her husband are the proud parents of a son, Kai, who keeps Susan very busy along with her work. I am happy to announce that Johnny Lin was elected by Council to serve in this capacity for the next two years. He will be attending Council’s semi-annual business meetings.

It was great to meet with our Canadian Scientific and Christian Affiliation (CSCA) brothers and sisters as well as a few from our English counterpart, Christians in Science (CiS). We want to thank the CSCA members for hosting us in Canada and especially Judy Toronchuk and David Clements for their extremely hard work as program chair and local arrangements chair respectively. Our staff here greatly appreciates all the detailed work they did to make things come off so well. CiS will be hosting us in Edinburgh, Scotland in 2007. We look forward to that.

Our honored members in this newsletter include those who have been ASA members for 30 years and thus would have joined in 1974. There are still 29 active members which include: Edward B. Allen, June A. Arnold, Paul T. Arveson, J. Merlyn Bilhorn, Allan W. Bjerkas, Hessel Bouma III, Lloyd J. Davis, Jan De Koning, Dennis L. Eggleston, Karl V. Evans, Dillard W. Faries, Robert H. Hammond, Paul G. Harms, Ronald G. Johnson, D. Gareth Jones, Michael MacKenzie, Kenneth A. Martin, Ruth C. Miles, Arthur E. Nelson, Sidney Niemeyer, Gordon D. Simons, Jr., Joe C. Smith, Jack C. Swarengen, Daniel R. Tucker, Lawrence J. Walker, John F. Walkup, Stephen P. Wilson, John R. Wood and Uko Zylstra. Congratulations to each of you. Please send your early memories to the newsletter editors and tell them what things you are doing right now. We want a newsy newsletter and we cannot have it without your help. Of course, this goes for everyone in the affiliation as well.

Perhaps some of you are wondering what I am doing and what is happening to the ASA executive director position. We do have a new director but that person will not be starting until next summer due to work obligations. In the meantime, I will be continuing on a part-time basis. My wife and I plan to move to Elizabeth City, NC to a 55+ community this September or October, and I will be setting up shop there to conduct ASA business.

President Martin Price presented me with a very nice plaque at the Trinity Western meeting, and there was a delicious cake as well. The Fellows gave me a hip, hip hooray at their meeting and several attendees signed a nice card. I deeply appreciate all the nice notes and comments I have been receiving. It was my privilege to serve you and I enjoyed it very much. It was a great ending to my 38-year career in teaching and administration at Houghton C., Gordon C. and the ASA. My wife recently retired from many years of nursing and teaching. Our daughter, a kindergarten teacher, attended parts of the ASA meeting with her husband and our two grandsons, and after 27 years of education starting with kindergarten, our son and his family are settling in Orlando, FL, where he will be in orthopedic surgery.

In this transition time, we definitely need your support and prayers. We must replace Bob Barnett who worked for about five months but is now entering preparation for ordination. We deeply appreciate all he did for us.

Your continued support is essential to keep the organization moving forward and to ready the place for the new director who presently plans to move to Ipswich next summer. Thank you for your help in advance. God bless!
“image of God” is not required by Scripture.

After exploring other concepts of the image of God that various scholars have formulated over the centuries—rationality, the human capacity for moral behavior, and the capacity to be rationality, the human capacity for having formulated over the centuries—imagine that various scholars in Scripture.

"image of God" is not required by Imago Dei

Instead, he reasoned that the key factor in the Imago Dei is relatedness. “To be in the image of God is at once to be created a particular kind of being, and to be called to realize a certain destiny, as stewards,” in accordance with Genesis 2.

Our unity is central. We know each other, not as brains ensheathed in bodies but as embodied persons. … [The image is located] in our human vocation given and enabled by God to relate to God as God’s partner in covenant, to join in companionship with the human family and in relation to the whole cosmos in ways that reflect the covenant love of God. This is realized and modeled supremely in Jesus Christ … Any full explanation of the Imago Dei would have to focus on Jesus Christ. (See, for example, 2 Cor. 4:4 and Col. 1:15) … The answer to the question about who we are is finally an eschatological one.


The Tide of Truth

He concluded:

Finally, believing that all truth comes from God, whether through Scripture or through science, we recognize repeatedly our need to keep an open mind but not an empty mind of whatever [part] of reality God has yet to show us … As we welcome the incoming tide of science, I hope we do not rush about filling sandbags to stem supposed intrusions into our cherished beliefs. But rather, as the incoming tide clears the sands of ignorance and prejudice, we see it revealing more of God’s truths. We need to continue to work together as workers who do not need to be ashamed, employing the many talents he has given us to discover more of how we are indeed “fearfully and wonderfully made.”

Cechetto, continued from p. 1.

very nicely. But unless the brainstem controls it, the heart won’t respond to increased needs—for example, when the body needs to respond to a “fight-or-flight” emergency. He uses functional MRI (fMRI) to image the brainstem, using computers to measure the intensity of activation of different Voxel holograms in the brain, by observing the blood flow to them.

Rewiring the Brain

The brain is no longer thought to be hardwired. Experiments with rats and observations of humans lead him to conclude:

The adult brain is capable of changing, at the level of the molecule, at the level of the neuron, and even to the point of generating new neurons—something that we never conceived of twenty or thirty years ago.

The kinds of experiences, the kinds of things we spend our time doing or thinking about, will change the morphology of the brain. Cechetto connects this to the biblical statement, “As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.” He added:

I would suggest that this is really what brain plasticity is all about. … The kinds of things your brain is actively doing determines, at a morphological level, the shape of your brain to a limited extent.

Experience rearranges the connections and the synapses—getting rid of some and creating new ones. He continued:

So that’s why I come back to this verse, “Do not conform any more to the pattern of the world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will.” I think that’s what brain plasticity teaches us … “Whatever things are noble, pure, right, true, lovely, admirable, think on these things.” … By thinking right thoughts, you’re going to be able to activate those areas of the brain and create the kinds of connections that you want in your brain.

Cechetto concluded:

Thus, recent neuroscientific advances seem to reflect scriptural principles in the physiological world. Can our faith be strengthened, our knowledge of the Creator’s character confirmed, by understanding that layer upon layer the universe is infused with the same truths that rotate and resonate—theologically, cognitively and even physiologically? How amazing to consider that a transformed mind includes not only new ways of thinking and feeling, but concomitant new pathways laid down in the observable matter of our brain! Indeed, part of the joy of neuroscience research is to discover that the Scriptures that have engaged me since childhood may be more than metaphors.
Amid Wholes, Holes

While several presenters attempted to integrate their understandings of brain, mind and/or soul as a whole, Warren Brown presented research on patients who lack the entire corpus callosum region of their brains. In a presentation entitled “Cognitive Deficits in Agenesis of the Corpus Callosum,” Brown said that part of the brain fails to form in one in 10,000 to one in 100,000 births. Conventional tests do not detect the deficit, because they test “crystallized intelligence”—items like vocabulary that have been “over-learned” by repetition—in contrast to the “fluid intelligence” needed to reason. These individuals lack the ability to access second-order, figurative meanings of language. They appear naive, insensitive to subtlety.

He gave the example of a 50-year-old lawyer who wasn’t doing as well in his profession as he thought he should be. A neurological exam revealed that his brain was missing 200 million neurons, his entire corpus callosum. An audience member asked what compensating strengths persons with this problem have. Brown answered that they are nice, straightforward, not full of resentment, not devious; they may lack the ability to fake you out. He quipped that this may explain why the patient wasn’t doing well as a lawyer.

An Exit from the Impasse

“Can I control how atoms move or neurons fire, or do they determine me?” In “The Metaphysics of Personal Agency,” InterVarsity Christian Fellowship’s Peter Payne defined agents as “any things that cause things to happen,” and that a personal agent means “that a person is causing something to happen.” Payne said some presentations had given the impression that humans were mere mechanisms, organisms in which a stimulus evoked a response, with no ability to choose whether or how to respond. He recited a statement attributed to Bertrand Russell, “I can do as I will, but I can’t will as I will.”

He discussed moral agency first in the compatibilist sense, “No one is making me do it. It comes out of the volitional structure of my brain.” He asked, “But is that simply part of a causal chain, previous elements of which I have no control over, which result in my choice?” As an example, a thermostat controls closing a circuit to activate a furnace, “so it is doing it. But that is something that just had to happen because of things that went before, over which I had no control.”

Moving to incompatibilist personal agency, he said, “This kind of personal agency, if it exists, is incompatible with strict determinism, claiming that the person does will what he wills, … at least some of the time controlling the direction of the choices made.” Although contemporary physics is no longer mechanistic, people still have a very mechanistic way of thinking about it—not as levers and hydraulics, but as circuitry or other mechanisms.

Top-Down Causation

Payne suggested “a third alternative, between the horns of the determinism/indeterminism dilemma.” A choice can be self-determined, not simply uncaused. “If every link in the causal chains that make up such complex functioning loops determines what the next must do, there is no choice in the incompatibilist sense. If such choice is possible, the person, the self, cannot be equated with a system understood deterministically.” He concluded:

If properties themselves don’t have causal power, if only substances have causal power, then it seems that there has to be something which is substantive which is involved in my making the choices that I make.

Is the Soul in an Organ?

William Struthers Wheaton C. psychologist pointed out that Descartes thought the seat of the soul was the pineal gland. Struthers suggests that, if there really is a physical location, the Cingulate Cortex is a better candidate. MRI research appears to indicate that it modulates several of the higher human functions, including features such as emotional processing, conflict monitoring, ethical decision-making and the inhibitory power to say no.

Struthers concluded his paper “Descartes’ Error Revisited: The Pineal Gland, Cingulate Cortex, and the Neuroscience of Volition,” by saying, “I’m a soulish agnostic … We’re not required by Scripture to have the monism or dualism thing right; we’re only asked “to act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly” with our Cingulate Cortex.

More Details

Of necessity, Newsletter summaries of the lectures are frustratingly brief, compared to the rich details provided in the presentations. Most plenary and parallel sessions are available on audiotape for $5.00 each, plus p/h and tax where applicable. Contact Sanders Christian Foundation, PO Box 2094, S. Hamilton, MA 01982; (978) 468-7306 or email: TapeSharer@aol.com

Newsletter Disclaimer

This publication is a newsletter. As such, its purpose is to present news spanning a spectrum of activities, reports, and publications in order to keep readers abreast of a variety of events and views. Just as newspapers report statements made by people of various viewpoints and opinions without endorsing them, inclusion in this newsletter does not constitute or imply official ASA endorsement.
Retired Faculty “Adopt a Campus”

What does a professor do after retirement? Terry Morrison has a suggestion:

We’re talking about getting retired faculty to be associate staff workers with InterVarsity Faculty Ministry. After some training and assuming they have the requisite gifts, they would adopt a nearby university campus.

They could assist Christian faculty to meet together, to develop ministries, have students in their homes. There’s an array of things these faculty could do, but they often need an outside person to encourage them so our faculty might well do a good job of that. [Retired faculty] don’t have to be paid and they have time.

For more information, check www.intervarsity.org/gfm/faculty, Morrison’s “Faculty as Salt & Light” www.intervarsity.org/gfm/faculty/resource_item.php?id=2566 or e-mail the Morrisons at tmorrison@ivcf.org or smorrison@ivcf.org.

Coming Events

Templeton/ASA Lecture Series
E-mail Don Munro: asa@asa3.org
Sept. 1. “Creation Versus Evolution: Why Both Sides are Wrong,” Kenneth R. Miller, U. Hawaii, Honolulu, HI
Sept. 21. “The Role of God in Modern Science: Where Naturalism and Intelligent Design Have Gone Wrong,” Alan C. Padgett, McMaster U., Hamilton, ON, Canada
Sept. 24. “Dare a Scientist Believe in Design?” Owen Gingerich, Eastern Mennonite U., Harrisonburg, VA
Sept. 26. “God and the Galapagos,” Ed Larson, King’s Univ. C., Edmonton, AB, Canada
Oct. 4. “Exploring the Concept of Religious Naturalism,” Ursula Wiltshire Goodenough, Phillips Theological Academy, Tulsa, OK
Oct. 12. “Galileo, Hero or Heretic,” Owen Gingerich, UMass, Amherst, MA
Oct. 18. “Scientific Evidence for an Evolving Creation Under Theistic Control,” Howard Van Till, Taylor U., Upland, IN
Nov. 8–10. Dennis Richard Danielson, U. Hawaii, Honolulu, HI

Additional Events in North America
Sept. 11. Determining Distances to Stars & Galaxies. Reasons to Believe, Chicago chapter. E-mail: bobclapper@yahoo.com
Sept. 12. “Human Agency in an Emergent World,” Science & Religion Discussion Group of Montgomery County, MD, Grace United Methodist, Gaithersburg, MD E-mail: Vikingtoog@aol.com
www.zephyrpoint.org
E-mail: zephyr@zephyrpoint.org

Oct. 14–15. York C. of PA, Humanities and Technology Association Annual Conference, “Technology and Religion.” E-mail: dweiss@ycp.edu

Oct. 18. Informal ASA regional meeting & dinner with Richard Wright, 6:15 p.m. at Traditions Restaurant, Harrisonburg, VA. Contact Roman J. Miller, 540-432-4412; millerjr@emu.edu

Oct. 18–21. 19th Biennial Meeting of the Philosophy of Science Assoc., Austin, TX. E-mail: psa2004@temple.edu
Contact: Miriam Solomon
Oct. 21. “What Philosophers Don’t Seem to Know about Knowledge,” Grand Canyon U., Phoenix, AZ. Speaker: David F. Siemens, Jr. E-mail: cias@grand-canyon.edu


Oct. 22. Psychotherapy, Psychiatry & Modern Clinical Treatment, Atlanta, GA. Speaker, Harold Koenig. E-mail: heidi@ewomen.net

Oct. 22–24. Overcoming Boundaries in the Scientific Study of Religion, Kansas City, MO, Contact: William H. Swatos, Jr. E-mail: swatos@microd.com

Oct. 22–24. Religious Research Association Annual Meeting: Linking Social Action & Religious Research, Kansas City, MO. E-mail: Bartkowski@soc.msstate.edu


Oct. 28–31. “Social Work in a Global Context: He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands,” Rastov, VA, (888) 426-4712 E-mail: info@nacsw.org

Oct. 29. The Christian Fellowship of Human Geneticists, Great Hall of St. Andrew’s Church, 73 Simcoe St., Toronto at noon for discussion and prayer. E-mail Elving Anderson: anderson@uwm.edu


Nov. 11–14. Christianity and Human Rights, Samford, U., Birmingham, AL, 4th Annual Lilly Fellows Program Natural Research Conference

Nov. 12. “Allergies, Inflammation & Parasite Immunity: Studies Using Genetically Engineered Mice,” Chris Lantz, Eastern Mennonite U., Harrisonburg, VA. Contact Roman Miller, millerjr@emu.edu

Nov. 13. Chicago chapter, Reasons to Believe. Speaker: Hugh Ross. E-mail: bobclapper@yahoo.com


Nov. 18–21. 19th Biennial Meeting of the Philosophy of Science Association, Austin, TX. E-mail: psa2004@temple.edu

Nov. 20. Salt and Light: The Public Dimension of Christian Ethics, San Antonio, TX. E-mail: Vincent.E.Bacote@wheaton.edu

Nov. 20–23. American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, San Antonio, TX. E-mail: AnnualMeeting@aaarweb.org


Dec. 11–12. Spirituality and Healing in Medicine: The Importance of Forgiveness, Chestnut Hill, MA. (617) 384-8600; millerrj@emu.edu

Dec. 12–16. First International Scientific Symposium on Paradoxical Effects in Biophysics and Medicine, Carmel, CA (831) 622-7975 E-mail: misaha@aol.com

Calling All ASA and CSCA Members
We encourage you to inform the newsletter co-editors about lectures, conferences, presentations, seminars, courses, or other involvements which you have in the fields of science and faith. We also invite you to respond to Newsletter articles, and to send us summaries of events you have attended or sponsored.

With the Lord
John Cruzan joined ASA in 1965, the year he graduated from King’s C., Briarcliff Manor, NY. After earning his Ph.D. in zoology, he joined the faculty at Geneva C., where he taught biology, ecology and environmental science. His most recent research involved developing techniques for surveying nocturnal mammalian predator/scavengers in the Mojave Desert. He was exploring a procedure to collect hairs from nocturnal animals, extract DNA from hair follicle cells and identify individual animals by DNA fingerprinting. He died of cancer July 28. His memorial service was July 31 at Chippewa Evangelical Free Church.

Job Postings
For descriptions of job postings, visit the ASA web site: www.asa3.org
Lighter Moments

Amidst the cerebral cogitation at this summer’s meeting, there were touches of levity:

• While announcing that all but five years of back issues of Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith had been archived onto the ASA web site, Jack Haas added that one retarding factor was the tendency of optical scanning software to read “God” as “Cod.”

• Closing plenary speaker David Cechetto confessed to some youthful horseplay:
  
  I was having surgery on my thumb after a skiing accident, and I asked for an axial block instead of general anesthesia. While the surgeon was operating, I tried a little trick. There was a screen, so I couldn’t see the surgeon. I’m pretty good at stopping my heart for five seconds or more, and suddenly there were four heads peering over the screen at me! I didn’t say “Fooled you!” but I did. Don’t try that trick with your surgeon!

Physics Today Cites Ellis

In announcing that George Ellis had been awarded this year’s Templeton Prize, the May issue of Physics Today quoted him as saying,

Physics can’t explain the existence of as simple a thing as a pair of spectacles … It is fundamentally wrong to say they are just quarks and atoms and molecules, for they embody design. Physics is causally incomplete because it doesn’t encompass human thoughts and intention.

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