

Announcements

IRAS

The Institute on Religion in an Age of Science

Purpose—IRAS is an independent society of scientists, philosophers, religion scholars, theologians, and others who want to understand the role of religion in our dynamic scientific world.

Activities—Each year IRAS holds a week-long conference on Star Island, 10 miles off the coast of Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Topics are selected to be relevant to current scientific thinking and to fundamental religious questions. (IRAS members pay a reduced rate for conference registration.)

IRAS organizes events at the annual meetings of the American Academy of Religion (AAR) and the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). IRAS has sponsored more than 250 meetings at universities, colleges, and theological schools.

Publications—*Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science*, *IRAS Newsletter*, and *Science & Religion News*. IRAS members receive subscriptions to these three publications free of additional charge.

Special Relationships—Affiliated Society, American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS); Member, Council of Societies for the Study of Religion (CSSR).

Membership Dues

\$60.00 Individual Member

\$65.00 Joint Member (two memberships but one set of publications)

\$40.00 Student Member (requires copy of student ID)

\$110.00 Institutional Member (supports IRAS's work: \$54.00 is tax deductible)

Overseas members are assessed a surcharge to cover mailing costs.

Invitation to Join—If you are in accord with the purposes of IRAS and would like to become a member, please submit an application to the IRAS Council, which reviews and votes on applications at biannual meetings in February and July. For an application write to:

Nancy Anschutz, 26 Turning Mill Road, Lexington, MA 02173

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Institute on Religion in an Age of Science
The Forty-Second Annual Star Island Conference
Saturday, July 29, to Saturday, August 5, 1995

Life in the Universe

A confirmed encounter with another intelligent life form in the universe would have a dramatic effect: it would bring a chain reaction of change almost unparalleled since the dawn of humankind. After a historical overview, the conference will ask whether other life in the universe is likely and, if so, whether communication or travel is feasible. Specialists in astrophysics and biology will direct this examination of the universe as we know it, the former updating our appreciation of the cosmos and the latter probing the origin of life itself. Then will follow theological reflection and interdisciplinary exploration of what we might face if we do encounter other intelligent life forms. Questions addressed will include:

- What is the process of discovery? Why should we undertake the search?
- What benefits or detriments might an encounter bring?
- How might it affect our understanding of who we are and how we should live?
- How should we regard claims of UFO sightings or encounters with extraterrestrials?
- Are self-transformation and salvation specific to Earth or common to the cosmos?
- How would an encounter alter our understanding of our place in the universe?
- What if we are alone? How would we cope?

Such speculative thinking is akin to the best in science fiction writing, which has been called “modern-day prophecy,” a prophecy that comments on the present situation and calls us to change, all in the terms of a future scenario.

The emphasis will be on enjoying the imaginative process, grounded solidly in contemporary science, to break molds cast around our current thinking and speculate about what might be. This can lead us to live more religiously and more responsibly in our actual universe.

Likely speakers include: Michael Crowe (history, University of Notre Dame); Lawrence Fagg (cosmos and salvation, Catholic University); Robert Garrison (discovery, David Dunlap Observatory); Ursula Goodenough (biology, Washington University); Theodore Peters (theology, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary and Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences); Michael Ruse (philosophy, University of Guelph); Jill Tarter (“SETI” project leader); an astronaut; science fiction writers.

The conference chaplain is Leslie Kawamura (Buddhist priest and professor of religious studies, University of Calgary). Conference co-chairs are Nancy Anshuetz (MITRE Corporation) and Christopher Corbally (Vatican Observatory).

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REGISTRATION FEES

Adult registration fee, \$100; young people between 5 and 16, \$60 for the *Archi Pelagos* program; children under 5, free, or with enrollment in the *Archi Pelagos* program, \$60. IRAS members who register before March 10 receive a \$15 discount; nonmembers receive the discount if they apply for membership by March 10. Annual dues, including a subscription to *Zygon*, are \$60 for individuals; \$65 for couples, (both of whom receive discounts). Student scholarships are available. Fees less 20% are refundable if registration is cancelled before June 1, 1995. Room and board are payable on the island.

PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Archi Pelagos, a new constellation of superfun programs for children and youth Preschool—Grade 9 by Nancy Johnson of the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools, will orbit concurrently with the adult program and offer a family experience for interested conferees.

Registration forms and further information available from:
Bonnie Falla, Registrar, 810 1/2 North 9th Street
Allentown, PA 18102. Telephone (610) 432-8711