

# 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, ten 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 two hundred fifty meetings at universities, colleges, and theological schools.

**Publications**—*Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science* and *IRAS Newsletter*. IRAS members receive subscriptions to these 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:

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Fifty-first Annual Star Island Conference  
Saturday, July 24, to Saturday, July 31, 2004

### Earth's Waters in Crisis: A Scientific, Spiritual, and Moral Challenge

Water is wondrous, scientifically and spiritually, and essential to life on our blue planet. Water inspires the human imagination in religion and the arts. It is a major source of ritual and symbol in religious traditions. Yet, today, our waters are in crisis due to population, pollution, climate change, and a multitude of competing local, regional, and global demands. On Star Island, where the experience of conserving fresh water shapes our daily lives, we will explore the roles science and religion can play in developing ethical approaches and moral commitment to actions on critical water issues. Among the questions to be considered are:

- What are water's origins and unique physical and chemical properties? What are the relations between the global water cycle, climate, and sea level change?
- What is the current situation of the world's water supplies? Which water uses are not sustainable? To what extent can conservation and technologies improve the situation?
- How does water serve as symbol and substance in various religious traditions? Has a loss of reverence for water as precious gift and sacred symbol contributed to the current crisis? How can new scientific knowledge inform religious practice?
- How do we mediate competing demands such as those of agriculture, industry, energy production, and domestic use?
- What are the tensions created by market forces, sociopolitical interests, and the demands for human rights and just water policies? How can universal access to adequate clean water be achieved?

The conference site itself, with its dependence on imported fresh water, rain, and salt water, will provide a symbolic microcosm for the emerging planetary crisis.

CONFERENCE CO-CHAIRS: **Sol Katz** (U. Pennsylvania), anthropology, food and water in world cultures; **George Fisher** (Johns Hopkins), geology, Earth systems, and sustainable living; **Jeanie Graustein** (M.Div.), environmental justice and water issues for churches.

CONFIRMED SPEAKERS TO DATE: **Owen Gingerich** (Harvard), astronomy, history of science; **Holmes Rolston III** (Colorado State), philosophy, environmental ethics; **David Haberman** (Indiana U. Bloomington), Hinduism and sacred rivers; **Barbara Rossing** (Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago). *Chapel speaker*: **V. V. Raman**, philosopher-physicist, pan-religionist, science-and-religion dialogue.

PROGRAM FOR YOUTH: There will be a professionally designed and led program for children and youth, ages 3–17.

COST: CONFERENCE FEES: *adults* \$125/person (\$100 for IRAS members who register by March 10 and nonmembers who apply for membership by March 10); *youth ages 3–17* \$100; children under 3 are free, but parents are responsible for their care at all times. PLUS room and board deposit of \$100/person over age 2; maximum registration/family \$500, plus room deposit. ROOM AND BOARD: payable in American currency on the island, ranging from (tentative) \$536–649/adult, depending on accommodations, and \$117–457/child, depending on age. Checks and cash accepted; *no* credit cards. Transportation to the island is by ferry from Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

For further information, see [www.IRAS.org](http://www.IRAS.org)  
or contact Bonnie Falla, Registrar, 810-1/2 N. 9th St.  
Allentown, PA 18102, (610) 432-8711