

Announcements

JULY 27 TO AUGUST 3 IRAS SUMMER CONFERENCE

The Impact of Computers on the Religious Enterprise will be the theme of the 1968 Conference of the Institute on Religion in an Age of Science. This will be the fifteenth year that scientific and religious inquirers have met at Star Island, Isles of Shoals (ten miles off Portsmouth, New Hampshire), under the sponsorship of the Institute, an independent society. The conference will be held July 27 to August 3.

Contemporary computer theory presents a more serious challenge to man's ideas of his destiny and duty than did the Copernican revolution of our beliefs away from the centrality of earth, than did the Darwinian evolution of our beliefs away from the centrality of man, or than has the Freudian analysis that casts doubt on the centrality of conscious beliefs. Writing in the September, 1966, issue of the *Scientific American*, Marvin L. Minsky of M.I.T. put the challenge of the computer thus:

As the machine improves both itself and its model of itself, we shall begin to see all the phenomena associated with the terms "consciousness," "intuition," and "intelligence" itself. It is hard to say how close we are to this threshold, but once it is crossed the world will not be the same. . . . Whether or not we could retain some sort of control of the machines, assuming that we would want to, the nature of our activities and aspirations would be changed utterly by the presence on earth of intellectually superior beings.

Are the institutions that guide man's ethical values and ultimate hopes and fears ready to speak with wisdom to this radical change? The coming of the computer forces us to examine realistically the deepest meanings and purposes of human life and its relationship to its ultimate source and destiny. The primary speakers and other participants of this summer's conference will deal with the radical potentialities of a not very distant future as well as with the already existing transformations of human life and values being brought about by computer science and technology.

Speakers include: Ralph Wendell Burhoe, Center for Advanced Study in Theology and the Sciences, Meadville Theological School; Manfred Clynes, Biocybernetics Laboratory, Rockland State Hospital, Orangeburg, New York; Aharon Katchalsky, biochemist, The Weizmann Institute, and president, Israeli Academy of Sciences; Marvin L. Minsky, professor of electrical engineering, M.I.T.; Louis R. Mobley, International Business Machines; John Morris, Computer Institute for Social Science Research, Michigan State University; and George A. Riggan, professor of systematic theology, Hartford Seminary Foundation, and 1967-68 postdoctoral fellow; Center for Advanced Study in Theology and the Sciences.

The limited number of accommodations on Star Island requires preregistration. For further information write to IRAS Conference, 5700 Woodlawn Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60637.