

Announcements

IRAS
The Institute on Religion in an Age of Science

Purpose—IRAS (www.iras.org) 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 organizes a week-long conference. The 2010 conference will be held at Star Island, off the coast of New Hampshire, July 24–31. 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

\$70.00 Individual Member

\$80.00 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)

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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[*Zygon*, vol. 45, no. 2 (June 2010)]

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Institute on Religion in an Age of Science

Fifty-sixth Annual Conference
Star Island, New Hampshire, July 24–31, 2010

The Energy Transition: Religious and Cultural Perspectives

CONFERENCE CO-CHAIRS: **Norm Laurendeau**, Purdue University
Larry Rasmussen, Union Theological Seminary

Energy and climate change typically are discussed in terms of their associated science, technology, economics, and politics. Little attention, however, has been given to fundamental religious and ethical questions surrounding the upcoming transition to renewable energy.

We are entering a period of monumental transition as we encounter the inevitable shift from fossil to renewable fuels. Fossil fuels are being depleted while we pile up nuclear wastes, yet renewable alternatives such as solar, wind and biomass are not significantly in place. As for any technological transition of this magnitude, ultimate success will require good ethics and religion as well as good science and technology. Unfortunately, religious pronouncements to date have been largely dismissed owing to their feeble consideration of accompanying scientific and technological realities. Nevertheless, religious perspectives have the advantage of highlighting ultimate values, regardless of economic and political pressures. The time has thus come to bring together scientists, engineers, ethicists and theologians to help effect a sustainable energy future.

The conference will engage scientific, technological, economic, and political issues associated with energy conservation and renewable energies in the context of global warming, sustainability, and human purpose. The emphasis will be on (1) ethical and religious perspectives that can be used to guide future energy choices and (2) energy choices that in turn might challenge ethical and religious perspectives. Queries will include the following:

- How will human values be challenged by the coming energy transition?
- What are the ethical implications of heightened competition for energy resources?
- How might religious perspectives help foster renewable energy for transportation or electrical power?
- What strategies can be used to provide affordable energy for low-income citizens?
- Can cultural values, as espoused by religious communities of simplicity, help humanize energy markets?
- What role should religion play in reducing consumption and building sustainable global communities?
- How are religious communities dealing with alternative energy policies and engaging realistically with those political processes needed to plan our energy future?
- How might theological and religious understandings of energy contribute to a viable energy future?
- How can religious institutions become better prepared to deal with human suffering on a global scale should we not plan well for a peaceful energy transition?

A professionally designed and led program will be available for children and youth ages 3–17. A refereed poster session will be held for young scholars. Clergy and seminarians will meet regularly during the conference to shape conference materials for use in their ministries. CEUs upon request.

A list of confirmed speakers and more information on IRAS can be found at www.iras.org. Information on Star Island is available at www.starisland.org. Information on conference fees, room and board, and registration is at www.iras.org/Conference.html, or contact Bonnie Falla, IRAS registrar, 810-1/2 N. Ninth St., Allentown, PA 18102; e-mail bfall@enter.net.