

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. 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 meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), and IRAS members help organize sessions at the American Academy of Religion (AAR). IRAS has sponsored more than two hundred fifty meetings at universities, colleges, and theological schools.

IRAS members may also join the lively online discussion group, and thus learn about new developments and publications, express their views, and become familiar with those of others.

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

Special Relationship—Affiliated Society, American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS).

Membership Dues

Membership is very attractive for those interested in *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science*. The membership fee for IRAS for individual members, including *Zygon*, online and print, is lower than the US rate for an individual subscription to *Zygon*! An even lower rate is available for those who prefer to have *Zygon* online only! And new members receive an additional discount in their first year of membership! There is also a discount for student members! For full details, see www.iras.org/membership.html.

Invitation to Join—You are most welcome to join IRAS, the Institute on Religion in an Age of Science. For further information and an application write to:

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The “Wicked Problem” of Climate Change: What Is It Doing to Us and for Us?

**The 63rd Conference of the Institute on Religion in an Age of Science
in partnership with the Parliament of the World’s Religions
June 24–July 1, 2017, Star Island off Portsmouth, NH**

Organized by Emily E. Austin, austin.emily@gmail.com and Karl E. Peters, kpeters396@cox.net (Co-chairs), and Paul H. Carr, paul.carr2@comcast.net (Conference Champion).



Climate change is a “wicked problem” with causes and consequences in economic, ecological, ethical, and technological realms. As climate change continues to alter our planet, how can we use this monumental change as an opportunity for societal and spiritual transformation?

“Uncertainty and ambiguity emerge here as resources, because they force us to confront those things we really want—not safety in some distant and contested future, but justice and self-understanding now.” – Sheila Jananoff

What is the way forward? We must confront climate change as a planetary community. It affects every institution, society, public policy, culture, and ecosystem into the foreseeable future. Every possible course of action intertwines with issues of international and intra-societal economic and social justice. Climate change is a multigenerational, transnational “wicked problem” with no single, simple solution.

Tasks to be addressed:

- Better understand the current scientific expectations for the future of the climate and its impact on our children and on all life.
- Take stock of what we can or can’t control in terms of the consequences of human action.
- Deal with our grief, hope, and desires in the midst of great losses and shifts that will occur.
- Recognize the limits and capacities of our evolutionary heritage. Think beyond our current economic and political identities into new ways of imagining and living into the future.
- Move away from anthropocentric thinking and learn to realize our human purposes as part of a finite, planetary community.
- Use the resources of guiding wisdom from the world’s religious and philosophical traditions.
- Formulate compelling narratives of creation care to enable us as persons, groups, and cultures to see what needs to be done and have the courage to do it.
- Use new understandings of how we should live to bring about social and economic justice for all in a sustainable earth community.

Coming to terms with what the “wicked problem” of rapid climate change might do for us will take creativity, imagination, and complex interdisciplinary thinking of organizations like IRAS.

CHAPLAIN: Mary E. Westfall has been Senior Minister at Community Church, UCC, Durham, NH, since 1999, and for eleven years was the Executive Director of the United Campus Ministry and Chaplain to the University of New Hampshire. Her commitment to the environment, and her interest in religion and science, led her to pursue a PhD at the University of New Hampshire Natural Resources Program. Mary taught Ecology and Values and related courses in the Philosophy Department, and in 1996 co-edited *The Greening of Faith: God, the Environment and the Good Life*, republished in 2016 by the University of New England Press, with a new foreword by Bill McKibben.

DIALOGUE PRESENTERS include:

Solomon H. Katz, PhD is professor emeritus of the Krogman Center for Child Growth and Development at the University of Pennsylvania, Professor of Physical Anthropology, Senior Fellow at the Wharton School Leonard Davis Institute for Health Economics, and CEO of the World Food Forum. He has over two hundred publications in fields such as molecular biology, neuroendocrinology, epidemiology, nutrition, child growth, anthropology and food studies, and science and religion. His *Encyclopedia of Food and Culture* (3 vols., 2,000 pages), was awarded the Dartmouth Medal for best reference work in 2004. Currently, he chairs the American Anthropological Association Task Force on World Food Problems.

Matthew Fox holds a doctorate in spirituality from the Institut Catholique de Paris and has devoted forty-five years to developing and teaching the tradition of Creation spirituality, reinventing forms of education and worship. He has authored thirty-two books on spirituality and contemporary culture that have been translated into sixty languages, including *A Way to God: Thomas Merton's Creation Spirituality Journey, An Original Blessing*, and *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ*. Fox's work is inclusive of today's science and world spiritual traditions. He is the founder of the new Institute for Creation Spirituality.

Ellen Kennedy embodies the thinking of Matthew Fox's creation spirituality in dance and teaches others how to do the same. She is a Sacred Circle Dancer (SCD), trained and certified at the Findhorn Foundation, Scotland. She founded the Mount Holyoke College Sacred Circle Dance Troupe, directing it for four years. She has developed, organized, and led SCD workshops, trainings, events, and retreats in the United States, Mexico, Scotland, Ireland, Iceland, South Korea, and Israel. Ellen is an international peace activist, recently dancing for peace at the Syrian border and the US Naval Base in South Korea.

William Shoemaker, PhD from MIT, has been neuroscientist at the National Institute of Mental Health and the Salk Institute, and at the University of Connecticut Medical School. Bill has authored more than a hundred scientific publications, many stemming from research on the effects of stress and isolation on the brains of rats. Recently, he is writing about the interface between neuroscience and religion, focusing on the social brain network, empathy, and psychopathy, and their relation to human moral behavior. One of his publications on this subject was in the December 2012 issue of *Zygon*.

SCIENCE PRESENTERS include:

Paul H. Carr, PhD in physics, Brandeis University. From 1967 to 1995 he led a branch of the AF Research Laboratory, which investigated microwave ultrasound and SAW (surface acoustic waves). His over eighty scientific papers and ten patents have contributed to new components for radar, TV, and cell phones. From 1998 to 2001 he taught a course at the University of Massachusetts – Lowell on science and religion with grants from the Templeton Foundation. This inspired his book *Beauty in Science and Spirit*. In recent years his work has focused on educating the public about climate change through presentations and debates. His home page is www.MirrorOfNature.org.

Robert S. Pickart, PhD in physical oceanography from MIT and the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI), is a Senior Scientist at WHOI. His research focuses on high-latitude processes, including air–sea interaction, deep convection, and the exchange of water between the shelves and the deep ocean. He does fieldwork in both the Atlantic and Pacific sectors of the Arctic Ocean and has recently been investigating ecosystem impacts of climate change. He is the author or co-author of one hundred and fifteen refereed scientific publications. His month-long (or longer) cruises carry out pioneering research and sometimes provide online education for grade school students and the lay public. See <http://arcticspring.org/>.

Emily E. Austin received her PhD in 2013 from the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of Tennessee. Her research has focused on the cycling of carbon through ecosystems and carbon fluxes to the atmosphere, the microbial communities responsible for carbon transformations in soil, and the potential for long-term storage (sequestration) of carbon in soils. Her PhD dissertation focused on the effects of warming on wood decomposition rates and wood decomposing fungal communities. Currently Emily is a post doctoral research assistant at the Grandy Soil Biogeochemistry Lab at the University of New Hampshire.

CALL FOR PAPERS:

In addition to invited speakers such as those above we also invite the submission of paper or poster proposals. Proposals of no more than two hundred and fifty words should be sent by email to Paulene Candaux before February 1, 2016, pcandaux@gmail.com. Please put "IRAS Proposal—[your last name]" in the subject line of the email. Proposals will be blind reviewed by a three-person committee. There will be full and partial scholarships for the top papers.

For more information, visit the IRAS website www.iras.org.

To register, please contact Marion Griswold, Registrar, at mbgriswold@yahoo.com.

For instructions on how to register online, go to www.iras.org and click on 2017 CONFERENCE and then on REGISTER FOR IRAS CONFERENCE.