

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 U.S. 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 CRISPR Apple on the Tree of Knowledge: Bioengineering, Gene Editing, and the Human Future

An IRAS Summer Conference
June 22–29, 2019

Program Co-Chairs: Arvin Gouw and Ted Peters

Conference Co-Chair: Maynard Moore; Co-Chair for Operations: Abigail Fuller

Human gene editing is quickly outstripping the decision-making mechanisms we have in place for approving or regulating technology usage. The technology to directly manipulate the genomes of plants, animals, and even humans is developing rapidly and is already in use. Can it be rationally managed and applied ethically? What are the medical, economic, environmental, and social consequences of genetic manipulation? At this conference, scientists, theologians, religious scholars, and ethicists will offer illuminating and thought-provoking perspectives on the issues surrounding the gene-editing technology known as CRISPR.¹ Scientists will explain the technique of gene editing with CRISPR and ethicists will ponder the impacts on society, from pest control to designer babies. What are the implications for agriculture and world hunger? What about medical advances that are too costly for most of the world? Theologians and religious scholars will discuss how we understand human nature and responsibility from within various religious traditions such as Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, and Hinduism. Most fundamentally, we will explore ethical issues such as therapy versus enhancement; species elimination versus global epidemic; germline intervention; and the long-term effects of bioengineering and genome editing that are within the realm of CRISPR possibility.

- First, do no harm: What is the state of research now? How far have we already come?
- Feeding the world's populations: What benefits and perils do we foresee for the future of the food system?
- Manipulating animal genomes, controlling pests: Successes and challenges.
- Correcting disorders and enhancing capabilities: Creating a post-human future?
- Managing technological advances—private and public cost issues: Who pays? Who benefits?
- Decision-making challenges: Who gets to decide? Ethical, legal, and international implications.

Speakers

Lisa Fullam, Professor of Moral Theology, Jesuit School of Theology, Santa Clara University

Arvin Gouw, Vice President for Research and Development, Rare Genomics Institute and Research Fellow in Oncology, Stanford University School of Medicine

Ted Peters, Research Professor Emeritus in Systematic Theology and Ethics, Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary and the Graduate Theological Union

Michael Ruse, Werkmeister Professor of Philosophy and Director of the Program in the History and Philosophy of Science, Florida State University

K. N. Siva Subramanian, Professor of Pediatrics and Obstetrics/Gynecology, Georgetown University Medical Center

Arthur Sutherland, Associate Professor of Theology, Loyola University Maryland

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1. Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Pallindromic Repeats (CRISPR) and the CRISPR associated protein 9 system (CRISPR/Cas9) are a bacterial antiviral mechanism which can be used as a genetic editing tool with the ability to target a specific region of a DNA sequence and insert a given gene.

**For further information: visit www.iras.org or contact
Abigail Fuller, abigail.fuller@maine.edu.**