

Eighth Annual Andrews Autumn Conference on Religion and Science



Faith & Reason: Foundations of Religion and Science

Saturday, October 26, 2013

Haughey Hall, Science Complex, Andrews University

“The scientist and the theologian both work by faith, a realist trust in the rational reliability of our understanding of experience.”

- John Polkinghorne

A function of the Midwest Religion and Science Society

ABSTRACTS

Stephen Harnish, *A Natural Bridge and Meeting Ground for Faith and Reason*

As widely assumed, the essence of mathematics is the dispassionate pursuit of numerical and logical certainty—moving from axioms, definitions and conjectures to clearly stated theorems, proofs and applications. In this light, mathematics is impersonal and indifferent to matters of faith. Or, is it? Deeper considerations of mathematical process, attitudes and ideas challenge this common assumption, and a sampling of perspectives from classical masters and modern communicators of mathematics presents a much more robust picture. Indeed, mathematics—that ‘unreasonably effective’ source of concepts and tools for the sciences, can also serve as a natural bridge and meeting ground for faith and reason.

Karl Bailey, *Believing Brains? Cognitive Approaches to Faith and Reason*

From its infancy in phrenological false promises, the idea that faith and reason should leave physical marks on the human brain has attracted both empirical and popular interest. The simple localization of faith or reason to a clearly defined brain area is, however, unlikely at this point, and the practice of using appeals to brain imaging to justify the existence of psychological constructs—neurorealism—is increasingly under critical fire. While we do not yet have a clear picture of the intricate networks that provide for the human experiences of faith and reason, some basic principles derived from a blending of psychology and neuroscience suggest the types of cognition that we would expect to underpin both faith and reason.

Ante Jeronic, *The Quest for “La Sapienza”: Elaborations on Roy Bhaskar’s Critical Realism*

During the last several decades, critical realism has proven to be a fruitful site of convergence for those interested in the dialogue of science and religion. As a methodological framework, it aims at presenting an alternative to both poststructuralist and foundationalist modes of reasoning by conjoining a realist conception of reality with that of epistemic fallibilism implied in constructivist accounts of knowledge. In this paper, I will focus on selected key postulates of Roy Bhaskar’s critical realist perspective by briefly delineating their significance for the stated dialogue, including questions of theological methodology and ethical responsibility. The discussion itself will be placed against the backdrop of pope Benedict XVI’s controversial nonappearance at the “La Sapienza” University of Rome in 2008 and the controversy that subsequently ensued.

Paul Keim, *With Heart, and Mind and Strength: Pursuing Reasonable Faith in the Maelstrom of Biblical Studies*

Faith seeking understanding gave rise to the systematic study of scripture in synagogue, church and mosque. Biblical studies, along with the ancillary disciplines of religious studies, Ancient Near Eastern studies and archaeology, arose out of this milieu and have found their place in the academy. The application of modern empirical methodologies to the Bible and its cultural environment has transformed modern approaches to and understanding of the Bible, but has also given rise to a form of biblical studies increasingly distanced from theology and the needs of faith communities. Yet religious consciousness and religious experience have always strained to find expression in rational discourse. At the moment when faith is defined and constrained by language, faith and reason become partners in a hermeneutic that transcends all confessional boundaries.

SCHEDULE

All activities held in the Julian Thompson Amphitheater (HYH133) unless otherwise noted.

- 8:30 am Registration and Breakfast (HYH118)
- 9:00 am Devotional
Trevor O'Reggio, Professor of Church History, Andrews University
- 9:20 am Welcome
Jiri Moskala, Seminary Dean, Andrews University
- 9:30 am Stephen Harnish, Professor and Chair of Mathematics, Bluffton University
A Natural Bridge and Meeting Ground for Faith and Reason
- 10:15 am Karl Bailey, Associate Professor of Psychology and Behavioral Neuroscience
Program Coordinator, Andrews University
Believing Brains? Cognitive Approaches to Faith and Reason
- 11:00 am Ante Jeroncic, Associate Professor of Religion, Andrews University
The Quest for "La Sapienza": Elaborations on Roy Bhaskar's Critical Realism
- 11:45 am Paul Keim, Professor of Bible, Religion & Foreign Languages, Goshen College
With Heart, and Mind and Strength: Pursuing Reasonable Faith in the Maelstrom of Biblical Studies
- 12:30 pm Lunch (HYH207)
- 2:00 pm Panel Discussion, moderated by Gary Burdick, Professor of Physics and
Associate Dean for Research, Andrews University
- 3:00 pm Breakout sessions
- 4:00 pm Synthesis
- 4:30 pm Worship
- 5:00 pm Supper (HYH207)

Sponsored by the Andrews University Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, the College of Arts & Sciences, and the Office of Research & Creative Scholarship.

FEATURED SPEAKERS



Stephen H. Harnish, Professor and Chair of Mathematics, Bluffton University

After theological studies at AMBS, Steve Harnish received his Mathematics Ph.D. at the University of Illinois, working under proof theorist Gaisi Takeuti—a friend and protégé of Kurt Gödel. He has since served at Neumann (PA) and Bluffton Universities, and as a founding member of the steering committee of the MRSS. Steve's professional commitments include mentoring NSF and MCRC-supported undergraduate research in logic, network theory, high performance computing, mathematical physics and the science and religion dialogue.



Karl Bailey, Associate Professor of Psychology and Behavioral Neuroscience Program Coordinator, Andrews University

Karl Bailey received his PhD in psychology, with a specialization in cognitive science, from Michigan State University. He has taught at Andrews University since 2004, and has directed the Behavioral Neuroscience Program since 2011. Bailey is one of the most active undergraduate research mentors on campus, supervising over 100 individual projects since arriving at Andrews. He and his students are currently working on problems in visual cognition, internalization of religious behavior, and cognitive load.



Ante Jeronic, Associate Professor of Religion, Andrews University

Ante Jeronic holds an MA in Systematic Theology from Stellenbosch University and a PhD in Theology from the University of Chicago Divinity School. His academic interests deal with questions of religion and violence, the relationship of ethics and aesthetics, as well as various issues of theology and culture. More specifically, his current research centers on the moral philosophy of Iris Murdoch, particularly her delineation of the Good as a form of ethical transcendence. Before joining Andrews University, Dr. Jeronic worked as a minister in the Chicagoland area.



Paul Keim, Professor of Bible, Religion and Foreign Languages, Goshen College

The primary focus of Paul Keim's academic training and scholarly work has been the Hebrew Scriptures. He spent a sabbatical year as Visiting Professor at the Friedrich Schiller University in Jena, Germany. He has also led international study groups to Israel/Palestine, Germany and Morocco.

The Andrews Autumn Conference on Religion and Science is an annual function of the Midwest Religion and Science Society (MRSS), an organization dedicated to the dialogue between religion and science. The MRSS is a cooperative endeavor of eight area colleges and universities: Andrews University, Bethel College, Bluffton University, Goshen College, Manchester College, Notre Dame University, Ohio Northern University, and the University of St. Francis. The next event of the MRSS is the Goshen Conference on Religion and Science, March 14-16, 2014, featuring Joshua Moritz. For more information please visit www.mrss-online.org.