Dear Friends:

I trust you have all had a fine summer with visits to and from friends, vacations, readings, and some rest also, refreshed for vigorous and renewed activities when the new season begins.

Many of us had yet another great conference at Chautauqua this year which included excellent talks and discussions, delicious meals, delightful happy hours, numerous personal interactions, meaningful morning services, peaceful candle-light sessions, a few good workshops: all this in addition to boat rides and swims and strolls, and sumptuous meals day and night with delicious soups and more than one dessert at our disposal.

In the midst of it all, many of us wondered why some people out there are bad. We were inspired by people who answered that question and showed us how we can be good in a variety of ways. We were abundantly entertained on the closing evening by a fantastic talent show. I am recalling all this to make the rest of the IRAS members regret they decided, for one reason or another, not to attend the conference this year. I am sure they have now decided not to miss the 2012 conference at Silver Bay, a wonderful spot on Lake George, a most enjoyable spread of buildings, lecture halls, swimming spots, tracks for jogging and grounds for strolling, as also fairly comfortable rooms.

The world has not been doing well in the meanwhile. Chaos in the Arab world, periodic terrorism in Iraq and Pakistan, corruption confrontations in India, financial crisis everywhere, murderous mayhem in Norway, let alone earth tremors, tornado disasters, and hurricane downpours. These are just some of the havoc about which we have been reading and listening in the media. They seem to provide a backdrop for the conference we are planning for 2012 which, as many of you know, will pose problem of saving the future. Some of our speakers will address the issues, enlighten us on the complexity of the problems and present ideas and insights for the solution of the countless problems our human family is facing.

The conference planners are hard at work, finalizing speakers, assigning topics, inviting workshops. Please affirm as early as you can your decision to come, since we have to guarantee a minimum number for ensuring the space.

The other major activity of IRAS listserv exchanges on shifting topics continues to reveal the interest and competence of our membership, not all of whom are equally active in keeping the discussions alive and vibrant. Still, the postings have been on the upswing in recent months, and that is commendable. These discussions have been so stimulating and weighty that I decided to include some of them thematically in our Website under the title of Perspectives. I trust you will all visit our Website and propagate it among your friends and other groups to which you belong.

As often happens, we have had some new members during and after the conference. We welcome them all in our midst.

V. V. Raman
October 2011

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The IRAS Annual Conference in 2011 was held from June 18 to 25, meeting for the second time at the Chautauqua Institution in southwestern New York State. This year the conference theme was: "Doing Good, Doing Bad, Doing Nothing: Scientific and Religious Perspectives on Human Behavior". It addressed the following questions: "What causes people to behave in ways that harm others? Benefit others? Why do some stand by and watch while others are hurt? And why do some step in to help, even at risk to themselves?" In response to these questions the conference sought to integrate recent understanding of behavior from the evolutionary, genetic, developmental, neural, and psychological sciences with teaching of the world's philosophies and religions, in order to better understand how we can become more "humane" humans.

For five days in lectures and workshops, conference attendees were provided traditional and new knowledge about human behavior from professors in the fields of social and behavioral sciences. While recent research in the social and behavioral sciences reveal some of the causes of "doing bad" and some of the difficulties in "doing good" there are also messages of hope for the future. These included reports from those working in such programs as the Plowshares Institute, Cultivating Peace for a Just Global Community and "To Highland With Love" where community volunteers come to an at-risk elementary school to be "Reading Friends". The following are some selected examples of those recent reports.

Melvin Konner, Professor of Anthropology and and Neuroscience and Behavioral Biology at Emory University spoke about fundamental Darwinian principles which predict conflict among many animal species where most species have controlled or even ritualized conflict. Human cultures have modified and continued these patterns, and have developed systematic group conflict, including scapegoating and genocide. But, he notes that along with deeply engrained conflict, human nature also includes cooperation and altruism. For example, while many "did nothing" during the Nazi Holocaust, there were the Danes who all wore the Star of David and the citizens of Le Chambone, France who saved 5000 Jews.

Ervin Staub, Professor Emeritus and Founding Director of the doctoral program in the psychology of peace and violence at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst spoke about Elements of Prevention of Conflict. They include: 1) Humanizing, rather than dehumanizing the other through words and actions.
Social structures that involve direct and regular contact among different groups, e.g., children in mixed groups engaged in cooperative learning. 2) Ideologies that are constructive and inclusive, built on regular contact and dialogue at all levels. 3) Healing of past wounds by talking with empathic others about traumas and distorted perceptions that follow. Find proper amount of punishment for justice that can be healing. With truth commissions modify memories and move toward a shared history. 4) Moderate, rather than uncritical response for authority, 5) Pluralistic, rather than monolithic, societal structure and process, 6) Social arrangements that are fair and just, 7) Eliminate repression that contribute to terrorism and revolution, and 8) Active, rather than passive bystanders. Research finds that children involved with family cooperative activities were more altruistic. Postivie action can generate reciprocity.

Mahzarin R. Banaji, currently President of the Association for Psychological Research spoke about recent research in psychology which reveals that our minds operate much of the time without conscious awareness. Thus, well-intentioned people may behave in ways that deviate from their own intentions. Subtle cues influence how we perceive others and act towards them, because we automatically rely on the social cues of our groupings like gender, race/ethnicity, sexuality, nationality, class, and age. An example is a physician who, half-way through a examination when he learned that his patient was a professor, changed his treatment plan for the patient. Research shows that the least bias is in those who cross boundaries regularly.

Laurie Anne Pearlman, a fellow of the Society for the Study of Peace, Conflict, and Violence and of the Trauma Division of the American Psychological Association, emphasized that children who are raised in caring, responsive environments develop along a predictable course. But, those with inadequate early physical or psychological nurturance, as well as sexual and other physical and emotional abuse, can have the natural developmental course disrupted. Children with difficulties, variously termed attachment disorders, developmental trauma, or complex trauma can lead to problems including trouble with emotional self-regulation, relationships, re-victimization, identity, and meaning. Not all who grow up in stressful families have problems however, studies show that the lack of problems is related to one person who cares, e.g., an aunt to comes each week to visit. The critical need of the individual is to have a sense of belonging. A call for all "to do something, not do nothing"!

Evans, Bob, Executive Director, and Alice, Director of Writing and Research, at Plowshares Institute, spoke about their approach to "Doing Good". It focuses on Walter Wink's "third way" of addressing destructive powers rather than with violence (doing harm) or submission (doing nothing). This approach of Doing Good involves engaging destructive forces with constructive non-violent intervention. It is "Conflict Transformation", it seeks to use the energy of conflict not only to resolve issues (conflict resolution) and manage relationships (conflict management), but also to transform the structural causes of conflict. Examples of this are: 1) being international advisers to the first truth commission between two nations, 2) a program with ten US cities to equip political, religious, business and community leaders with 'Peace Skills', and 3)a new program which includes young people seeking sustainable pace in the tribal areas of northeast India.

This year, the leader of the morning Chapel Services was Rev. Barbara Jamestone. The central theme of her meditations was: "East of Eden: Moral Ambivalence in the Religions of the East." She shared that while "it is comforting to imagine that the great wisdom traditions all shimmer with the same 'ultimate concern' underneath their vibrant and robust differences...in fact, they do not ask the same core questions or share the fundamental understandings of humanity's place in time and eternity. Rather, having emerged in distinct times and places, they each address a different central problem. For example, the farther East we travel, the less concern there is for the problem of evil. At the same time, each tradition does concern itself with the human condition, with how to live fully as a human being with the potential for transformation." Within this theme, she led inspiring meditations based on the traditions of Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucian Humanism, and Taoism.
Humanity continues to face serious problems within communities and countries, between nations and religions. Today, however, humanity faces a trio of new problems that threaten all of civilization and even our existence as a species; they might be termed the modern “three horsemen of the apocalypse:”

- Unsustainable world population growth;
- Excessive consumption of natural resources;
- Climate change, most likely caused by our use of fossil fuels

The Institute on Religion in an Age of Science (IRAS) believes a desperate need exists to seek solutions to these problems. In July 2010, IRAS looked at the issues and opportunities in converting from fossil energy to renewable energy technologies and at ways of conserving energy. Although it was not able to address all the relevant technical issues, it did offer the hope that we have in our grasp the science and technology needed to achieve sustainability. The IRAS conference in June 2011 considered, amongst other things, why many people remain passive when confronted with evil.

The IRAS conference in July 2012 will build on these conferences, focusing on why the World’s peoples and nations are mostly failing to deal with the greatest threats to humanity in history. It will examine the root causes of the current unwillingness to take adequate action, be they: human nature, culture, institutions and/or political/economic competition.

The conference will also consider recent progress, highlighting examples of effective cooperative action at local, national and international levels. It will then discuss how we might apply the lessons learned from them to the “three horsemen.” Local and community initiatives, in particular, are essential steps in demonstrating feasibility and changing opinion in favor of national efforts. Some of the problems and questions we will be exploring are:

What will the world be like at the end of this century if we take vigorous action? What will it be like if we don’t?

Have we been ill prepared by evolution to wisely exercise the dominance that we have achieved?

In what ways, if at all, do religion and our other traditional institutions help or hinder our achieving a sustainable economy and civilization?
CASIRAS (the Center for Advanced Study in Religion and Science) is a sister organization of IRAS. With IRAS it co-publishes the Journal *Zygon* through a Joint Publication Board. There is a representative from CASIRAS on the IRAS Council. And some members of IRAS are involved in the activities of CASIRAS. Yet, many in IRAS probably don’t know much about CASIRAS. As President of CASIRAS, I would like to share some thoughts on the relationship of these two organizations and outline some of the history of CASIRAS. My main point is that CASIRAS has always existed as an organization in relation to other organizations, one of which is IRAS.

To begin it may help to clarify the difference between IRAS and CASIRAS. While the fundamental purposes of the two organizations are the same, according to Ralph Burhoe (who may be regarded as the founder of IRAS, CASIRAS, and *Zygon*) there is a “difference in institutional character and function . . . . IRAS is an open-membership, voluntary organization which holds conferences and which may be joined by persons concerned with meetings and conferences for general purposes of integrating religion and science. . . . CASIRAS is a closed, self-perpetuating group, established more specifically to cooperate as an agent affiliated with educational institutions and theological schools for conducting advanced studies and teaching at various levels from postdoctoral, to predoctoral, to professional-degree programs involved in developing religious understanding and practice in the light of the sciences, more or less akin to the development of medical understanding and education in the light of the sciences”. In other words, CASIRAS is an educational and research center. This is born out by its early history.

How did this relationship between IRAS and CASIRAS come to be? For the first decade of its history, IRAS was one of a couple of organizations devoted to constructively reforming religious thought and practice in the context of current scientific understandings. Even before the founding of IRAS in 1954, in fact since about 1949, Burhoe and others like Henry Nelson Wieman were interested in establishing a journal of science and religion. Funding was not available for this. IRAS leaders did develop two books based on IRAS Star Island Conferences: *Science Ponders Religion* ed. Harlow Shapley and *Religion Ponders Science*, ed. Edwin Prince Booth. Still, the dream of a journal for publishable papers from IRAS conferences and elsewhere remained unfulfilled.

Then, in the early 1960s Meadville/Lombard Theological School, under the leadership of its president Malcolm R. Sutherland, Jr., became interested in the work of Burhoe and IRAS. Meadville was a Unitarian Universalist Seminary affiliated with the University of Chicago, and Sutherland, Sanborn Brown, Burhoe and others became interested in establishing a Center for Advanced Study in Science and Theology at the school. With the approval of the Meadville Board of Trustees this Center (CASTS) was established with an inaugural symposium in 1965. Burhoe moved from Boston, where he was the Executive Director of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, to Chicago to become a Meadville Professor and the Director of CASTS. At the same time CASTS and IRAS joined together, with the support of Meadville, to establish *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science* with Burhoe as the Founding Editor.

The Center itself was established in its own home at 5700 Woodlawn in October, 1966. Its first Fellows arrived that autumn. The first full-time, full-year Fellows were George Riggan, Riley Professor of Systematic Theology at Hartford Seminary Foundation; Donald Gentner, professor of chemistry from the University of California, Berkeley; Kenneth Cauthen, from the Crozer Divinity School faculty in Rochester, NY; Henry Nelson Wieman, professor at the University of Chicago; and John Ruskin Clark, a Unitarian-Universalist minister from San Diego.”

A part of CASTS’s mission was to co-publish *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science* in partnership with the Institute on Religion in an Age of Science (IRAS). This publishing venture was through a Joint Publication Board with representatives from both CASTS and IRAS. Thus at its inception the organization now known as CASIRAS was related to two other organizations, Meadville and IRAS. Yet, it had its own purpose as a center for advanced study, namely to develop research and educational programs for faculty and students in science and religion.
In 1972-1973, when Meadville/Lombard could no longer support CASTS, it was reorganized as CASIRAS, an independent non-profit center for advanced study, incorporated in the State of New York. At that time the editorial office of Zygon moved from Meadville/Lombard to the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, and there CASIRAS offered an Advanced Seminar in Religion and Science headed by Ralph Burhoe and Philip Hefner. It also continued the CASTS tradition of Fellows, some of whom have been Karl Peters, Norbert Samuelson, and Willem Drees. With IRAS it continued to co-publish Zygon.

In 1979 Karl Peters became editor of the journal, and the editorial office of Zygon moved to Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida. Rollins joined IRAS and CASIRAS in the publishing venture, while LSTC continued to be the home of CASIRAS and the Advanced Seminar. There also were informal connections between the presidents of Rollins and LSTC (Thaddeus Seymour and William Lesher) that recognized the relational nature of this science and religion enterprise.

In 1989, Philip Hefner succeeded Peters as the Editor-in-Chief of Zygon and the editorial office returned to Chicago and LSTC. At the same time Burhoe, Lesher, and Hefner led an effort that established the Chicago Center for Religion and Science. CASIRAS and LSTC joined together as formal partners that sponsored CCRS.

In 1999 the Chicago Center was renamed the Zygon Center for Religion and Science (ZCRS) as a way to remember the pioneer leader of all these related science and religion enterprises, Ralph Wendell Burhoe (1911-1997). (For a beautiful website with special tributes to Burhoe by Hefner and Katz, go to http://www.usao.edu/~facshaferi/BURHOE.HTML.

From 1973 through 2000 the structure of CASIRAS consisted of people invited by the Board to be members, who in turn elected members to the Board. Some of the Board and the members also were Fellows. Then in 2001, in order to accommodate the legal requirements involved with the “Burhoe Trust” that Burhoe set up before his death to support CASIRAS, the Zygon Journal and the Zygon Center, CASIRAS (when Sol Katz as President) was reorganized into its present form as a self-perpetuating Board. The primary legal purpose of the Board is to oversee three endowments from the Burhoe Trust (one for the Zygon Center, one for the Zygon Journal, and one for CASIRAS itself). The former members of CASIRAS were made Fellows with occasional responsibility for advising the Board.

Current Board members are Karl Peters (I) President, Philip Hefner (I) Vice President, Robert Glassman (I) Secretary, Carol Albright Treasurer, Terrence Baeder (L), William Lesher, Greg Davis (L), Kimberlee Eighmy (L), Paul Heltne, William Irons (I) Solomon Katz (I), James Moore, Gregory Peterson, Lea Schweitz (L), Mladen Turk, Gayle Woloschak (I). Current Fellows are John Albright, Richard Busse, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Lindon Eaves, Ursula Goodenough (I), James Nelson, Loyal Rue, and Jeffrey Wicken.

The developments from 1989 through 2001 strengthened the relationships between CASIRAS and ZCRS, so that some people regard ZCRS as the active program arm of CASIRAS. In many ways the program of ZCRS resembles that of the original CASTS and Meadville/Lombard. Both have educational, research, and community outreach components.

In the course of distributing funds from the ZCRS Burhoe endowment during its annual Board meeting, CASIRAS Board members engage in conversation with and offer suggestions to the leadership of ZCRS (Director Lea Schweitz and Associate Director Gayle Woloschak), who in turn are members of the CASIRAS Board. Further, some members of the CASIRAS Board are on the Advisory Committee of ZCRS. Two Board members, Carol Albright and Philip Hefner, have been active in ZCRS programming, in addition to Gayle Woloschak and Lea Schweitz, while Karl Peters, Paul Heltne, and Bob Glassman regularly participate in ZCRS seminars and classes. So the relationship between CASIRAS and ZCRS is both a legal arrangement but also a networking of persons who are involved in both organizations.

At the same time, CASIRAS continues its relationship with IRAS as the co-publisher of Zygon. The publishing enterprise is formally independent of any relationships with ZCRS and LSTC. However, the editorial office of the journal is located at LSTC—actually an office shared with the staff of ZCRS—and LSTC provides that office space, handles the Burhoe
Endowment for the Zygon Journal, and does the accounting for the Journal.

Finally, CASIRAS’s relationship with IRAS continues informally with people in leadership positions of both organizations. Philip Hefner and Sol Katz have been two-time Presidents of IRAS, and Sol is the current Vice President for Science. Carol Albright is a past IRAS Vice President for Religion. Karl Peters, the current President of CASIRAS, also has been President of IRAS and Vice President for Conferences of IRAS. Other CASIRAS Board members, (Bob Glassman, Greg Peterson, Lea Schweitz, Mladen Turk, and Gayle Woloschak) are or have been members of IRAS. Two CASIRAS Board members now deceased were very active in IRAS: Malcolm Sutherland was President, and Robert Sorensen was a Vice President for Development.

All this makes CASIRAS a “Sister Organization” of IRAS, even as it also is related to the Lutheran School of Theology and the Zygon Center for Religion and Science. Still, in the midst of all these relationships, CASIRAS remains its own organization, legally incorporated in New York State as an independent Center for Advanced Study in Religion and Science.


Many others were involved in the founding of these organizations. However, in each case Burhoe was the catalyst, organizer, and promoter.


Ibid., 119.


This site was designed by Ingrid Schaffer. I discovered it and other fascinating material by googling “Ralph Wendell Burhoe.” (I) means IRAS member; (L) means appointed by the President of the Lutheran School of Theology.

ESSSAT CONFERENCE 2012
What Is Life?

The European Society for the Study of Science and Theology (ESSSAT) invites you to the Fourteenth European Conference on Science and Theology (24-29 April 2012) See www.esssat.org

As usual, we will have five plenary lectures, a panel and ample space for short paper discussions. Plenary lectures will be held by Gayle Wolochak, Stuart Kauffman, Bronislaw Szerszynski, Richard Vilems and Antje Jackelén. General Assembly will meet on April 27, 14.00-15.00.

All of us can accept the challenge and try our own take on this topic: Is life a biological, or philosophical, theological or paleoarcheological, social scientific or psychological issue, or all of it, and many others? Are the best representations of life presented by artists, are the best explanations by biosemioticians? Is life a process of dying slowly, or a prelude to something else?

This is the first time, the ESSSAT will have its conference in Estonia, in fact, the first time the conference will be held in the territory of the former Soviet Union. For many, it would be a new destination on the map of Europe – come and see! One’s own eye is the king, as we say
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To AAAS
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INTER-FACING ORGANIZATIONS  (Not part of IRAS but important to its work.)

AAAS General contact – Linda McDaniel

AAAS Program of Dialogue on Science, Ethics, and Religion (DOSER)– Jennifer Wiseman, Chair, Albert H. Teich, Director of Science and Policy Programs; Edward G. Derrick, Deputy Director of Science and Policy Programs; Stephen D. Nelson, Senior Advisor on Science & Technology Policy. Email: science_policy@aaas.org (See also AAAS – DOSER in list below.)

AAR Religion and Science Group – James Haag, Lea Schweitz

American Psychological Association, Division 36 (Psychology of Religion) – William Hathaway

Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences (CTNS) – Robert Russell

European Society for the Study of Science and Theology (ESSSAT) – Willem Drees is the IRAS contact and the current president is Antje Jackelen (Lund)

John Templeton Foundation Andrew Rick-Miller, Home (610) 941-2828; drickmiller@templeton.org

Metanexus Institute on Religion and Science – Billy Grassie, Executive Director Eric Weislogel

Zygon Center for Religion and Science (ZCRS) – Lea F. Schweitz, Gayle Woloschak

DOSER, AAAS Dialogue on Science, Ethics, and Religion), doser@aaas.org tel ((202) 326-6600 fax (202) 289-4950 Peyton West, PhD, Albert H. Teich, PhD, and Mark S. Frankel, PhD Jennifer Wiseman, Chair