Humanity 2.0? God, Technology, and the Future of Being Human

COSAC—The leading interdisciplinary conference on Christianity, the sciences, and technology in Australia since 1997.

Join us at ISCAST's biennial Conference on Science and Christianity (COSAC 2024) as we come together to dive into these questions over three days.

- What does the Bible say about being human?

- What are the implications of being made in God's image? Of being created "male and female"?

- Are bodies essential to being human?

- Are we free to heal them? Remodel them? Enhance them? Escape them altogether? Should we seek to combat aging? Mortality?

- When does the good use of God-given creativity cross the line and become "playing God"?

- What are the implications for social (in)equality and the abuse of power? And, beyond the church, how can Christians help society wrestle with what it means to be human?

There will be themed parallel presentations by theologians, philosophers, scientists, and practitioners, as well as keynote talks and panel sessions for a lay audience. There will be plenty of opportunities to connect with others interested in the science–faith conversation.

Students:

- Have the chance to win a grant for a science–faith project! See our Call for Proposals for more details.

- Can enquire about extra assistance from scholarships and grants, on top of the already discounted student tickets, if required to be able to attend the conference. We don't want anyone to miss out. For details, contact us.

New College (UNSW) Sydney
29 Nov – 1 Dec 2024

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Featured Speakers + Friday Night AI Talks

Neil Dodgson

is one of our three "AI x Christianity" keynote speakers, as a leader in this inter-disciplinary field. He is Professor of Computer Graphics in the Faculty of Engineering and Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Research at Victoria University of Wellington. He has spent 30 years working across mathematics, engineering, and computing, including twenty years as co-leader of the Graphics and Interaction Research Group at the University of Cambridge Computer Laboratory. His current research students use a range of AI techniques to achieve novel results in image processing.

Living in an Age of Disruptive Technologies: AI and What It Means to Be Human

AI is in the news now, but scientists have been working on it for seventy years. So why now? What has happened, is happening, and will happen? I will summarise the history of AI and explain the current technology of deep learning that has led to generative AI systems that can do things we once thought were the sole purview of human beings. I will talk about the positive and negative potential of AI, how we respond to the ethical problems it raises, and how the church might engage in the debate.

Stephen Garner

is a Senior Research Fellow at Laidlaw College and a consultant at thirdSpaces Consulting. With backgrounds in theology, computer science, and higher education, his research and writing engage with theology, technology, media, ethics, and public and context theology. For 25 years, he's worked with people developing practical wisdom for living faithfully and ethically with digital technology, media, and culture. He currently serves on the board of the Global Network for Digital Theology, is co-chair of the American Academic of Religion Human Enhancement and Transhumanism Program Unit, and is a member of the Lausanne Theology Working Group.Stephen will also be flying in from New Zealand.

Who Do You Say That I Am? Living Faithfully and Wisely with Technology

Technological developments bring with them both a sense of wonder at human creativity and ingenuity, alongside very real anxieties about the nature and use of technology. Converging technologies such as artificial intelligence and robotics; genetics, medical, and biotechnologies; information and communications technologies; and nanotechnology generate existential questions about our humanity and threats to the wellbeing of communities and the world, as well as more mundane ones around work and employment, security, education, and everyday ethics. Drawing on biblical and theological insights and the notion of 'appropriate technology' this presentation examines what grounds faithful, wise living in this technological world, and who do we say Jesus Christ is in it.

Kara Martin

is a lecturer, mentor, podcaster, as well as author of "Workship" and "Workship 2", which are focused on rediscovering our vocations, and "Keeping Faith" which is about developing organisational theologies. She lectures at Mary Andrews College, Sydney, and is an Adjunct Professor at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Boston. Drawing on 30 years of experience in corporate and not-for-profit roles (in TV journalism, human resources, business analysis, lecturing, policy formation, advocacy, theological studies, leadership, and lecturing), her books provide a biblical foundation and practical wisdom to equip workplace Christians, churches and Christian organisations. Both "Workship" books were shortlisted for Australian Christian Book of the Year. She will share on the topic of "Gospel Wisdom for Work" in our "AI x Christianity" session.

This AIn't Working: AI and the Future of Work

As AI rapidly transforms the workplace, it presents both opportunities and challenges. Kara will explore AI's potential to boost productivity and innovation, while also addressing job displacement and inequality. Rooted in the biblical view of work as a gift from God, how can we affirm the dignity of human labour and highlight the importance of creativity, ethics, and stewardship in an AI-driven world?

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