

6th International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences Opens in San Francisco

Louise Strait
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Photo date and location unknown

Nobel Laureate in physiology Sir John Eccles believes science cannot be restricted to phenomena that can be measured. "Its identifying characteristic is its reliance on creative imagination and rational criticism," he says.

To delve further into the area of science and values, Sir John will chair the Sixth International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences, November 25-27 at the Fairmont Hotel, San Francisco. He will be joined by 500 other notable scientists, theologians and philosophers from more than 50 nations. Michael Young Warder, Secretary-General for the Conference, says 10 Nobel Prize winners are also expected to participate.

Purpose of the Conference is "to provide an opportunity for scholars and scientists to reflect on the nature of knowledge and to discuss the relationship of science to a standard of value," according to Warder.

The Conference is sponsored by the International Cultural Foundation, founded by the Reverend Sun Myung Moon in 1968 as "a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting academic, scientific, religious and cultural exchange among the countries of the world." The Foundation is headquartered in New York.

Following the highly-successful format of the past five years' conferences, the theme, "The Search for Absolute Values in a Changing World," will be addressed in four main committee areas: Religion and Philosophy, the Social Sciences, the Life Sciences, and the Physical Sciences. Also, 13 interdisciplinary discussion groups will convene during the final day of the Conference to allow attendees the opportunity to share their observations with those in other areas.

More than 70 individual papers and talks will be delivered during the three-day Conference.

Proceedings of the annual conferences are published by the International Cultural Foundation Press and are available to interested persons.

Chairman:

Sir John Eccles, Professor of Neuroscience, Locarno, Switzerland, a Nobel Laureate in Physiology. The eminent Sir John is chairman of the Sixth ICUS.

Committee Chairmen include:

Dr. Richard L. Rubenstein, Distinguished Professor, Florida State University. Dr. Richardson is Chairman of the Committee on Religion and Philosophy;

Dr. Daniel Lerner, Professor of Sociology, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and world renowned expert on communication and media. Dr. Lerner will chair the Committee on the Social Sciences;

Dr. Kenneth Mellanby, Zoologist, Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, UK. Dr. Mellanby, noted ecologist and environmentalist, will chair the Committee on the Life Sciences;

Dr. Eugene P. Wigner, Professor of Physics, Princeton University. A Nobel Laureate in Physics, Dr. Wigner will chair the Committee on the Physical Sciences.

Some of the Featured Speakers include:

Ramchandra Gandhi, University of Delhi. Dr. Gandhi, grandson of the late Mahatma Gandhi, will

speak on "Death and the Meaning of Life from the Point of View of Hinduism."

Max Jammer, Professor of Physics, Bar-Ilan University, Israel. Dr. Jammer, noted physicist and philosopher, will talk on "Physics and the Search for the Absolute."

Alexander King, Chairman, International Federation of Institutes for Advanced Study, Paris. Dr. King, co-founder of the Club of Rome, will speak on "The Future of Humanity in a World of Finite Resources."

Morton A. Kaplan, Professor of International Relations, University of Chicago. Professor Kaplan, noted expert on international affairs, will speak on "Alienation and Identification."

Karl H. Pribram, Professor of Neuroscience, Stanford University. Dr. Pribram will speak on "The Brain-Mind Problem in Relation to the Physical Sciences."

Funding

Funding for the annual conference comes in the form of grants from the Unification Church to the International Cultural Foundation. "There is very little institutional support for such an international and interdisciplinary conference, despite a very real need," claims Warder.

He says most institutions with financial capacity often have nationalistic concerns or limited interests. "The Conference is truly international, interdisciplinary and concerned with the world as a whole," he says. Some of the more than 50 countries represented this year include Great Britain, West Germany, Soviet Union, Japan, Israel, Jordan, Kenya, Italy, and Brazil. A host of third-world countries is also achieving greater representation.

Warder attributes the success of past Conferences to a number of reasons:

"The theme is important; there is complete academic freedom; the Conference is well-organized and well-staffed; and a very fine volume of proceedings is published after every Conference".

Why is this Conference significant?

According to Dr. Miguel R. Covian, noted neurophysiologist from the University of Sao Paulo, Brazil and an attendee at last year's Conference: "I think this kind of Conference is an urgent necessity for scientists and scholars who run the risk of being isolated in their own specialty, losing in this way the knowledge of the total reality..."

"These Conferences have already caused great impact on scientists and scholars all over the world."

Dr. Joseph Meeker, interdisciplinary professor at Athabasca University, Edmonton, Alberta Canada, says:

"The interdisciplinary movement of which this Conference is a part is not an academic fad, but a response to the growing need among people everywhere to find a new sense of integrity for their own lives and for their understanding of the world around them.

"It is in part a corrective movement intended to combat the fragmentation that has resulted from centuries of specialization. But it is also a creative effort directed toward greater wholeness and integration of human knowledge.

"The fences must come down to correct past errors and distortions, but at the same time we must learn new ways to live on the wilderness of wholeness where our best hope for the future lies.

Sunday Discussion Groups

1. Media Freedom and Responsibility.
2. Death and the Meaning of Life.
3. The Relationship of Government and Business to the Individual in Democratic and Totalitarian Systems.
4. The Ways and Means of Multidisciplinary Studies.
5. Science as an Experience of the Absolute: Religious and Moral Implications of Research.
6. The Future of Humanity in a World of Finite Resources.

7. Scientific Research and Enquiry: Ivory Tower or the Market Place, Slaughterhouse or Shangri-La?
8. Future of the Family: A Cross-Cultural Perspective.
9. How Can Atomic Energy Help Man's Future?
10. Alienation and Identification.
11. The Systematic Interrelation of Types of Values.
12. The Role of Education in Imparting Values.
13. The Social Meaning of Artistic Creativity.

Topics Outline

Sixth International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences

Chairman: Sir John Eccles

Committee I Religion and Philosophy

Group Topics:

- A. Philosophies as Alternative Modes of Social Praxis.
- B. Comparative Religious Responses to Modernization.
- C. Religion and Society.
- D. Religion and Science.

Committee II the Social Sciences

Group Topics:

- A. Intercultural Communication in a Changing World. Chairman: To be announced.
- B. Values, Policy and the Control of Violence.
- C. Projecting a New Economic World Order.
- D. Shaping a New Political World Order.

Committee III The Life Sciences

Group Topics:

- A. The Ethics of Research on Recombinant DNA.
- B. Health Care as a Global Problem-Social and Behavioral Aspects.
- C. Health Care as a Global Problem.
- D. Biological Foundation of Altruism, Dedication and Egoism.

Committee IV The Physical Sciences

Group Topics:

- A. Limits of Science.
- B. A Consideration of the Universe as a Whole.
- C. The Brain-Mind Problem in Relation to the Physical Sciences.
- D. The Boundaries of Science and Technology