

Autumn Conference on Religion and Science

14th annual conference continues to foster fruitful dialogue

THE THEME FOR THIS YEAR'S AUTUMN Conference on Religion and Science was “Science & Theology Dialogue: ‘Finding Common Ground.’” The 14th annual conference was held November 1–2 and aimed to facilitate fruitful dialogue by engaging in the study of nature and Scripture, which offer complementary perspectives that seem at times to be in conflict with one another.

The weekend began with a poster session followed by four dialogues presented by featured speakers. The first dialogue was on science and theology. Gary Burdick, professor of physics and dean of research at Andrews, spoke on “The Theological Foundations of Modern Empirical Science,” and Martin Hanna, professor of systematic theology at Andrews, presented “The Cosmic Christ of Scripture as the Center of Science-Theology Dialogue.”

Øystein LaBianca, professor of anthropology at Andrews, and Earl Kumfer, professor emeritus of philosophy and theology at the University of Saint Francis, presented the second dialogue on anthropology and theology. They discussed “Saving the Planet: Science, Culture and Theology in the Anthropocene” and “Refocusing Biblically Grounded Images of God, Man, and Nature: Toward an Eco-Theology.”

The third dialogue covered cognitive science and theology. Attendees heard from Karl Bailey, professor of psychology at Andrews, and Russell Haitch, professor of theology and human science at Bethany Theological Seminary. They presented “Body & Soul, Chance & Control: Folk Beliefs about the Human Person & Agency” and “Wholeness and Holiness: How Psychology & Theology Can Complement & Correct Each Other.”

The final dialogue was on ecology and theology. Daniel Gonzalez-Socoloske, associate professor of biology at Andrews, spoke on “The State of Our Planet: An Ecologist’s View of the Natural World.” Rahel Wells, associate professor of biblical studies at Andrews, presented “The Earth is the Lord’s and Everything in It: A Theologian’s View of the Natural World.”

The Science & Theology Dialogue is sponsored by the Andrews University Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, the College of Arts & Sciences, and the Office of Research & Creative Scholarship. The Andrews Conference on Religion & Science is an annual function of the Midwest Religion and Science Society, an organization dedicated to the dialogue between religion and science.

School of Social Work receives full reaccreditation

Successfully completes CSWE requirements

THE ANDREWS UNIVERSITY BACHELOR and Master of Social Work programs (BSW and MSW), offered by the School of Social Work, have successfully been reaccredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the national accrediting organization for all social work programs in the U.S.

According to the School of Social Work, both the BSW and MSW degrees integrate concepts of professional ethics and values, critical thinking, research, and sensitivity to diversity, oppression, social and economic justice, and populations-at-risk. Field education is an integral component of both degrees.

“Our BSW degree has been accredited since 1976 and our MSW has been accredited since 1995, and we are pleased to continue offering high quality social work degrees at Andrews University,” says Curtis VanderWaal, chair of the School of Social Work.

The accreditation process typically takes several years to complete and involves

assessing all areas of the curriculum and program in general. Faculty must show how students master the knowledge, values and skills of the profession across each required class. The programs must justify everything from budgets to faculty teaching loads to community impact. In the most recent reaccreditation process, there were no concerns noted by the Commission on Accreditation and no remediation plans were needed.

“We are delighted to have achieved full BSW and MSW accreditation for the maximum eight years. The entire reaccreditation process was truly a team effort where all our faculty played an important role,” says VanderWaal.

This reaccreditation is significant because graduation from an accredited program is almost always required for employment in the field of social work and is absolutely required for all levels of social work licensure in all states.

“Our students were the stars of the accreditation site visit,” says VanderWaal. “One of the reviewers said that in his 30 years of conducting accreditation visits, he had never encountered a more enthusiastic group of students.”

The School of Social Work will continue to grow its programs—it is adding a trauma-infused curriculum with a newly developed minor in trauma and disaster response that will be offered in 2020 in collaboration with the School of Social & Behavioral Sciences. In addition, they recently established the International Center for Trauma Education & Care and will also be launching a new dual degree with the Master of Public Health in 2020.

