

Research Project No.1: Dr Denis Alexander and Nell Whiteway

Project title: 'Genes, Determinism and God'

Genetic determinism has waxed and waned ever since genetics became established as a scientific discipline in the early part of the 19th century. This project aims to investigate the literature describing the relationship between the inter-individual genomic variation that exists between organisms within a species and the variation that exists in behavioural phenotypes. Using a 'bottom-up' approach, relatively simple organisms will be investigated, then more complex, finally addressing the same inter-individual variation relationship within the human context. The question will be asked as to whether genetic variation is relevant to human concepts of free-will and moral responsibility, and the role of such variation in the Judaeo-Christian notion of humankind being made in the image of God. Dr. Alexander presented some of the results of this research in his Gifford Lectures that took place at St. Andrews University on December 3rd, 4th, 6th and 7th, 2012. This project was part of the [Uses and Abuses of Biology](#) programme.



Dr Denis Alexander



Nell Whiteway

OUTPUTS

Books

Alexander, D.R. *Genes, Determinism and God*, CUP, 2017 [The Gifford Lectures].

Alexander, D.R. *Are We Slaves to Our Genes?* CUP, 2020

Articles

Alexander, D.R. (2013) 'Genes, Determinism and God', Cambridge Paper Vol 22, No 4, December.

Whiteway E. and Alexander, D.R. (2014) 'Understanding the Causes of Same-Sex Attraction', *Science and Christian Belief*,

Whiteway, E. (2015) 'Scientific insights into the causes of same-sex attraction', *Faith and Thought*, April, pp 4-18.

Alexander, D.R. (2017) 'Genes, Determinism and God'. Triple Helix. Winter Edition.

Alexander, D.R. (2019) 'Determinism and Freedom in Modern Science – the Perspective of Genetics', article for *Sapientia* at the Henry Center's Creation Project, Chicago.

Alexander, D.R. (2020). Sapientia Symposium, Henry Center, Chicago, on *Genes, Determinism and God*, introduced by Ken Keathley: <https://henrycenter.tiu.edu/2020/05/genes-determinism-and-god-introducing-the-symposium/>. Clay Carlson, Michael Ruse and Michael Wittmer provided commentaries, followed by a Response by Alexander at: <https://henrycenter.tiu.edu/2020/05/genes-determinism-and-god-a-rejoinder/>.

Media

Alexander, D.R. 'Made In the Image of God: The Theological Implications of Genomics - Part 2', Huffington Post, Jan 2012.

Alexander, D.R. 'Cooperation, Altruism and Naturalism', Cambridge University web-site 24 May 2012: <http://www.cam.ac.uk/research/discussion/cooperation-altruism-and-naturalism-two-lectures-on-evolutionary-themes/>.

Alexander, D.R. 'Made in the Image of God: Human Value and Genomics', Huffington Post, Jan 10th, 2013. [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/made-in-the-image-of-god-human-value-and-human-genomics_b_2401494].

Alexander, D.R. (2013), 'Genes not to blame for human actions', The Times (Correspondence), 4th April.

Alexander, D.R. (2017) 'Genes, Determinism and God'. ISSR website: <https://www.issr.org.uk/blog/genes-determinism-god-denis-alexander/>

Alexander, D.R. (2017) 'Genes, Determinism and God'. BioLogos website: <http://biologos.org/blogs/guest/genes-determinism-and-god>

Alexander, D.R. (2018). 6th Sep. Live interview with Christian Radio Station based in Sydney.

Alexander, D.R. (2018). 10th Sep. Filmed interview with Natasha Moore, Centre for Public Christianity, Sydney.

Alexander, D.R. (2022) 'Say 'No' To An Insidious Genetic Determinism', *Melbourne Anglican*, May 2022, p. 18.

Lectures

3-7 Dec 2012. Four Gifford Lectures, St. Andrews University, under overall title 'Genes, Determinism and God':

Lecture 1: 'Genes, History and Ideology'.

Lecture 2: 'Reshaping the Matrix of Genes and Environment'.

Lecture 3: 'Genetic Variation and Human Behaviour'.

Lecture 4: 'Molecular Genetics, Determinism and the *Imago Dei*'.

13 Dec 2012. Lecture at American Association for the Advancement of Science, Dialogue on Science, Ethics and Religion Program, Washington, entitled 'Are We Only Our Genes?'.

21 Jan, 2013. Lecture at Oxford Christian Graduates Society. 'Genes, Determinism and God'.

20 April, 2013. Lecture at Cambridge Papers Conference, Cambridge, on 'Genes, Determinism and God'.

26 Sep., 2013. Lecture at Tonbridge School Parents and Teachers Association: 'Genes, Determinism and God'.

8 Oct., 2013. Lecture to Leeds Christians in Science: 'Genes, Determinism and God'.

10 Oct., 2013. E.T.S.Walton Lecture at Trinity College, Dublin: 'Genes, Determinism and God'.

11 Oct., 2013. E.T.S.Walton Lecture, Belfast: 'Genes, Determinism and God'.

19 Nov., 2013. Lecture in 'Bible and Science' series, Worcester: 'Genes, Determinism and God'.

25 Feb., 2014. Lecture to Haberdashers School Sixth Form Science Club on 'Genes, Determinism and God'.

10 April 2014. Inaugural Elving Anderson Lecture at the University of Minneapolis, USA, on 'Genes, Determinism and God'.

22 Jan., 2016. Lecture at Westmont College, California USA: 'Are We Slaves to Our Genes?'

30 Jan., 2016. Lecture to Faculty Club, McMaster University, Canada: 'Are we Slaves to Our Genes? A scientific and Christian perspective'.

5-7 April 2016. Five lectures given at Lee Abbey Retreat, including 'Are we Slaves to Our Genes?'

19 July 2016. Lecture on 'Are We Slaves to Our Genes?' Parks-at-One, Science Park, Cambridge.

4 Nov., 2016. Annual Dallinger Lecture at the University of Plymouth on 'Are we slaves to our genes? A scientific and Christian perspective'.

14 -16 2017. Lectures in Wales hosted by Cymra Institute of Contemporary Christianity: 'Are We Slaves to Our Genes – a Scientific and Christian Perspective?' Swansea on 14th; Cardiff on 15th; Colwyn Bay on 16th.

17 March 2017. Lecture at University of Juiz de Fora, Brazil, for Mind-Brain Conference on 'Genes, Determinism and God'.

4 April 2017. Lecture at Hope College, Holland USA, 'Are We Slaves to Our Genes?'

31 May 2017. Hong-Kong University Lecture: 'Are We Slaves to Our Genes – Genes, Determinism and God'.

10 July 2017. Theos Institute, London. Lecture: 'Genes, Determinism and God'.

27 July 2017. Faraday-Kuyper Course, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Lecture: 'Genes, Determinism and God'.

23 Nov., 2017. Lecture at Leeds University Centre for Philosophy of Religion on 'Genes, Determinism and God'.

29 Nov., 2017. Lecture at Sanger Genome Campus, Cambridge. 'Genes, Determinism and God'.

4 Jan., 2018. Lecture at Trinity College, Cambridge, to annual Opus Dei Scholars Workshop: 'Genes, Determinism and God'.

28 April 2018. Lecture in Philosophy Dept, Beijing Normal University, China: 'Genes, Determinism and Free Will'.

30 April 2018. Lecture to medical students at Shantou Medical College, China: 'Are We Slaves to Our Genes?'

8 May 2018. Lecture at Faraday Course, National University of Singapore,: 'Genes, Determinism and Free Will'.

27 August 2018. Lecture at Green Belt Festival: 'Are Our Futures Written in Our Genes?'

12 Sep., 2018. Lecture at New College, University of New South Wales, Sydney: 'Are We Slaves to Our Genes?: Faith and the Future of Humanity'.

18 Sep., 2018. Lecture at the Emmanuel Centre for the Study of Science, Religion and Society, Emmanuel College, University of Queensland, Brisbane. Title: 'Genetics, God and the future of humanity'.

19 Sep., 2018. Lecture at St. Peter's Anglican Church, East Hill, Melbourne. Title: 'Genetics, God and the future of humanity'.

20 Sep., 2018. Lecture at The Peter Doherty Institute for Infection and Immunity, Melbourne. Title: 'Genes, Determinism and God: are we slaves to our genes?'

21 Sep., 2018. Lecture at ISCAST, Canberra, Title: 'Genetics, God and the future of humanity'.

24 Sep., 2018. Lecture at ISCAST, Tabor College, Adelaide. Title: 'Genetics, God and the future of humanity'.

23 Oct., 2018. Faraday Research Seminar, Cambridge: 'Genetics, God and the Future of Humanity'.

7 Feb., 2019. Lecture to Suffolk Theology Forum, Ipswich: 'Genes, Determinism and God'.

19 Feb., 2019. Lecture at St. John's Cathedral, Hong Kong: 'Genetics, God and the Future of Humanity'.

21-23 Nov., 2019. Four lectures at Bangalore Faraday Course, India: including 'Are We Slaves to Our Genes?'

11 Feb., 2020. Lecture to Cambridge Jewish Society: 'Are We Slaves to Our Genes?'

13 Feb., 2021. Lecture for Arizona State University Conference: 'Are We Slaves to Our Genes?'

9 April 2021. Lecture for international Langham Scholars: 'Are We Slaves to Our Genes?'

29 April 2021. Lecture for ISCAST (Australia + New Zaland): 'Are We Slaves to Our Genes?'

6 April 2022. Trotter Prize Lecture at Texas A&M, USA (by Zoom). 'Are We Slaves to Our Genes?'

28 July 2023. Opening lecture of Annual ASA/CSCA Conference, Toronto, Canada: 'Are We Slaves to Our Genes?'

15 Sep., 2023. Lecture to 'Thank God Its Friday' faculty group at the Pretoria Rugby Club, S. Africa: 'Are We Slaves to Our Genes?'

6 Oct., 2023. Lecture at the University of Copenhagen: 'Are We Slaves to Our Genes?'

16 Oct., 2023. On-line lecture to Sharif University of Technology, Teheran, on 'Are We Slaves to Our Genes?'