There is a growing crisis in scientific research characterized by failures to reproduce experimental results, fraud, lack of innovation, and burnout. In *Science and Christian Ethics*, Paul Scherz traces these problems to the drive by governments and business to make scientists into competitive entrepreneurs who use their research results to stimulate economic growth. The result is a competitive environment aimed at commodifying the world. In order to confront this problem of character, Scherz examines the alternative Aristotelian and Stoic models of reforming character, found in the works of Alasdair MacIntyre and Michel Foucault. Against many prominent virtue ethicists, he argues that what individual scientists need is a regime of spiritual exercises, such as those found in Stoicism as it was adopted by Christianity, in order to refocus on the good of truth in the face of institutional pressure. His book illuminates pressing issues in research ethics, moral education, and anthropology.

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NEW STUDIES IN CHRISTIAN ETHICS

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Christian ethics has increasingly assumed a central place within academic theology. At the same time, the growing power and ambiguity of modern science and the rising dissatisfaction within the social sciences about claims to value neutrality have prompted renewed interest in ethics within the secular academic world. There is, therefore, a need for studies in Christian ethics which, as well as being concerned with the relevance of Christian ethics to the present-day secular debate, are well informed about parallel discussions in recent philosophy, science, or social science. New Studies in Christian Ethics aims to provide books that do this at the highest intellectual level and demonstrate that Christian ethics can make a distinctive contribution to this debate – either in moral substance or in terms of underlying moral justifications.

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1. Rights and Christian Ethics, Kieran Cronin
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12. Priorities and Christian Ethics, Garth Hallett
13. Community, Liberalism and Christian Ethics, David Fergusson

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SCIENCE AND
CHRISTIAN ETHICS

PAUL SCHERZ
The Catholic University of America
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Two of the previous contributors have had considerable practical experience as working academic scientists before writing their monographs for *New Studies in Christian Ethics*. The first was Celia Deane-Drummond in *Genetics and Christian Ethics* (2006). Her original doctorate was in plant physiology; she held post-doctoral science fellowships at the Universities of British Columbia and Cambridge; and then became a Lecturer in plant physiology at Durham University. Only then did she turn to academic theology. The second was Christopher C. H. Cook in *Alcohol, Addiction and Christian Ethics* (2006). He originally qualified in medicine and trained as a psychiatrist, in time becoming Professor of the Psychiatry of Alcohol Misuse at the University of Kent. He too turned to academic theology at this midpoint in his career. Paul Scherz now joins them (as he explains in his Introduction) with a number of years of practical work as a laboratory biologist before his turn to academic theology. It is one thing for Christian ethicists without any significant background in practical science to write on science-related topics, but it is quite another for these three Christian ethicists. They bring a level of knowledge, experience, and credibility in scientific practice that the rest of us cannot quite match, admirably fulfilling the two central aims of *New Studies in Christian Ethics*:

1. To promote monographs in Christian ethics that engage centrally with the present secular moral debate at the highest possible intellectual level.
2. To encourage contributors to demonstrate that Christian ethics can make a distinctive contribution to this debate – either in moral substance or in terms of underlying moral justifications.

Paul Scherz’s focus is on modern scientific culture, offering at the outset timely examples of how the entrepreneurial ideal is increasingly distorting scientific research – encouraging researchers to think of themselves as market actors and their work as being primarily focused on business opportunities. He is especially concerned with three aspects of what many
have called a contemporary crisis in science: (1) problems in reproducibility, (2) a lack of innovation despite increasing hyperbole about the promise of results, and (3) increasing levels of burnout among researchers. With his own direct experience of laboratory research, he is well placed to make these critical points in the opening chapters of this new monograph and then, with his additional theological training, to address them ethically and theologically in subsequent chapters. In the latter it is evident that he has a particular and critical interest in the works of Michel Foucault and Alasdair MacIntyre. He argues that a combination of Aristotelian virtues (following MacIntyre) and Stoic moral techniques (following Foucault) is needed within scientific culture today if its problems are to be addressed adequately. Stoic moral formation in particular, so he and a few other theologians have argued recently, presupposes that virtuous practices need to be cultivated in the midst of communities and social contexts that are not virtuous themselves but are, in various ways and to various degrees, morally distorted. More specifically, Christian faith and practice can, so he believes, deepen the risky truth-speaking that is needed (and sometimes lacking) within the scientific community, by tying it to trust and faith in God.

There is much here to stimulate further discussion. Paul Scherz offers a well-informed, original, and significant challenge to current scientific culture that, I believe, deserves to be taken very seriously indeed.
Acknowledgments

The impetus for this work began long ago, during my scientific training, and required the support and encouragement of a host of people to come to fruition. My deepest debt of gratitude belongs to my mentors, Bill Skarnes, Cliff Tabin, and Didier Stainier, and all of my lab mates in their laboratories. While I could feel the pressures of entrepreneurial science growing during my education, I was lucky enough to be trained by supervisors and colleagues who gave me an example of the best forms of scientific life. It is this training that provided the experiences and resources that allowed for the critique of the problems of contemporary science found in this book.

Though extensively reworked to address the problems of contemporary science, much of the analysis in this book arose from insights in my dissertation research in the Theology Department at the University of Notre Dame. There I benefited from my fellow students, including Luis Vera, Jeff Morgan, David Elliot, Angela Carpenter, and Brian Hamilton, who served as interlocutors throughout my graduate work, especially in the form of the moral theology dissertation writing group. Phil Sloan gave important advice on sections of this project. Jean Porter and Gretchen Reydams-Schils helped me to develop my understanding of Aristotelian and Stoic ethical theory and ensured that that training was well applied in this project. The project would not have been possible without the criticism and encouragement of my advisor, Jerry McKenny. His interest in Foucault’s late ethics gave me the push I needed to start this project, and he has continued to provide invaluable support throughout its development into a book. Jerry is simply the best advisor I could have hoped to have had.

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