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Feb. 8, 1999

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Religion and Science--Do They Mix? Theologian, Scientists Set for Feb. 18 Dialogue at IWU

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.--God and science--Are they friend or foe?

That's the question up for discussion when William Lane Craig, research professor of theology at the Talbot School of Theology, joins two Illinois Wesleyan University science professors for a dialogue on "Is religious belief compatible with the scientific method and contemporary scientific theory?"

The program--which is open to public, free of charge--is slated for Thursday, Feb. 18, at 8 p.m. in the Main Lounge of IWU's Memorial Student Center, 104 E. University, Bloomington.

Panelists will include Bruce Criley, George C. and Ella Beach Lewis professor and chairperson of biology, and Tony Rothman, assistant professor of physics and mathematics.

Classic Clashes

The dialogue over religion and science, slated for IWU, has deep historic roots, including the famous contest between the Italian scientist Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) and the Roman Catholic Church.

Galileo--a celebrated mathematician and astronomer, inventor of the Microscope, and discoverer of Jupiter's satellites--ran into church opposition beginning in 1612 for advocating the theory that the Earth and the other planets revolve around the Sun, a notion first advanced by the Polish astronomer Nicholas Copernicus (1473-1543).

Galileo traveled to Rome to defend himself, but in 1616 he was admonished by a Cardinal and told he could not defend Copernican astronomy because it went against Church doctrine.

In 1632, Galileo was summoned to Rome by the Church, where a tribunal passed a sentence condemning him. It compelled the scientist to solemnly repudiate his theory. He was exiled to Siena and retired in 1633.

Craig's Background

Craig, the author of more than a dozen books, has been a research professor of philosophy at the Talbot School of Theology since 1996. Previously, he has been a researcher or professor at Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Westmont College, and Trinity International.

He is a member of the American Philosophical Association, American Academy of Religion, Society of Biblical Literature, Society of Christian Philosophers, Science and Religion Forum, Philosophy of Time Society, and the American Scientific Affiliation.

Craig has received academic honors from Wheaton College, Andersen Foundation, Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung, University of Iowa, Templeton Foundation, University of Western Ontario, and Southern Methodist University.

He received a bachelor of arts degree in communications from Wheaton College in 1971; a

doctorate in philosophy from the University of Birmingham, England, in 1977, and a doctorate in theology from Universität München, Germany, in 1984.

Criley Profiled

Criley joined the IWU faculty in 1971 as professor of biology and chairman of the department. Previously, he was at the University of Colorado, where he received an All-University teaching Recognition Award and was named Outstanding Teacher by the Colorado Year Book.

He was named IWU's George C. and Ella Beach Lewis Professor in 1979. The professorship was established in 1947.

Criley received a bachelor of science degree (1960), a master of science degree (1962), and a doctorate (1967)--all in zoology from the University of Illinois, Urbana/Champaign.

Rothman Profiled

Pulitzer Prize-nominated writer-physicist Tony Rothman's sixth book, "Doubt and Certainty," hit bookstore shelves, Nov. 18, 1998.

Rothman says: "'Doubt and Certainty' is about what we know, what we don't know, and what we don't know about what we know. It's unlike other popular science books that talk about the latest discoveries. We look at basic issues in science."

Rothman is a physicist, novelist, and playwright whose book, "A Physicist on Madison Avenue," was nominated for a 1991 Pulitzer Prize and in 1996 was chosen as one of the 120 best books for spurring science literacy by the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

His books, "Science a la Mode" and "A Physicist on Madison Avenue," were chosen as selections by the Library of Science Book Club. He was the scientific editor of Andrei Sakharov's memoirs. Sakharov was a leading Soviet physicist, atomic scientist, and dissident, who won the 1975 Nobel Peace Prize.

Rothman received a bachelor of arts degree in physics from Swarthmore College in 1975 and a doctorate from the Center for Relativity at the University of Texas, Austin, in 1981. His areas of expertise are physics, mathematics, astronomy, astrophysics, and cosmology, the study of the early universe.

Rothman also has had teaching and research posts at the Center for Relativity at the University of Texas, Austin, Harvard College Observatory, Tufts University, Princeton University, and the National Radio Astronomy Observatory. He was an editor of Scientific American in 1988-89.

About IWU

The dialogue on the coexistence of science and religion, is sponsored by the Religious Life Committee of the IWU Student Senate, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, IWU Chaplain's Office, and IWU's Philosophy Club.

IWU, founded in 1850, enrolls about 2,000 students in a College of Liberal Arts, and individual schools of Music, Theatre Arts, Art, and Nursing. Since 1994, these facilities have been added to the IWU campus: a \$15 million athletics and recreation center, a \$25 million science center, a \$6.8 million residence hall, and a \$5.1 million Center for Liberal Arts.

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