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Theology and Science: From Creation to New Creation

Lectures sponsored by The Central Pennsylvania Forum for Religion and Science

Featured speaker: Dr. Robert J. Russell, Ian G. Barbour Professor of Theology and Science in Residence at the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, and Founder and Director of the Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences

These lectures explore a variety of topics on the frontiers of the creative mutual interaction between Christian theology and the natural sciences, from a theology of creation as it interacts with both scientific cosmology and evolutionary biology to a theology of the new creation based on the bodily resurrection of Jesus and the challenge to it raised by scientific cosmology. Three lectures, with questions from the audience, as follows:

10:00 am. Cosmology, philosophy and theology: A complex interaction. This talk describes the subtle, but crucial, roles played by philosophy and theology in the construction of scientific cosmology from the Newtonian universe to Einstein's Big Bang and its competitor in the 1950s & 1960s, Hoyle's steady state cosmology. It will also assess a variety of theological interpretations of the significance of Big Bang cosmology for Christian faith.

1:00 pm. Theistic evolution and the challenge of natural evil. Theistic evolution is presented as a robust response to evolutionary biology, particularly when it is augmented by an appeal to non-interventionist objective divine action. The challenge to theistic evolution raised by the fact of suffering and death in nature ("natural evil") has several responses, the most promising of which is Christ's own suffering with nature.

3:00 pm. Resurrection, eschatology and cosmology: guidelines for their creative mutual interaction. A Christian eschatology, based on the bodily resurrection of Jesus, is offered. The challenge raised to eschatology by the predictions for the far future of the universe, based on Big Bang cosmology, is confronted. The response provides a series of guidelines by which to move the conversation forward to a new creative interaction with science that could offer interesting research questions for scientists.

Saturday, 14 November 2009, from 10:00 am until 4:30 pm. Students receive chapel credit for these talks.

Location: Hostetter Chapel Sanctuary, Messiah College, Grantham, PA. Directions and a campus map are here <http://www.messiah.edu/visitors/direction.html>.

Cost: Free for students & employees of Messiah College and members of the Forum, but tickets are required. All others pay \$25 before November 1 or \$35 at the door. Tickets go on sale in early September; contact the ticket office at 717-691-6036.

Robert John Russell is the Ian G. Barbour Professor of Theology and Science in Residence at the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, and the Founder and Director of the Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences. He holds a Ph. D. in physics and advanced degrees in theology. Author of *Cosmology from Alpha to Omega: The Creative Mutual Interaction of Theology and Science* (Fortress, 2008) and *Cosmology, Evolution and Resurrection Hope* (Pandora Press, 2006), he also edits the journal, *Theology and Science*, and is ordained in the United Church of Christ.

The Central Pennsylvania Forum for Religion and Science is based at Messiah College. For details about all Forum events, please visit <http://www.messiah.edu/godandscience/> or contact Dr. Ted Davis (tdavis@messiah.edu), 717-766-2511, ext 6840.



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