

UC SANTA BARBARA

THE Current

February 27, 2002

Bill Schlotter

UCSB Science, Religion, and Human Experience Lecture Series Examines Science's Religious Roots

A philosopher and a geologist will discuss how science was born of religion in a pair of lectures on Thursday and Friday, March 7 and 8, at UC Santa Barbara.

The talks by Michael Ruse, a professor of philosophy at Florida State University, and Bruce Tiffney, a professor of geological sciences at UCSB, will be the fourth and fifth this year in UCSB's "Science, Religion, and the Human Experience" series, sponsored by the John Templeton Foundation.

Both talks are free and open to the public.

Ruse, the Lucyle T. Werkmeister Professor of Philosophy at Florida State University, will give a lecture titled, "Darwinism and Atheism: A Marriage Made in Heaven?" at 7 p.m. Thursday, March 7 in UCSB's Corwin Pavilion.

"I see evolution, Darwinism in particular, as the child of Christianity," Ruse said.

"As always with parent-child relationships, there is a somewhat uneasy love-hate relationship.

You think that the child has grown away from the parent, and then in the half light or by a tone of voice, you realize that things are not so very different after all."

Tiffney, whose research has focused on plant evolution, will give his talk, "The Origins of Science in Religion; or, Parents and Offspring Should Respect Each Other," at 7 p.m. Friday, March 8 in the Isla Vista Theater.

Many assume that science and religion have been at odds from earliest times.

But according to Tiffney, that is not true.

"In fact, the Catholic and then Protestant churches fostered scientific thinking as a way to better know God and were, in many respects, the cradle in which modern science was nurtured to a point it could start to evolve independent of its theological parent," Tiffney said.

"Only when the findings of science became difficult to reconcile with the predictions of older natural theological hypotheses did the friction begin in earnest."

The series is sponsored by the John Templeton Foundation, which seeks to encourage

"a fresh appreciation of the moral and spiritual dimensions of life." UCSB and Columbia were the first two universities to be selected to receive Templeton grants to stage lecture series covering science and religion.

Stanford University and Israel's Bar-Ilan University were added to the foundation's program for 2002. UCSB will also offer a Templeton-sponsored series of lectures in 2003.

In addition to giving their talks, Templeton lecturers will meet with various UCSB students and faculty during their visits. The lecture series has a website (www.srhe.ucsb.edu) that includes speaker biographies and abstracts of each talk. Upcoming speakers in the 2002 UCSB series include:

Harold Oliver, professor emeritus of philosophy of religion at Boston University.

"The Complementarity of Science and Religion." 7 p.m. Thursday, April 11, Isla Vista Theater.

Thomas Carlson, associate professor of religious studies at UC Santa Barbara.

"Modernity and the Mystical: Science, Technology, and the Task of Human Self-Creation." 7 p.m. Friday, April 12, Isla Vista Theater.

Hilary Putnam, Cogan University Professor (emeritus) at Harvard University. "The Depths and Shadows of Experience." 7 p.m. Thursday, May 9, Corwin Pavilion.

Bruno Latour, philosopher, anthropologist, author.

"The Specific Regime of Enunciation of Religious Talk."

7 p.m. Friday, May 10, Corwin Pavilion.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.