

COMPLEMENTARITY: *Its Past and Future*

a faith and science lecture by

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ABSTRACT:

Throughout the second half of the 20th century, the concept of complementarity was a cornerstone of the evangelical engagement with science. Drawing on insights from quantum physics, leading evangelical scientists in both the USA and Britain argued that science and religion offered distinct perspectives of the natural world that were reconcilable, if one recognized them as complementary models rather than as mutually exclusive claims. Though it was not without its critics, this logic was employed by a majority of the most conspicuous evangelical scientists who attempted to ease the tension between Christianity and modern science. The benefit of such a view, they argued, was the avoidance of reductionism; neither Christians nor scientists could assume that their approach to understanding the world invalidated the other perspective.

At the 2009 annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion, theologian Sarah Coakley questioned the value of complementarity. Rather than fostering genuine dialogue between science and theology, she argued that complementarity treats the two as distinct and unaffected categories and allows for a fully reductionist view of the issues.

Drawing on the history of the American Scientific Affiliation and Christians in Science (formerly the Research Scientists' Christian Fellowship), this paper will examine the past use of complementarity in light of Coakley's critique and will begin to ask what value complementarity might still have in the 21st century.

Monday, October 18 ~ 6:30 PM
Rogers Buidling, Room 109

FREE PIZZA AND DRINKS!!

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