"God does not play dice with the universe." — Albert Einstein

Isthmus: Relating science, religion

... The future — which changes every instant. — Ellen Caniff
By Bob Fenley

FOR SOME, the two great tracks of mankind's inquiry — science and religion — seem to stretch away like a railroad and converge at an infinite horizon. But for others, it is an illusion which affects the intellect. Last winter, four Nobel Prize winning scientists were brought to Dallas for lectures and dialogues with two distinguished theologians. The purpose: Explore convergence with the hope of giving new perspective to human existence.

Sponsored by the Isthmus Institute, a local philosophical organization, the four presentations were held at the University of Texas Health Science Center from November to January, where they attracted steadily increasing numbers of people. And while no one could rightfully announce that any great cosmic void had been charted, the freedom of mankind to think and act independently, to enjoy the unexpected, to ponder the fascinations and frustrations of ordinary and quantum worlds and to experience the mystic satisfactions of the spiritual, all were paid homage.

The first Nobel laureate to appear in the series was Dr. Ilya Prigogine, a remarkable physicist who may have discovered the mathematical explanation for life. The newest concepts of physics, explained Prigogine, contain elements of randomness, of non-equilibrium and non-linearity. In the physics of subatomic particles, for instance, scientists have found it impossible to predict with absolute certainty position and energy at any given time. But scientists are able to rely on statistics. This is not unlike the situation of fans at a baseball game who know that a player who comes to the plate has a certain batting average. No one knows for certain whether he will hit a home run, but his success generally follows his statistical batting percentage.

There is, simply, a built-in principle of uncertainty both in human events and in the statistics of quantum physics.

"The fall of Rome was not ordained at the time the universe was formed," Prigogine said. This concept set the stage for the physicist to discourse with Albert Einstein, who on one occasion declared, "God does not play dice with the universe."

In fact, said Prigogine, God really might play dice with the universe.
Isthmus brings scientists, theologians together

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the author of The Reality of God and The Point of Christianity.

"We are now going toward a new definition of what it means to live in the age of love."...