'Unbiblical' creation debate spawns protest at Trinity Western University

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LANGLEY, BC (CP)—In an effort to secure a meeting with Trinity Western University's Board of Governors, Camp Copeland has stood guard with a homemade protest sign at the university's entrance for the several days over the past three weeks.

Copeland, the father of a 1995 TWU alumnus, has held a regular demonstration in protest of what he calls unbiblical teaching by some of the university's professors.

"Concerned about the fact that the University has people on staff that openly deny Genesis as literal history, but as a metaphor," he said.

Copeland said he first took note of a TWU professor's stance on creation according to Genesis 1:26-31 after attending a conference on the subject held on campus last spring.

According to Copeland, two professors spoke to underscores questions towards the conference's speaker and claimed the Bible's creation story was nothing more than a myth.

"Once you start to say that, where does the rest of the Bible fall?" Copeland asked at the TWU campus entrance.

But Del Bukich, a religious studies professor, denies Copeland's assertions, stating that he never claimed the biblical story of creation to be non-historical.

"I think I was just trying to say that these guys should not read Genesis as literal history, but as a metaphor," Bukich said. "The Bible wishes to tell us that God made the world, not how God made the world."

Bukich said he originally intended the conference last spring in order to protest against the view of a literal, six-day creation story.

He said it's foolish to believe that the Earth was created in six days, adding that these same Genesis 1:1-31 and 100 percent literal are "really very unhelpful" as reading the Bible.

Bukich assured further that the conference attended such as Copeland had misconstrued his arguments. His public seminars never claimed the creation story to be mythological, he noted.

"I feel that they are a dangerous group," Bukich said of those who hold a literal creation view. "They are very, very isolated.

According to Bukich, many supporters of the six-day creation story disregard any scholarship that refutes their claims.

Copeland and Bukich met for the first time last Wednesday as they debated both sides of the creation argument. While both men held the meeting on what Bukich called "basic terms," Copeland is unsure on whether he will continue his protest or not.

"I don't want to hurt anyone," Copeland said. "But the overall truth is more important than any one person, including myself."

Although TWU has no intentions of prohibiting Copeland from protesting in the future, as he's on land owned by the Township of Langley, the university also has no intentions of accommodat- ing his request to meet with the board of Governors.

"We have no further plans at this point," said Glen Foster, executive assistant to the President.