

# THE MacLaurin INSTITUTE



*Bringing God into the marketplace of ideas*

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## Institute Prepares for Busy Fall Lectures

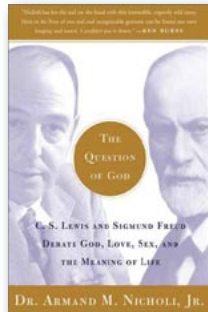
"I'm always amazed at the top-flight speakers who speak on behalf of the Institute at the University," commented Bryan Dowd, Mayo Professor in the University of Minnesota's School of Public Health and Institute Board Chair, in a recent conversation.

As part of the vanguard in our effort to introduce Christian scholarship into the academic milieu at Minnesota's pre-eminent university, the Institute in 2004-2005 will again sponsor more than 15 lectures by leading Christian academics.

University of Southern California philosophy professor **Dallas Willard** takes the spotlight as our ninth annual Holmer Memorial Lecturer on November 5, when he lectures on the role of universities as centers for moral education.



On October 25, Harvard University professor of psychiatry **Armand Nicholi**, author of the remarkable apologetic *The Question of God* (also featured in a



primetime PBS special that will air September 15 and 22), will lecture on how C. S. Lewis and Sigmund Freud had dramatically contrasting views of sex and the meaning of life.

Our February 18 and 19 *University of Minnesota Conference on Biblical Reliability* features Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary president **Walter Kaiser** and Denver Seminary distinguished professor **Craig Blomberg**.

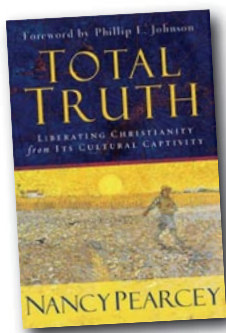


Many of the Institute's remaining lectures in this upcoming year will only be announced through our weekly e-mail newsletter. Be sure that you don't miss our lecture announcements, as well as special web-only book specials. Visit our web site at [www.maclaurin.org](http://www.maclaurin.org) to sign-up for the newsletter or e-mail us at [maclaurin@maclaurin.org](mailto:maclaurin@maclaurin.org) and ask to be put on the e-mail newsletter list. You won't want to miss a single issue!

The Institute's demanding program schedule needs your support, in order to continue expanding our critically-needed and vital Christian academic presence on the University of Minnesota campus. You can mail your tax-deductible gift to us at, MacLaurin Institute, P.O. Box 141007, Minneapolis, MN 55414, or visit our web site at [www.maclaurin.org/donor.php](http://www.maclaurin.org/donor.php) to find how to donate online.

# Exclusive Interview with Nancy Pearcey

Nancy Pearcey is the Francis A. Schaeffer scholar at the World Journalism Institute. She currently serves as a Visiting Scholar at the Torrey Honors Institute at Biola University, and a Senior Fellow at the Discovery Institute. Nancy's book *Total Truth:*



*Liberating Christianity from Its Cultural Captivity* was released in July. Only two days after going on sale at Amazon, it soared to #9 on Amazon's bestseller list for Religion & Spirituality, and then it sold out! Fortunately, it is now back in stock at Amazon, as well as Barnes & Noble, Books-A-Million, and other stores. Borders plans to give the

book their special "Borders Recommends" display in September and October. To read an excerpt, or the Foreword by Phillip Johnson, see the book's official web site [www.totaltruthbook.com](http://www.totaltruthbook.com).

**What follows is an excerpt from our exclusive interview with Nancy, which can be read in its entirety at [www.maclaurin.org](http://www.maclaurin.org).**

**Institute:** Why did you write this book?

**Pearcey:** Christians everywhere realize that America is in moral free-fall. Aggressive homosexual activism, unchecked abortion, decadent entertainment, failing families—a host of issues have jolted Christians out of their cultural passivity. We are waking up to our responsibility before God to help shape the public culture. But even with the best of intentions, most of us simply don't know how to do it. In a recent survey at a major Christian university, *more than half* the faculty said they didn't feel capable of giving a biblical perspective on the subject they teach.



That's where the concept of worldview comes in. It's a way of spelling out the implications of Christianity for

business, economics, politics, science, bioethics—all of life. Having laid out a case for a worldview approach in the chapters I authored for *How Now Shall We Live?*, in this book I wanted to take readers to the next level in crafting a Christian worldview.

First, of course, you have to clear away the deadwood—you have to diagnose the most common mental blocks that stand in the way of worldview thinking. Most evangelical churches have a long history of anti-intellectualism that elevates the *heart* over the *head*, the *sacred* over the *secular*. The reason is that American evangelicalism grew out of the First and Second Great Awakenings, which focused on an intense emotional conversion experience, while downplaying doctrine, theology, and the whole cognitive element of belief. As a result, even today most Christians treat religion as though it were a matter of their private experience, relevant mostly to church, worship, and ethics—but they have a hard time seeing how it applies to their professional work, their academic study, and the way they run their businesses and ministries.

I am convinced that this is a major reason we miss out on the power and joy we're meant to experience in our Christian life. The sacred/secular split is not just an abstract concept—it produces a division in our inner lives, so that we are fragmented and compartmentalized, losing out on the wholeness and focus that God intends for us. The theme of my book is that Christianity is not just religious truth but truth about all of reality. It is "total truth."

**Institute:** Explain briefly how you construct a Christian worldview perspective (using the Creation, Fall, and Redemption categories).

**Pearcey:** The key insight is that every aspect of the world participates in the fundamental turning points in biblical history: Creation, Fall, and Redemption. This gives us an effective three-part grid for constructing a worldview perspective in any area we are interested in. We ask ourselves three questions:

1. CREATION: How was this aspect of the world originally created? What was its original nature and purpose?
2. FALL: How has it been twisted and distorted by the Fall? How has it been corrupted by sin and false worldviews?

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3. REDEMPTION: How can we bring this aspect of the world under the Lordship of Christ, restoring it to its original, created purpose?

What's fascinating is that the same three categories can be used to analyze non-Christian worldviews as well. After all, every worldview or philosophy has to include a theory of ultimate origins (Creation); it has to explain what's wrong with the world—the source of evil and suffering (Fall); and finally, it has to inspire people with a vision for changing the world and setting things right again (Redemption).

Let's apply the grid to a pressing issue today: Why is homosexual marriage on the front burner today? The reason is that a new social philosophy has taken hold—namely, social contract theory. The early modern political philosophers (Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau) asked: How do we get at the essence of human nature? And they answered: We have to imagine what humans would be like if they were stripped of all social relationships, moral systems, laws, cultural conventions—in fact, stripped of civilization itself. This pre-social condition was dubbed the “state of nature,” and in this primeval stage of human life, we are all disconnected, autonomous selves.

Do you detect the new view of ultimate origins being proposed here? The state of nature was a deliberate substitute for the Garden of Eden, a new story of origins.

And if ultimate reality consists of lone, autonomous individuals, what does that mean for social relationships, like marriage? Answer: They are created by individual choice. And if we *create* relationships by choice, then of course we can also *recreate* them by choice. This is the core idea underlying the acceptance of homosexual marriage. In fact, the very idea that marriage has some universal normative structure is denounced as arbitrary and oppressive.

We could say this is the counterpart to Fall in social contract theory: What is the source of evil and oppression? Those arbitrary moral and social conventions that restrict our freedom and keep us from realizing our natural autonomy.

And the only way to restore the pristine autonomy of the state of nature is through the social contract. Why? Because there *we* are in charge: We decide for ourselves the terms of the contract, the conditions under which it ends, the mutual services we will offer,

and so on. The logic of social contract theory is to dissolve all traditional social bonds and to replace them with contracts. This is always presented in terms of “liberating” people from oppressive conventions. It is nothing less than a vision of Redemption. And unless we understand this underlying worldview, we will be chasing symptoms instead of dealing with the cause.

How does all this contrast with traditional Christian social theory? The doctrine of Creation tells us we are made in the image of a God who is a Trinity. God is truly One as well as Three. Thus the human race, made in God's image, is also truly One as well as many. That is, the relationships that bind us together as one are as real as our separate existences as individuals. The implication is that relationships are part of the created order. They are just as ultimate or real as individuals; they are not the creation of autonomous individuals, who can make or break them at will. And the moral requirements that relationships make on us are not impositions on our freedom; instead they are expressions of our true nature.

In the homosexual marriage debate, we need to find effective ways to argue that marriage is not something we create by our own choices, or can reinvent at will. Instead, it is a pre-existing social institution, with its own normative structure, which we enter into. (Remember that old phrase: We “enter the holy estate of matrimony.”) Sadly, this is a concept of marriage that even Christians have largely lost. And that's why we are losing the debate over same-sex marriage.

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## The Passing of Paul Holmer



Paul Holmer, former University of Minnesota professor and professor of philosophical theology at Yale Divinity School, passed away on Tuesday, June 29. The Institute's annual Holmer Memorial Lecture, featuring Dr. Dallas Willard this year, honors Dr. Holmer's legacy.

Bob Osburn, executive director of the Institute, remarked, “Paul Holmer was a champion for Christian thought on the University of Minnesota campus during his tenure here.”

# Upcoming Events 2004-2005

All events are free and open to the public, unless otherwise noted

This is a tentative list of this year's lectures. Be sure to check our web site ([www.maclaurin.org](http://www.maclaurin.org)) and subscribe to our e-mail newsletter (on our website) to receive confirmations on locations and times for all of our lectures.

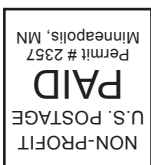
## Maclaurin Campus Lectures

- September 16 *Gay Marriage Debate*, **Dale Carpenter**, Associate Professor of Law, University of Minnesota Law School; **Glenn Stanton**, Director, Social Research and Cultural Affairs, Focus on the Family. 6:30 p.m., Moos Tower, Room 2-620
- September 24 *Debating Darwinism: Science as Argument and Civic Education*, **John Angus Campbell**, Professor of Rhetoric of Science and Speech, University of Memphis. 7:00 p.m., Tate Laboratory of Physics, Room 150 (tentative)
- October 1 *Have the Puritans Gotten a Bad Rap?*, **Don Kistler**, Founder and President of Soli Deo Gloria Ministries. 12 noon, 2221 University Avenue SE, Minneapolis, Conference Room
- October 19 *Christians and Public Policy: Why Should We Be Involved?*, **Teresa Stanton Collett**, Professor of Law, University of St. Thomas Law School. 7:00 p.m., location TBD

- October 25 *The Question of God: C. S. Lewis and Sigmund Freud Debate Sex and the Meaning of Life*, **Armand Nicholi**, Associate Professor of Psychiatry, Harvard University. 7:00 p.m., Smith Hall, Room 100 (tentative)
- November 5 *Moral Education in the Academy: Optional or Necessary?*, **Dallas Willard**, Professor of Philosophy, University of Southern California. 7:30 p.m., Humphrey Institute, Cowles Auditorium
- January 27 or 28 *Lecture on Bioethics*, **Nigel Cameron**, Dean of the Wilberforce Forum and Chair of the Center for Bioethics and Culture. Location and time TBD
- February 18-19 **Conference on Biblical Reliability**, **Walter Kaiser**, President and Colman M. Mockler Distinguished Professor of Old Testament, Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary; **Craig Blomberg**, Distinguished Professor of New Testament, Denver Seminary. Willey Hall (tentative). This event requires tickets.
- February 28 *Faith and Law lecture*, **Judge Michael McConnell**, 10th Circuit Court of Appeals, Salt Lake City, UT. 7:00 p.m., University of Minnesota Law School (tentative)
- April 1-2 *Renewing the Social Sciences*
- April 8 *Roundtable on Faith and Scholarship*

It's not too late to register for the Survey of the Old Testament class that meets Mondays, 6:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.  
Call 612-378-1935 or e-mail [maclaurin@maclaurin.org](mailto:maclaurin@maclaurin.org)

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