



THE MacLaurin INSTITUTE

Winter/Spring 2006

*Bringing God into
the marketplace
of ideas*

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Veritas Forum Comes to the U of Minnesota February 2-4, 2006

Since InterVarsity staffer Kelly Monroe inaugurated the Veritas Forum at Harvard University in the early 90s, the program has spread to well over 50 campuses in North America. Even though the University of Minnesota is one of the largest institutions in the USA, only now is the Forum coming here. "This is a tremendous opportunity for the Body of Christ at the U to come together to reach out in an intellectually authentic way,"

said Bob Osburn, Institute Executive Director and advisor to the student leadership team organizing the events. Ben Stevens, a Carlson School junior from Wisconsin, leads the student effort.

The Forum, for which the Institute is providing the organizational base, builds upon an intense Fall schedule that included a faculty conference on September 24, a December 8 debate between Osburn and a well-known atheist, eight campus lectures (including one by Intelligent Design scientist Michael Behe that drew a crowd of 500), a brilliant lecture by Father Richard John Neuhaus on October 28 and an ongoing series of faculty conversations on the interface between religion and science.

"The conference highlighted the marvelous example of Rutherford Aris," said Osburn, noting that Dr. Aris (who went to be with Christ on November 2) was a brilliant chemical engineering theorist and paleographer and a deeply-committed Christian who touched his students' lives in remarkable ways. More than 60 scholars from across North America and Northern Ireland gathered to investigate the meaning

of Christian faculty mentorship in the secular academy while reflecting on his example

Another highlight, said Osburn, was the privilege of taking three students to the University of Chicago for a weekend conference in early November. They heard scholars like Dallas Willard, George Marsden, Paul Griffiths, and Susan Emmerich wrestle with the challenge of redeeming reason at a time when the academy has, to a significant extent, abandoned reason.

February's Veritas Forum features Dr. Krister Sairsingh (PhD in philosophy, Harvard), who is professor at several universities in Moscow, Russia, Lauren Winner (PhD candidate in American

Father Richard John Neuhaus



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Christian Studies Courses – Winter/Spring of 2006

Galatians, Hebrews and the Promise

For the first century Christians, it was vital that Jesus of Nazareth: crucified, dead but risen, be the promised Messiah of the Hebrew Scripture. The New Testament would come to be the revelatory compliment of the Hebrew Bible. The New Testament word that summarizes the Old Testament revelation is “promise.”

The two New Testament books that deal most directly with the relationship of the two Testaments are Galatians and Hebrews, hence the rationale for studying these two books and the “promise,” which solidifies the connection of the Testaments. In the course of our study, we will consider issues such as “law and grace” as well.

This course will meet for 10 sessions, starting **Monday, January 30, 2006, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.** at the Institute office (2221 University Avenue SE, #120, Minneapolis, MN 55414).

The cost is \$85.00, which includes a workbook for the study.

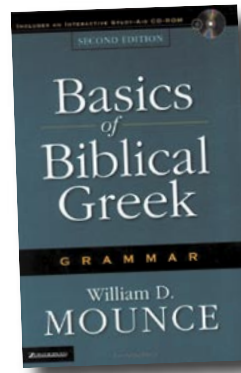
Teacher: Bruce Olson, MDiv, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.

For more information or to register, e-mail Bruce at bolson431@msn.com.

"Veritas Forum" continued from page 1

studies at Columbia), popular writer who has recently penned *Real Sex: The Naked Truth about Chastity*, Doug Geivett, popular apologist and philosophy professor at Talbot Seminary, and Jed Macosko (PhD, University of California-Berkley), a biophysicist at Wake Forest University whose parents, Chris and Kathleen, are active members of the University of Minnesota Christian community. For more information about the Forum (all events are free and open to the public), please visit the Institute homepage <http://www.maclaurin.org/> and click on the Veritas Forum logo on the bottom of the page.

Introduction to New Testament Greek 2



For Christians, no body of literature is more important than the documents collected in the New Testament. As God's inspired testimony to the ministry and significance of Jesus, they have remained at the heart of Christian devotion, liturgy, mission, and thought for nearly two thousand years.

These ancient texts, now read in hundreds of languages, were originally composed in Koine Greek. In this course, we will build upon the principles in Greek 1 (or equivalent course) as we continue to master the elements of this fascinating and picturesque language.

The course aims at developing the student's ability to read and translate the New Testament with confidence and competence (and limited outside help). Successful completion of the course will equip the student for Intermediate level work in Greek New Testament. While the class presupposes some previous exposure to the Greek language, the Institute's Greek I course is not a prerequisite for registration. Anyone seeking a structured refresher--or even an ambitious beginner--might greatly profit from the class. So come join us as we enhance our ability to love God with all our mind by learning to “cut a straight path” (2 Tim. 2:15) through His Word!

This course will meet for 14 sessions, starting **Thursday, January 26, 2006, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.** at the Institute office (2221 University Avenue SE, #120, Minneapolis, MN 55414).

Teacher: Pete Lackey, MDiv, Yale Divinity School.

The cost is \$85.00 per student plus the price of the textbook.

For more information or to register, e-mail Pete at petelackey@att.net or call 763-208-5652.

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Executive Editor: Robert Osburn
Editor: Scott Noble



Interview with Rodney Clapp

Rodney Clapp is currently the editorial director of Brazos Press and one of the speakers (along with Ron Sider) at the Christianity in a Consumer Culture conference we are co-sponsoring April 28-29. Please check the web site at www.maclaurin.org/lectures.php for further information.

MacLaurin Institute: What is consumerism and what does it have to do with Christianity?

Rodney Clapp: The suffix-“ism”-is key here. All living things, humans emphatically included, must consume to live. Even plants consume sunlight and water. Consumption is part of life as God created it. That's why it's a very different thing to talk about simple consuming vs. consumerISM. The “ism” alerts us to an ideology and congeries of practices, indeed, to a way of life. The “ism” indicates that we are talking about the significant passage from consuming to live (consumption as one, subordinate part of life) to living to consume (consumption as the goal of life). Consumerism is an all-consuming attitude, even itself at least a quasi-religious take on who we humans are and what we are for. This makes it obvious what it has to do with Christianity-consumerism is a competing faith. Christianity as a faith and a way of life affirms that humans are created ultimately for participation in the life of God; in a phrase, for the praise of God. Consumerism says we are born, live, and die to consume material goods, experiences, an unending array of novel pleasures.

Institute: Why is it important for Christians to develop a framework for thinking about consumerism?

Clapp: If we intend to be faithful Christians, we need to respond faithfully and effectively to cultural, economic, political realities that may dilute our faithfulness or even on occasion run directly contrary to it. Consumerism is especially tricky to begin to sort out but it is not a tangle and a temptation we can avoid just by quitting or absenting ourselves from discrete aspects of the culture. For instance, if we decide smoking or extorting bribes is harmful and unfaithful, we can quit smoking or extorting bribes. We can live without tobacco and bribes. But we can't live without some level and some kinds of consumption. So we need to be able to develop

standards, languages, conceptualities, and practices that will help us to discern when and what consumption is consumerism.

Institute: Why do you think this is a non-issue for so many Christians in America?

Clapp: On a trivial but still true level, it is a non-issue for so many because, for those of us who are affluent (and most Christians in America are, by any global and historic standards, affluent), consumerism is comfortable and more than a little pleasant. At least on a surface level, it can make us feel secure. (When we delve just below the surface, we begin to uncover a lot of frustration and even desperation--with the out-of-control busyness of our lives, with the gnawing emptiness that comes from never truly being satisfied, with the numbness of soul that comes from disregarding our neighbors and only looking out for “number 1,” and so on.)

Rodney Clapp



More profoundly, consumerism is a non-issue because it has so thoroughly suffused our society, our lives, that we have trouble imagining life without it. Think how few activities you can conduct in a normal day without spending money, without thinking of yourself as a consumer making choices and purchasing commodities. Our youth in school are no longer first and foremost “students,” but are designated “educational consumers.” We are prone spiritually to be “church shoppers” rather

than “worshippers.” We approach our problems and discontents as individualized consumers: in another cultural setting someone having trouble relaxing and sleeping might learn how to pray or meditate; in ours, we think first of a sleeping pill or other elixir we can buy and consume. When we worry for a spouse's or elderly relative's safety while driving alone, we don't ask how safer roadways and neighborhoods might be achieved politically and structurally, but we buy the spouse or grandparent a cell phone. In short, we are fish and consumerism is the water we swim in--and that we breathe.

Because it's so pervasive it's hard to notice, let alone question.

Rodney Clapp interview conducted by Mark Van Steenwyk, Mission: Think

Upcoming Events Winter/Spring 2006

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

Be sure to check www.maclaurin.org for confirmations for lecture locations and times, or call 612-378-1935.

MacLaurin Campus Lectures

- January 27 *What Students Believe and What Students Are Taught About Evolution and Creationism in Minnesota*, **Dr. Randy Moore** (University of Minnesota), 11:00 a.m., Room 140, Nolte Center
- January 27 **Fourth Annual Faith and Bioethics Lecture, Toward a Philosophy of the Pro-Life Movement: Personhood, Rights and 'Purpose on Life'**, **Dr. Robert Spitzer** (Gonzaga University), 7:00 p.m., Room 2-620, Moos Tower
- February 16 *An Indian Explores the Soul of Western Civilization*, **Vishal Mangalwadi** (Fellow, MacLaurin Institute), 7:30 p.m., Room 101, Fraser Hall
- March 8 **Second Annual Faith and Law Lecture, The Right to be Wrong: Ending the Culture War Over Religion in America**, **Kevin Hasson** (Becket Fund), co-sponsored with the University of Minnesota Federalist Society and the Christian Legal Society, 12:30 p.m., Room 25, University of Minnesota Law School

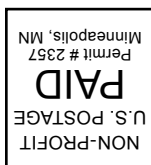
- March 22 *Visions of Peace in Two Traditions*, **Dr. David Shenk** (international teacher and author), 4:00 p.m., location to be determined
- March 30 Title to be determined, **Dr. John Patrick** (formerly of the University of Ottawa), 12:00 p.m. (noon), Room 2-620, Moos Tower
- April 21 Title to be determined, **Michael Novak** (American Enterprise Institute), 12:00 p.m. (noon), University of Minnesota Law School

MacLaurin Conferences and Special Events

- February 2-4 *The Veritas Forum*, **Dr. Jed Macosko** (Wake Forest), **Dr. Krister Sairsingh** (Russian State University for the Humanities), **Dr. Lauren Winner** (author) and **Dr. Doug Geivett** (Talbot Seminary), University of Minnesota campus, various times and locations
- April 28-29 *Christianity in a Consumer Culture*, **Dr. Ron Sider** (Evangelicals for Social Action and Palmer Theological Seminary), **Dr. Sondra Ely Wheeler** (Wesley Theological Seminary), **Rodney Clapp** (Brazos Press) and **Vincent Miller** (Georgetown University). Visit www.consumer-culture.org for more information and ticket prices.

Register now for the
 April 28-29 conference
 on Christianity in a
 Consumer Culture

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



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