

Upcoming Events

Academics and activists from around the world come to our doorstep, speaking on the implications of a biblically-informed Christian worldview for all aspects of life and study. Lectures are free and open to the public. Bring a friend!

U Campus Lectures

October 19. **Dr. Kim Kwong Chan.** Executive Secretary, Hong Kong Christian Council. *WTO Membership and Religious Freedom in China.* 4:00 pm. Location to be announced (watch your mail).

November 9 (tentative). **Dr. Jed Macosko.** Post-Doctoral Fellow in Chemistry, University of California-Berkeley. *Life's Molecular Machines: By Chance or by Design?* 7:00 pm. Location to be announced (watch your mail).

April 12, 2002. **Dr. James Skillen.** Executive Director, Center for Public Justice. Watch your mail for further information.

Holmer Lecture

The sixth annual Holmer Lecture, named in honor of philosopher Paul Holmer, is scheduled for 4:00 pm, Wednesday, February 20, 2002, featuring political philosopher **Jean Bethke Elshtain**, Laura Spelman Rockefeller Professor of Social and Political Ethics at the University of Chicago. As usual the lecture is in Cowles Auditorium, in the Humphrey Center, 301 19th Av S on the West Bank of the U of Minnesota. A parking ramp is available across 19th Av. Please call the Institute for directions. A reception will follow the lecture. Watch your mail for

details, or call the institute at 612-378-1935.

20th Anniversary Lecture

On March 8, 2002, the Institute will celebrate its 20th anniversary with featured lecturer **Ravi Zacharias**, famed Christian apologist whose books are read and lectures are heard on campuses around the world. Tickets are \$8 but may be purchased in prepaid blocks of 15 for \$4 each. Come celebrate with us at 7:00 pm! Reception following.

Heart of the Matter Bookstore Lectures

The Christian worldview is not restricted to a narrow religious horizon but instead has something to contribute in every realm of human interest and endeavor. Join us for stimulating lectures from a Christian perspective at Borders Books, Hamline and 94 in St Paul's Midway Marketplace, 7:30 pm., on the first Thursday of every month from October through May. Upcoming speakers include:

October 5. **Dr. Charles Aling.** Professor of Bible, Northwestern College. Topic: Joseph and Egyptian History.

November 1. **Dr. Charles Amjad-Ali.** Professor of Islamic Studies, Luther Seminary.

December 6. **Dr. Steven Keillor.** Independent scholar. Topic: Economics and History: Globalism's Theory of Increasing Returns.

January 3, 2002. **Dr. Dan Ritchie.** Professor of English, Bethel College. *Reconciling the Heart with the Head: Personal Knowledge in a Scientific Age.* ■

Fall Courses Still Open

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

331 Seventeenth Ave SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414

THE
MacLaurin
INSTITUTE



Bringing God into the marketplace of ideas

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Fall Courses Still Open

The MacLaurin Institute is still accepting students for its Fall 2001 courses, which begin the week of September 4. These popular Christian studies courses, taught by faculty from Northwestern College (Roseville) are fully transferable to student transcripts at the U of Minnesota, as well as many other area colleges.

Three-credit courses offered this Fall include *Old Testament History and Literature* (Tuesdays and Thursdays 3:35 to 4:55 pm), *Christian Theology* (Mondays and

Wednesdays 3:35 to 4:55 pm) and *History of Christianity* (Mondays and Wednesdays 3:35 to 4:55 pm). All classes are held at the Institute, 331 17th Av SE, on the East Bank of the U of Minnesota near Dinkytown. The course on the Gospel of John has been canceled.

More than 70 students have enrolled in the courses since they began in the Spring 2000 semester.

"I really like the small class size and the flexibility to have open discussions," reported

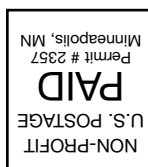
one U student. Another popular feature is the affordability of the classes, which at \$175/credit hour are almost identical to rates at the University, but dramatically less expensive than similar courses at area private colleges.

Adult learners also are welcome to enroll for credit or to audit the courses at half-price.

For more information, contact the Institute at 612-378-1935, or e-mail



courses@maclaurin.org. Check out our website at www.maclaurin.org and click on "Fall 2001 Courses." Registration closes after the first day of class. ■



An Interview With Professor Bryan Dowd, Chair of the Institute

1. Bryan, what is your vision for the Institute?

My vision for MacLaurin is that it will be the primary resource for information about the Christian worldview for faculty and students at the University of Minnesota. We will accomplish that objective not only through continuation of the fine programs that MacLaurin has produced for the last 20 years, but also in some innovative new ways of reaching out to students and faculty.

2. How did you become involved?

I was asked to serve on the Board three years ago. I enjoyed my association with MacLaurin, and when Chris Macosko stepped down as Board Chair, he and Bob Osburn asked if I would consider becoming chair. I am now in my second year.

3. As a Christian faculty member, what do you hope your impact will be here on campus?

The first, and most important, job of Christian faculty at the University of Minnesota is simply to make sure that students and faculty know that there are, in fact, Christian faculty at the University of Minnesota. Second, we need to find a way to encourage the many fine Christian faculty and students at the University to find their voice, in the same way that other groups have found theirs. Third, we need to do a much more effective job of presenting the Christian worldview as a viable alternative to post-modernism and “comprehensive” scientific naturalism. Finally, I would like to establish a community of Christian professors that is so vibrant and stimulating that non-Christian faculty will be drawn in out of sheer intellectual curiosity.

4. Tell us a bit about your background—spiritually, educationally, and familywise.

I was born in Atlanta and raised in Rome, Georgia. My father was a Roman Catholic from Brooklyn, and my mother was a Southern Baptist from Plainville, Georgia. My two sisters and I were raised Southern Baptist.

After accepting Christ as my Savior and being baptized at an early age, I had the usual “mid-life crisis” at about age 21. I surveyed the alternatives, and as I often say to people, accepted Christianity intellectually, as an adult, for the same reason that I became an economist—it was the only story I ever heard on that particular subject that made any sense. My wife, Susan, and I met in college and were married 28 years ago, and we have a daughter Emily who is a senior at Minnehaha Academy this year. We attend St. Stephen’s Church in Edina where I serve on the vestry and occasionally play the organ.

I am a professor and director of graduate studies in the Division of Health Services Research and Policy at the University of Minnesota, where I have worked for the past 21 years. My undergraduate degree is in architecture from Georgia Tech, and I have a M.S. in urban administration from Georgia State University. My doctorate is in public policy analysis from the University of Pennsylvania.

5. What do you see as some immediate priorities of the Institute, at least for the next year?

This year, in addition to continuing the Heart of the Matter Bookstore Lectures and Holmer Lecture, we will be concentrating on raising the visibility of the Institute on campus. We’re going to spend a lot of time improving our webpage. Our goal is to have 55,000 visitors to our webpage—one for each student and faculty member at the University of Minnesota. We also will be planning a 20th anniversary event next spring featuring Ravi Zacharias, one of the most dynamic Christian speakers in the world. Our director, Bob Osburn, is returning to the University this fall to begin his Ph.D. in international education. Bob will continue his duties at the Institute on a part-time basis while working on his degree. We all are grateful that Bob has this opportunity to expand his already formidable set of leadership skills. ■



Resources for You

The Institute’s Heart of the Matter Bookstore Lectures and Campus Lectures are available on tape.

Each taped lecture is \$5.00 (tax and shipping included). Call the Institute at 612-378-1935 to order a copy. VISA and MasterCard are accepted, or the Institute will invoice you. Recent taped lectures include:

- *Beyond the Bible: Secular History and Jesus of Nazareth*, Jeff Siemon
- *Becoming Post-Human: The Ethics of the Technological Re-Making of Man*, Dr. Christopher Hook
- *GenX Credo: Hypocrisy Sucks, Authenticity Rules*, Margie Haack
- *Hope for Women Caught in the International Sex Trade*, Gary Haugen
- *Rwanda Revisited: A Christian Response to Genocide*, Gary Haugen
- *China in Turbulent Times*, Dr. Carol Lee Hamrin

Ted Kaczynski and Creeping Despair

More than a year ago Atlantic Monthly magazine featured a cover story that was sobering if not downright unsettling. In “Harvard and the Making of the Unabomber,” author Alston Chase portrays Ted Kaczynski not as a lunatic but as a man of reason. Chase sees Harvard and modern academia as a key to understanding why Kaczynski murdered three people and maimed many others.

Chase writes whereof he knows. He was not only at Harvard at about the same time as Kaczynski (one of the Institute’s board members, Dr. Terry Nichols, was one of Kaczynski’s classmates), but Chase later chaired the philosophy department at Macalester College (here in the Twin Cities) and later went on to “drop out” of society in much the same way as Kaczynski.

So, how could America’s most prestigious and oldest institution of higher learning “make” a mass murderer? In the late 1950s, Kaczynski and other students at Harvard were taught to place supreme confidence in reason, science and technology, a naturalistic worldview that sees matter as all there is. At the same time, he learned that “absolute reason leads to absolute despair,” a position well developed by the existential philosophers (e.g., Camus and Sartre) who were all the rage in the 50s. Gripped by that despair, Kaczynski developed a deep and, to him, profoundly rational disdain for technology as the enemy of humanity. To Kaczynski, it seemed only rational, in a universe of despair, to murder those whose technology was destroying humanity.

Alston writes that the Unabomber’s motivation is ultimately found within a deeply flawed system of higher education:

Despite their historically unprecedented affluence, many middle-class Americans, particularly the educated elite, are still gripped by despair. The education system continues to promote bleak visions of the future.

p. 65, June 2000 Atlantic Monthly

But, what if Kaczynski’s story is only an incredible exception? Haven’t there been tens of millions of university graduates



who have made wonderfully productive contributions to society? And, what about Jim Jones and the 1979 mass suicide in Guyana—wasn’t he an evangelical pastor who went bad? If so, the church and academia have an equal share of “bad eggs.” Certainly, a vision of reality shaped by biblical teaching compels us to admit that sin is no respecter of institutions, church and academia alike.

Anyone around academia for long also must admit that there really are some wonderful people and wonderful things

happening on our campuses, and many of them in the very technical fields of which Kaczynski was so fearful. Indeed, many do remarkable things, thanks to the reality that many academicians deny: we are made in the image of God, and in every one of us, as Edith Schaeffer often said, there is a bit of “leftover beauty.”

Still, Chase has made a penetrating observation about higher education today: a chronic despair creeps behind the academic scenery, as it were. Many postmodernists express it with their cynicism, suspicion and disdain for the good, the true and the beautiful. I suggest that the postmodernists have identified something that is undeniable, and for which the larger academic enterprise hasn’t yet supplied an answer: if reason is all we have and if through reason we conclude that all of life can be reduced to the sum of its parts (e.g., “we are our genes”), then isn’t reason itself a product of our biochemistry? Why should we trust it? Doesn’t reason thoroughly strip away all of life’s “enchancements”: its beauty, its courage, its heroes, its loves?

Francis Schaeffer concluded 35 years ago that the “escape from reason” was a terribly unfortunate but predictable response to a world dominated by reason. In a sense, Kaczynski’s problem was that he never escaped reason’s relentless logic. And yet, with Schaeffer and others, we offer a better way: a way of thinking and living that not only “re-enchants” our universe but gives a firm basis for knowledge in God’s self-revelation (in nature, His son and His word) and in the very useful, but not autonomous tool of human reason. Were such a theistic perspective granted voice in academia, would there not be a measure of hope instead of despair? ■