

*New Testament Scholar Unfolds Counter-Cultural Implications of Luke and Acts*

In an April 12 evening lecture at the University of Minnesota's Fraser Hall, leading evangelical New Testament scholar Dr. Richard Hays unfolded deep and often unseen connections between the Hebrew Bible (the Christian Old Testament) and Luke's writing in his Gospel and the Book of Acts. Co-sponsored by the University of Minnesota's Department of Classics and Near Eastern Studies, the lecture was part of the Institute's on-going series of campus lectures featuring leading Christian scholars.

The evening began with a special award ceremony, when Dr. Theo Stavrou, longtime U of Minnesota Professor of History, became the second recipient of the *Rutherford Aris University of Minnesota Christian Faculty Mentoring Award*. This award, which was given by Dr. Chris Macosko (the first recipient of the award), honors the memory of the late Regents Professor Aris and is given to a Christian scholar who embodies Professor Aris' deep desire to mentor students and fellow faculty and who shares his devotion to Jesus Christ.

Dr. Hays' lecture, which nicely demonstrated the combination of his scholarly rigor and pastoral vision, appealed to the idea that texts are often utilized to evoke deeper, unstated visions. For example, Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg address was more than the obvious and direct meaning of the text. Rather, it also evoked great images from the founding of the USA. Similarly, when Luke wrote his Gospel and the Book of Acts he was carefully utilizing language that appealed to great Old Testament texts concerning promises of Israel's liberation from enemy oppressors. For example, Mary's Magnificat in Luke 1:54-55 evoked in early Jewish readers Hannah's song in I Samuel 2:1-10. Their respective pregnancies portended God's salvation for the downtrodden of Israel.

These "intertextual" narratives also presented Jesus as the agent of Israel's liberation. For example, Luke 4:16-30 evoked Isaiah 61:1-2 and 58:6. The church, in Hays' interpretation of Acts, is a countercultural community, whose prayer in Acts 4:23-31, which evokes Psalm 2, is a form of "countercultural resistance."

Dr. Hays' lecture, as is true for most Institute lectures, is available as a free downloadable MP3 file on the Institute website. The Lanners Foundation generously helped underwrite the cost of the event.