

2011–2012 Lecture Series



IN THE
GRAND
SCHEME
OF THINGS

Faith Engaging
Culture

“ ‘I believe’ must be spoken tremblingly.”
—Frederick Buechner



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Faith Engaging Culture

In the Grand Scheme of Things

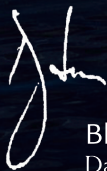
We are sometimes tempted to think our experience trivial as we watch the spectacle of the news of the world unfolding on the ubiquitous big screens around us. Undervaluing our own feelings and ideas, we fall victim to Elijah syndrome, retreating to our private caves to pity ourselves over our perceived uselessness. One unfortunate victim in this process is curiosity.

Eugene Wilson says that the “quest quotient” is more important than the “intelligence quotient.” He’s right. The programs of the Buechner Institute are an invitation to keep the search invigorated. Buechner goes so far as to sum up the essential message of his long career as an admonition to “listen to your life.” That’s what we are up to here, clarifying our cultural experience, listening, paying attention.

You may recall that wondrous moment early in the Gospels when John the Baptizer’s followers become curious about this newly arrived Jesus Christ. Here are some folks still alive enough to ask a fine question: “Where are you staying?” Curiosity drives them to ask such a question. Do you remember the response? “Come and see,” says the Messiah. The invitation remains.

We have too many channels these days, of course. So many distractions dull our sense of inquisitiveness, our capacity for hope, our faith in positive change. Buechner Institute programs aim at keeping the virtues of wonder and contemplation alive. In a whirl of diversion, we offer these moments of focused consideration, opportunities for reflection.

In the grand scheme of things, ideas matter. The curious know that life is more than meat and drink. Again this year, we invite you beyond surfaces to conversations that matter. Do come and see.



Blessings,
Dale Brown
Director, The Buechner Institute

The BUECHNER INSTITUTE

Faith Engaging
Culture

Surely one of the more pressing concerns of our time is the relationship between faith and culture. The Buechner Institute at King College was founded in 2007 to address this vital issue while also paying tribute to the American writer and

Throughout his long career, Buechner

has spoken powerfully on matters

of faith and art. Located between

shrill sectarianism and abject

secularism, the Buechner Institute

aims to cultivate a conversation

that is both artful and substantial on

issues of faith and culture. Our lecture

programming, symposia, and other events

offer opportunities for audiences in our region

and beyond.



Frederick Buechner
© Jack Hawkins

Marilynnne Robinson | January 28, 2012

7:00 p.m. | First Presbyterian Church

Beginning with an inaugural talk by Frederick Buechner

himself in January 2008, the Buechner Institute has celebrated

its January birthday with the Buechner Lectureship. Barbara

Brown Taylor was the featured speaker for the 2009 edition,

Ron Hansen delivered the lecture in 2010, and Katherine

Paterson was featured as the 2011 Buechner Lecturer. For

2012, Pulitzer Prize-winning author and popular speaker

Marilynnne Robinson will be featured. Marilynnne Robinson was

awarded the 2005 Pulitzer Prize for *Gilead* (2004) and the 2009

Orange Prize for Fiction in Great Britain for *Home* (2008). Her

most recent non-fiction work, *Absence of Mind* (2010) explores

the conflict between science and religion and why they should

not be at odds. She teaches at the Iowa Writers Workshop.

"I'm not saying that you're actually dead if you haven't read Marilynnne

Robinson, but I honestly couldn't say you're fully alive."—Bryan Appleyard

Annual Lectureship

Season Finale

Jan Karon, April 23, 2012

7:00 p.m. | First Presbyterian Church

Jan Karon enjoyed a successful career in advertising, winning

awards for ad agencies from Charlotte to San Francisco, including

the prestigious Stephen Kelly Award. At age 50, she moved to

North Carolina to pursue a writing career. Her *New York Times*

bestselling novels are often set in the fictional village of Mitford,

with recent detours through Mississippi and Ireland's County Sligo.

"Jan Karon has a particular sensibility about what is best in our culture, and she

tries to preserve that vision."—Zachery Karabell



Buechner Lecture Series 2011–2012

Richard Ray | August 31, 2011

Opening Convocation

10:30 a.m., King College Memorial Chapel

David Wilcox | September 5, 2011

10:30 a.m., King College Memorial Chapel

7:00 p.m., Concert at Bristol Train Station

Barbara Hagerly | October 10, 2011

10:30 a.m., King College Memorial Chapel

7:00 p.m., Bristol Train Station

Joan Cronan | October 24, 2011

10:30 a.m., King College Memorial Chapel

7:00 p.m., Bristol Train Station

Lauren Winner | November 7, 2011

10:30 a.m., King College Memorial Chapel

7:00 p.m., Bristol Train Station

Marilynnne Robinson | January 28, 2012

Buechner Institute Annual Lectureship

7:00 p.m., First Presbyterian Church

Robertta Ahmanson | February 20, 2012

10:30 a.m., King College Memorial Chapel

7:00 p.m., Student Center Board Room

Jacqueline Mendels Birn | February 27, 2012

10:30 a.m., King College Memorial Chapel

Iain Torrance | March 5, 2012

10:30 a.m., King College Memorial Chapel

Andy Crouch | March 19, 2012

10:30 a.m., King College Memorial Chapel

7:00 p.m., Bristol Public Library

Jan Karon | April 23, 2012

7:00 p.m., First Presbyterian Church

And watch for the occasional “Buechner Bonus” at

www.buechnerinstitute.org or on Facebook

To make a donation or offer ideas for programming, contact Dale Brown, Director, The Buechner Institute

buechnerinstitute.org | 1350 King College Road, Bristol, Tennessee 37620 | 423.652.4156

If you wish to bring a Buechner program to your town or if you would like to participate in a BuechnerFest,

please email Dale Brown at wdbrown@king.edu.

IN THE GRAND SCHEME OF THINGS

Buechner *Lecture Series* 2011-2012



Richard Ray | August 31
Opening Convocation
10:30 a.m. | Memorial Chapel

Richard Ray is an avid student of early Christian thought and the ways in which it has influenced the development of faith and culture for centuries. He is general editor for *Kerygma Bible Studies*, the Director of the Children's Trust Society of

the Grandfather Home for Children, a member of the Governing Board of the Buechner Institute, and the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Presbyterian Heritage Center in Montreat, North Carolina. After graduating from Dartmouth College, Union Theological Seminary, and the University of St. Andrews, he served as pastor for sixteen years at the First Presbyterian Church in Bristol and as an adjunct professor at King College. He is a member of the Board of Trustees of King College.



David Wilcox | September 5
10:30 a.m. | Memorial Chapel
7:00 p.m. | Bristol Train Station

David Wilcox, an American folk musician, singer-songwriter, and celebrated guitarist, has won critical acclaim for his work in the music business since his 1987 debut disc *Nightshift Watchman*. His latest album is *Reverie*.

"It's strange for me to hear *Reverie*," he notes. "The David Wilcox I once knew didn't want to risk being misunderstood, so his songs were more like memoirs than novels." Wilcox released sixteen albums prior to *Reverie*. *The Los Angeles Times* describes Wilcox's performance style in a recent review: "Factor in a strong acoustic guitar technique that eschews simplistic strumming in favor of expressive finger-picking, and a pleasant voice that sounds like a more insistent, fuller bodied James Taylor, and you have a solid solo-acoustic performer who will make his way even if he doesn't serve ear candy."

"The Buechner Institute is a wonderfully imagined venture."

—Eugene Patterson



Barbara Hagerty
October 10
10:30 a.m. | Memorial Chapel
7:00 p.m. | Bristol Train Station

The first sign that Barbara Bradley Hagerty had a future as a writer appeared in her kindergarten report card. "Barbie always listens very carefully to the stories we read, and asks questions

about why people do the things they do," the teacher wrote, adding, "She's very dexterous with the scissors." After graduating from Williams College, she worked as a copy kid at *The Christian Science Monitor*. At 29, she was posted in Japan as Asia correspondent for the *Monitor's* nightly television news program, *World Monitor*. It was while on a fellowship at Yale Law School in 1994 that Hagerty, suffering from a bad case of stomach flu, first experienced the wonders of Tylenol—an event that was instrumental in her leaving the faith of her childhood, Christian Science, and launching an intense spiritual search. Her coverage for NPR earned her the Peabody and Foreign Press Club awards. Her book, *Is There More Than This? Fingerprints of God* attempts to answer that question by diving into the emerging science of spirituality.



Joan Cronan | October 24
10:30 a.m. | Memorial Chapel
7:00 p.m. | Bristol Train Station

Joan Cronan was recently named interim vice chancellor/director of athletics by UT's Chancellor Jimmy G. Cheek. The University of Tennessee's Lady Vols have garnered a reputation as one of the most visible and respected programs in

the nation. UT's successes in both the athletic and academic realms occurred under the vision and direction of Women's Athletics Director, Joan Cronan. Her teams have finished in the top two in the *New York Times'* Southeastern Conference's Women's All-Sport Award for five of the past six years, including three first-place finishes. In three of the past five years, all eleven Lady Vols teams participated in postseason play. Cronan is a past president of the Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame, is active on the boards of First Tennessee Bank and the YMCA, and has served as vice chair of the Leadership Knoxville, the NCAA's Executive Committee, Management Council, as well as the NCAA's Council. She is also a member of the NCAA Championship Cabinet and the Southeastern Conference Executive Committee.



Lauren Winner | November 7
10:30 a.m. | Memorial Chapel
7:00 p.m. | Bristol Train Station

Lauren F. Winner is the author of *Girl Meets God*, *Mudhouse Sabbath* and most recently, *A Cheerful & Comfortable Faith: Anglican Religious Practice in the Elite Households of Eighteenth-Century Virginia*, published by Yale University Press. She has appeared

on PBS's *Religion & Ethics Newsweekly* and has written for *The New York Times Book Review*, *The Washington Post Book World*, *Publishers Weekly*, *Books and Culture*, and *Christianity Today*. Winner has degrees from Duke, Columbia, and Cambridge universities, and holds a Ph.D. in history. A former book editor for Beliefnet, she teaches at Duke Divinity School and lives in Durham, North Carolina. Winner travels extensively to lecture and teach. During the academic year of 2007–2008, she was a visiting fellow at the Center for the Study of Religion at Princeton University. In 2010–2011, she was a visiting fellow at the Institute of Sacred Music at Yale University.



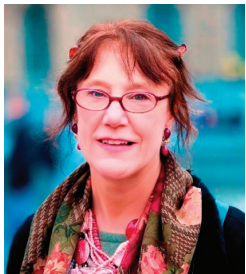
Marilynne Robinson
January 28

Buechner Institute Annual Lectureship

7:00 p.m. | First Presbyterian Church

Marilynne Robinson has written three highly acclaimed novels: *Housekeeping* (1980), *Gilead* (2004) and *Home* (2008). *Housekeeping* was a finalist for the 1982 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction (US), *Gilead* was

awarded the 2005 Pulitzer, and *Home* received the 2009 Orange Prize for Fiction (UK). Her non-fiction works include, *Mother Country: Britain, the Welfare State, and Nuclear Pollution* (1989), *The Death of Adam: Essays on Modern Thought* (1998) and *Absence of Mind: The Dispelling of Inwardness from the Modern Myth of the Self* (2010). She has written articles, essays and reviews for *Harper's*, *The Paris Review* and *The New York Times Book Review*. She has been writer-in-residence or visiting professor at the University of Kent, Amherst, and the University of Massachusetts' MFA Program for Poets & Writers. In 2009, she held a Dwight H. Terry Lectureship at Yale University, giving a series of talks entitled *Absence of Mind: The Dispelling of Inwardness from the Modern Myth of the Self*. She currently teaches at the Iowa Writers' Workshop.



Roberta Ahmanson
February 20

10:30 a.m. | Memorial Chapel
7:00 p.m. | Board Room

Roberta Green Ahmanson is a writer and philanthropist whose public activities focus on the vital role the arts play in shaping human experience and the critical role of religion in public life. She

is chairman of the board of the Museum of Biblical Art in New York City, a regular speaker at the International Arts Movement's annual encounters, and a frequent commentator on the arts. She has sponsored a number of international art exhibitions, the most recent being "The Sacred Made Real" at the National Gallery, London, in the fall of 2009. Ahmanson is also chairman of the board of the Media Project and a contributor to Oxford University Press's 2008 award-winning book, *Blind Spot: When Journalists Don't Get Religion*. She and husband, Howard, are trustees of the private philanthropy Fieldstead and Company. Most recently, the Ahmansons received Arts Orange County's 2010 Achievement Award for Outstanding Arts Philanthropist.

"How many other novelists have had an Institute named after them? Good for Fred."

—John Updike



Jacqueline Mendels Birn
February 27

10:30 a.m. | Memorial Chapel

Jacqueline Mendels Birn's experiences as a Holocaust survivor began in May 1940 when Germany invaded France. At five, Birn's childhood was completely shattered when the Vichy government instituted "Aryanization." Her father was forced to sell his business to his non-Jewish partner and eventually she and her family had to escape and go into hiding. In November 1944, the family was able to resume their life in Paris — but only after 20 close family members had been deported to Sobibor and Auschwitz and murdered. Birn met her husband, Richard, while he was studying in Paris. They came to the U.S. in 1958, where they married and later had two children. Jacqueline retired from the U.S. Foreign Service Institute in 2007 and is now a volunteer at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Her documentary film, *29 months in exile*, explores her family's escape, hiding and ultimate survival in France at the time of the Holocaust.



Iain Torrance | March 5
10:30 a.m. | Memorial Chapel

Iain R. Torrance's wide-ranging scholarship has focused on early Christian thought, the ethics of war, and bioethics. He has been co-editor of *The Scottish Journal of Theology* since 1982. He is interested in ecumenism, and is co-chair of the international dialogue between the World

Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Orthodox Church. In 2001 he became Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Divinity at Princeton Theological Seminary. In the same year, he was appointed a chaplain to Her Majesty the Queen, an office he retains. In May 2003, Torrance was elected moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland; as moderator, he traveled widely, including visits to Iraq, Eritrea, Sudan, and China. He was elected to his current role as Princeton Theological Seminary's sixth president in 2004. He has been granted honorary doctorates by the universities of St. Andrews, Aberdeen, Debrecen, and King College. He is a Corresponding Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, Scotland's National Academy of Science and Letters.



Andy Crouch | March 19
10:30 a.m. | Memorial Chapel
7:00 p.m. | Bristol Public Library

Andy Crouch is the author of *Culture Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling*, winner of *Christianity Today's* 2009 Book Award for Christianity and Culture and named one of the best books of 2008 by *Publishers Weekly*, *Relevant*, *Outreach*

and *Leadership*. In 2011 he became special assistant to the president at Christianity Today International, where he has served as executive producer of the documentary films *Where Faith and Culture Meet* and *Round Trip*, and as editorial director of the Christian Vision Project. He serves on the governing boards of Fuller Theological Seminary and Equitas Group, a philanthropic organization focused on ending child exploitation in Haiti and Southeast Asia. He is also a member of the editorial board of *Books & Culture*, a senior fellow of the International Justice Mission's IJM Institute, and a member of the Board of Advisors for the John Templeton Foundation. His writing has appeared in several editions of *Best Christian Writing* and *Best Spiritual Writing*.



Jan Karon | April 23
7:00 p.m. | First Presbyterian Church

Jan Karon is the author of the bestselling series of novels that feature Father Timothy Kavanagh, an Episcopal priest, and the fictional village of Mitford, North Carolina. Set in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains with recent detours through Mississippi and Ireland's County

Slago, Karon's books include *At Home in Mitford*, *A Light in the Window*, *These High, Green Hills*, *Out to Canaan*, *A New Song*, *A Common Life: The Wedding Story*, *In This Mountain*, *Shepherd's Abiding*, *Light from Heaven*, *Home to Holly Springs* and *In the Company of Others*. Born Janice Meredith Wilson in 1937, she was raised on a farm near Lenoir, North Carolina. She penned her first novel when she was 10 years old, the same year she won a short-story contest organized by the local high school. At 18, Karon began working as a receptionist for a Charlotte, N.C. advertising agency. Karon went on to have a highly successful career in the field, winning awards for ad agencies from Charlotte to San Francisco, eventually garnering the prestigious Stephen Kelly Award. At the age of 50, she moved to North Carolina to pursue a writing career. Karon's many books have found an audience of more than 30 million readers.

Most of the Buechner Institute events are free of charge and all are open to the public. We hope you will take advantage of these opportunities in our community life.

Your contributions help carry this work. To make a donation or offer ideas for programming, please see buechnerinstitute.org.