Emory’s Witte to Lecture in Japan on Law and Christianity

Friday, May 19, 2006

By: April L. Bogle

Emory University law professor John Witte, Jr. will explain the impact of Jesus and Christianity on the Western legal tradition to scholars and students at Japan’s Seigakuin University on June 21-23, 2006.

Witte, Jonas Robitscher Professor of Law and Ethics at Emory University School of Law, will deliver four lectures in his capacity as the Alonzo L. McDonald Family Professor on the Life and Teachings of Jesus and their Impact on Culture. Emory’s Candler School of Theology houses this professorship and selected Witte to serve in 2006.

The lecture titles are “Christianity and Democracy: Past Contributions and Future Challenges,” “From Sacrament to Contract: Marriage, Religion, and Law in the Western Tradition,” “From Contract to Covenant: Marriage as Contract and Covenant in Law and Theology,” and “Separation of Church and State in America: The Views of Thomas Jefferson versus John Adams Historically and Today.” All lectures will be translated into Japanese and published. Witte will deliver these lectures as part of the inaugural festivities for the establishment of a new Society for Puritan Studies headquartered at Seigakuin University and in collaboration with Tokyo Union Theological Seminary.

The McDonald chair is funded through the McDonald Agape Foundation, directed by Alonzo L. McDonald, an Emory alumnus and Trustee Emeritus. McDonald has had a distinguished career in business, government, and academia. He established the foundation more than 10 years ago to support Christ-centered activities. The purpose of the chair is to further study on the person of Jesus and his influence on all aspects of life for believers, non-believers and followers of other religions. According to McDonald, "there is not a chair on the general subject of ‘the life and teachings of Jesus and their
impact on culture' at any university in North America. The chair is not aimed at promoting Christianity but rather at exploring the person and impact of Jesus."

Witte delivered his first McDonald lecture, "Freedom of a Christian: Protestant Contributions to Modern Religious Liberty and Human Rights," pm Feb. 9 at Emory’s Cannon Chapel.

Witte serves as Jonas Robitscher Professor of Law and Ethics and director of the Center for the Study of Law and Religion (CSLR) at Emory. The CSLR is home to world-class scholars and forums on the religious foundations of law, politics and society and has drawn hundreds of major scholars as project leaders, participants and lecturers. An expert on the history of marriage, legal history and religious liberty, Witte has published 18 books, 8 journal symposia, and 120 articles, and delivered more than 150 major public lectures at leading universities throughout North America, Europe, Israel, and South Africa. He has been selected eight times by Emory law students as Most Outstanding Professor. Witte has directed eight major multi-year research projects and a dozen smaller projects, and raised some $8 million for these efforts.

***

The Center for the Study of Law and Religion is home to world class scholars and forums on the religious foundations of law, politics, and society. It offers expertise on how the teachings and practices of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam have shaped and continue to transform the fundamental ideas and institutions of our public and private lives. The scholarship of CSLR faculty provides the latest perspectives, while its conferences and public forums foster reasoned and robust public debate.

Link to this story: http://www.law.emory.edu/index.php?id=1589&no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=385