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"Gospel of Judas" Lecture Features Pagels, Meyer on March 21

ORANGE, Calif., Feb. 27. 2007 Dr. Marvin Meyer, Chapman University's Grisct Professor of Bible and Christian History and a member of the National Geographic team that brought the Gospel of Judas to light last year, will team with Dr. Elaine Pagels of Princeton University, bestselling author of *The Gnostic Gospels*, to present a lecture on the Judas discovery and its meanings. The Gospel of Judas: A Conversation with the Experts will take place at 7 p.m. Wednesday, March 21 in Memorial Hall. Admission is free and open to the public, and seating is non-reserved. A book signing by both authors will follow the talk. For more information, the public can call (714) 744-2174 or go to www.chapman.edu/judas.

This marks the first time that Dr. Meyer who over the past year has traveled widely and lectured under the auspices of National Geographic from Paris Sorbonne to South America to Japan has presented a public talk on the Gospel of Judas on his home turf. It also marks the second time Dr. Pagels a good friend of Dr. Meyer has appeared at Chapman. The event is presented by Chapman University's Wilkinson College of Letters and Sciences and sponsored by the Grisct Lectureship, the Department of Religious Studies and the Department of Peace Studies.

One of Biblical archaeology's most stunning discoveries, the Gospel of Judas was uncovered in the 1970s when a peasant found the 1,700-year-old codex (bound book of papyrus pages) while searching for treasure in the old tombs of Middle Egypt. Lost in the antiquities market for many years, the codex deteriorated and crumbled into thousands of pieces. It was finally brought to the attention of the National Geographic Society, which authenticated it, purchased it, and painstakingly restored it. Dr. Meyer was invited to join the project in 2005 when the National Geographic needed a respected Coptologist (an expert in Coptic, the language of the early Christians living in Egypt) to provide the English translation of the document. His translation revealed one of the strangest Gnostic gospels yet discovered one which shows the historically reviled figure of Judas to be the best friend and closest disciple of Jesus. Dr. Meyer also appeared in the widely seen television special and DVD documenting the project. Dr. Pagels serves with Dr. Meyer as a member of the National Geographic's Gospel of Judas advisory board.

Dr. Elaine Pagels is the Harrington Speare Paine Professor of Religion at Princeton University and a preeminent member of the theological community whose impressive scholarship has earned her international respect. As a young researcher at Barnard College, she changed the historical landscape of Christian studies by exploding the myth of the early Christian church as a unified movement. She published her findings in 1979 in a book that became a groundbreaking bestseller, *The Gnostic Gospels*. An analysis of 52 early Christian manuscripts that were unearthed in Egypt and known collectively as the Nag Hammadi Library, *The Gnostic Gospels* won the National Book Award and the National Book Critics Circle Award, and was chosen by the Modern Library as one of the 100 most influential books of the 20th century. It is fair to say that Pagels bestseller set the stage for the runaway success of *The Da Vinci Code*, said *U.S. News and World Report* in a 2006 article on recent Gnostic manuscript discoveries. Among Dr. Pagels many other books are *Beyond Belief: The Secret Gospel of Thomas*; *The Origin of Satan*;

and her latest book, *Reading Judas: The Gospel of Judas and the Shaping of Christianity*, to be published this spring.

Dr. Marvin Meyer holds the Belle Griset Chair in Religion at Chapman University and was one of three experts who authored last year's international bestseller *The Gospel of Judas*, published by the National Geographic Society. The National Geographic's unveiling of the authentic 2nd-century A.D. Gnostic gospel, which portrays Judas as a sympathetic and even heroic figure, caused a worldwide media sensation, and Dr. Meyer, who also appeared on the widely seen television special, was the lead English translator of the manuscript. An expert in Coptic the language of the early Christians in Egypt and considered one of the world's foremost scholars on Gnosticism and texts about Jesus outside the New Testament, Dr. Meyer has authored more than 40 books. Some of his most recent books are *The Gnostic Discoveries: The Impact of the Nag Hammadi Library*; *The Gospels of Mary: The Secret Tradition of Mary Magdalene, the Companion of Jesus*; and *The Gospel of Thomas: The Hidden Sayings of Jesus*. Forthcoming from Dr. Meyer this year are *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures* and the critical (scholarly) edition of *The Gospel of Judas*, which he co-authored with the National Geographic team.

For more information, visit www.chapman.edu/judas.