



HILLSDALE COLLEGE

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Carl R. Trueman Delivers Drummond Lecture in Christ Chapel at Hillsdale College

Trueman's lecture addressed the modern impulse to transgress the sacred for the sake of authenticity.

HILLSDALE, Mich. — Carl R. Trueman, professor of Biblical and religious studies at Grove City College, presented the first talk in the “Drummond Lectures in Christ Chapel” series for the 2024-25 academic year on Sept 26. His lecture, titled “Blessed are the Transgressors,” addressed the modern tendency to view transgression or desecration as the only way to be authentically human.

“The joyous exaltation of the transgression and the demolition of old religious values is quite remarkable. Even on the left of politics, it seems to me there is a big difference between arguing that abortion should be safe, legal, and rare and shouting it, wearing it as a badge of honor,” Trueman said. “I want to suggest that at its root what is taking place is a fundamental transformation or a fundamental destabilization of what it means to be human.”

Trueman said that as change in the world accelerated and life became less stable, people eventually came to place a high value on authenticity, defining themselves less by their family, hometown, and occupation and more by their individual feelings.

“To be authentic is to express outwardly that inner felt identity, to act and perform in public in a manner consistent with the content of the inner space. To be truly human is therefore not first and foremost to conform oneself to the demands of society or to define oneself in terms of one's obligations towards others,” Trueman said. “Modern human beings can only realize themselves as free and authentic as they transgress the boundaries of behavior that were originally grounded in religious authority.”

Trueman said this transgressive impulse manifests itself across the political spectrum, from the progressive left to the dissident right.

“This need for transgression as a way of demonstrating one’s credentials, one’s authenticity — it has no static political content because, to go back to what I said earlier on, it’s an aesthetic,” Trueman said. “It’s an aesthetic that pits itself against anything that establishes itself a sacred or stable.”

Carl R. Trueman is a graduate of the Universities of Cambridge (M.A., classics) and Aberdeen (Ph.D., church history). He taught on the faculties of the Universities of Nottingham and Aberdeen before moving to the United States in 2001. Since 2018, he has served as a professor at Grove City College. He is a Fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C., and a contributing editor at First Things.

The “Drummond Lectures in Christ Chapel” series presents faculty, staff, and students with lectures on faith, learning, and related issues of the day. Previous speakers include former vice president of the United States Mike Pence, former secretary of education Betsy DeVos, psychiatrist and founder of OptimalWork Kevin Majeres, C.S. Lewis scholar Michael Ward, and Woodson Center President Robert Woodson.

For photos from the lecture, click [here](#). For photos of Christ Chapel at Hillsdale College, click [here](#). For photos of Hillsdale College, click [here](#).

For a high-resolution copy of the Hillsdale College clocktower logo, click [here](#).

About Hillsdale College

Hillsdale College is an independent, nonsectarian, Christian liberal arts college located in southern Michigan. Founded in 1844, the College has built a national reputation through its classical liberal arts core curriculum and its principled refusal to accept federal or state taxpayer subsidies, even indirectly in the form of student grants or loans. It also conducts an outreach effort promoting civil and religious liberty, including a free monthly speech digest, *Imprimis*, with a circulation of more than 6.6 million. For more information, visit hillsdale.edu.

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