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## Martin Marty, Renowned Religion Historian, to Speak at Illinois Wesleyan University

Vito Trifiletti  
*Illinois Wesleyan University*

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March 6, 1995

Contact: Vito Trifiletti 309/556-3181

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Martin Marty, Renowned Religion Historian,  
to Speak at Illinois Wesleyan University**

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.--A joke around the University of Chicago Divinity School: An outsider phones, asking to speak with Church Historian Martin E. Marty. A secretary says, "I'm sorry, but Professor Marty is writing a book." The caller responds, "That's all right. I'll hold."

Marty has authored over 40 books during his career as a Lutheran clergyman, and is generally acknowledged to be one of the most influential living interpreters of religion in the United States.

Marty will visit Illinois Wesleyan University March 15-16, as the Religious Life Committee's spring lecturer. Marty will deliver a series of presentations, all taking place in Evelyn Chapel, which are open to the public:

- Wednesday, March 15, 11 a.m.

*Reconciliation: a First Word and a Last Word*

- Wednesday, March 15, 4 p.m.

*The One Culture and the Many: the Americian Prospect*

- Wednesday, March 15, 7 p.m.

*The Multiculture and the Multimulticultures*

- Thursday, March 16, 4 p.m.

*Celebrating Elements of the Common Good*

Leander Keck, dean of the Divinity School at Yale, observes that Marty is not only a noteworthy religion scholar, but a "front-rank popularizer. . . In this country there isn't anyone comparable." Other academic commentators, says Keck, lack Marty's breadth of information, polish and "enormous energy."

That awesome vigor--the tireless Marty writes his books while standing up--is clearly evidenced by his travel schedule. One of the best-known and most solicited religion scholars working the lecture circuit today (Marty holds 40 honorary doctorates), he receives daily a half-dozen invitations to speak, scheduling one out-of-town appearance a week.

Marty was reared in two Nebraska towns, West Point and Battle Creek. He was a member of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, which employed his father as an elementary school principal. He attended Synod schools from first grade through Concordia Seminary near St. Louis. The training was so European oriented, says Marty, that "I was 26 years old before I cracked a book in the field to which I have devoted my career," American religion.

Marty continues to work as a professor and writes a column for the *Christian Century*, the liberal Protestant weekly. He also decides what books the *Century* reviews and writes for numerous other journals. A self-confessed magazine junkie, he receives 250 periodicals and culls them for a fortnightly newsletter.

Ever quotable, Marty is constantly sought by reporters looking for quick bursts of wisdom on subjects ranging from Pat Robertson's 1988 presidential campaign to baby boomers.

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