

**Elaine Pagels**

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"I write about Adam and Eve and Satan because these are the kinds of images that speak to deeply held cultural values. What these images evoke—for example—about sexuality and evil—speaks not only to religious people, but may have powerful resonances even for many people who are not 'religious.'"

Elaine Pagels

### Areas of expertise

- Concepts of evil in Judaism, Christianity and Islam
- Attitudes toward religious pluralism
- The influence of biblical religion on sexuality and gender in the Christian West

### Topics in the News

- The dangers of identifying America with Christian values
- Use of religious terminology in politics

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## Biography


Elaine Pagels has won international acclaim for her works. She is an engaging and accessible speaker, well practiced in television interviewing. Her new book, *Beyond Belief: The Secret Gospel of Thomas*, focuses on religious claims to possessing the "ultimate" truth. Pagels contends that, as Christianity became increasingly institutionalized, it became less pluralistic and more corrupt. As a young researcher at Barnard College, Elaine Pagels changed forever this historical landscape of the Christian religion by exploding the myth of the early Christian Church as a unified movement.

## Resources by this expert

- *Beyond Belief: The Secret Gospel of Thomas* (Random House 2003)
- *The Gnostic Gospels* (Random House, 1979)
- *The Origin of Satan* (Random House, 1995)
- *Adam, Eve and the Serpent* (Random House, 1988)

## Recent Interviews & Articles

- *Washington Post: On Faith*, April 25, 2007, "[Forgiving Judas: The Ultimate Test](#)"
- *Star Tribune*, April 14, 2007, "[Forgiving Judas: The Ultimate Test](#)"
- *NBC News*, April 7, 2007, "[Gospel of Judas Manuscript Found and Authenticated](#)"
- *Richmond Times Dispatch*, April 8, 2007, "[In light of old text, a new focus on Judas](#)"
- *Weekend Australian*, April 7, 2007, "[Judas's side of the story](#)"
- *Religion News Service* (also ran in *The Leader-Post*) "[Pagels, King Write Judas Book](#)"
- *ABC News Primetime Live*, April 6, 2007, "[Gospel of Judas; New Biblical Finding](#)"
- *The Charlie Rose Show*, April 6, 2007, "[Discussion About the Meaning of Easter](#)"
- *Salon.com*, April 2, 2007, "[Gospel According to Judas](#)"
- *The Washington Post*, April 1, 2007, "[Embracing Judas; A recently translated gospel argues that betraying Jesus was the right thing to do](#)"
- *The Sunday Telegraph*, April 1, 2007, "[It's a Devil of a Job Being Satan](#)"
- *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, March 30, 2007, "[The most faithful disciple?](#)"
- *Time*, March 26, 2007, "[Downtime: Reading Judas](#)"
- *Publishers Weekly*, March 26, 2007, "[Reimagining the Past; Alternative histories ride a wave of post-Code popularity](#)"
- *ABC Magazine*, March 25, 2007, "[Judas: Not such a bad guy after all](#)"
- *NPR: Fresh Air*, March 14, 2007, "[Religion scholars Elaine Pagels and Karen King discuss the gospel of Judas, which offers different version of Judas' relationship to Jesus](#)"
- *Los Angeles Times*, January 20, 2007, "[Q & A; Continued discovery within 'secret gospels'](#)"
- *WGBH Radio Boston*, October 29, 2006, "[The Devil's Trill](#)" 
- *New York Times*, October 3, 2006, by Ellen Goodman, "[The devil made them do it \(op-ed\)](#)" 
- *San Jose Mercury News*, May 21, 2006, Op-ed, "[The truth at the heart of 'The Da Vinci Code'](#)" 
- 48 Hours (CBS News Broadcast), December 20, 2005 "[The Mystery of Christmas](#)" 
- *Daily Nebraskan*, September 16, 2005 "Scholar sheds new light on Biblical views"
- *Lincoln Journal Star*, August 24, 2005 "Princeton professor gives speech on Jesus"

- *The Kansas City Star* January 12, 2005 "Gospel of Thomas among Controversial Manuscripts"
- *Tikkun Magazine*, January 1, 2005 "The Ideological Roots of Christian Zionism"
- On February 11, 2003, the Religion & Culture communications initiative hosted an audio news conference entitled ***President or Preacher?: George W. Bush's Irresponsible Use of Religious Language***. Dr. Elaine Pagels of Princeton University and Rev. C. Welton Gaddy of the Interfaith Alliance criticized President George W. Bush's consistent and reckless use of religious language, saying that such language is divisive and destructive to the healthy debate essential to the democratic process.
- Transcript from the audio news conference [here](#)
- Listing of articles generated by the audio news conference [here](#)
- Elaine Pagels has been profiled in *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Vogue*, *Mirabella* and *The New Yorker*. She has appeared on "[Frontline](#)"  on PBS, Responding to Tragedy: Religion In A Time Of Terror, an interfaith religious special on CBS.

### Organizational links for this expert

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