perspective

Institute for Christian Studies

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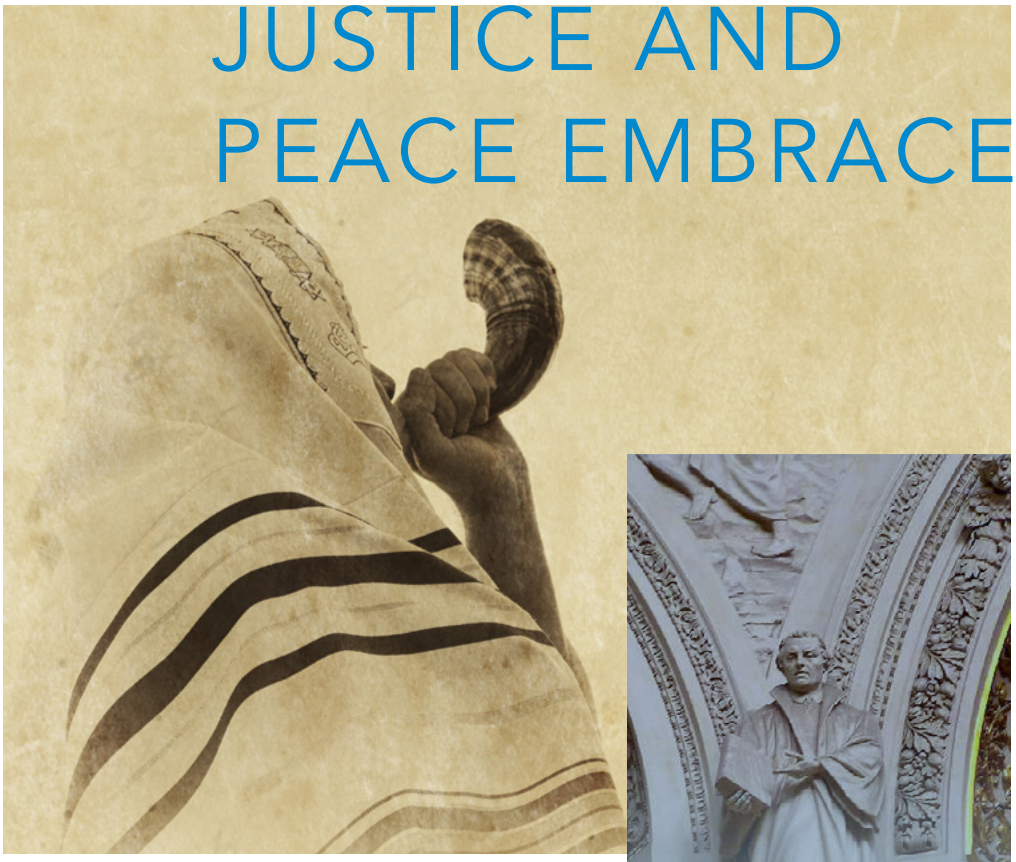
JUBILEE: WHERE JUSTICE AND PEACE EMBRACE



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About this issue

Philosophy students are often commanded to think in abstract terms, to move in the realm of universal categories, to avoid the use of anecdotes, examples, or stories. Questioning the foundational premise of this approach, ICS encourages its scholars to explore their own life-experiences as they develop their theoretical constructs, empowering them to wrestle with the anecdotes that "plague" everyday language and to listen to the stories that the world is desperately trying to tell. This, among many other idiosyncrasies, places ICS at the intersection of the academy and the world that academics claim to understand.

In that spirit, the Junior Members have collaborated on this issue of *Perspective* to perform through their writings what constitutes a routine at ICS, bridging the world of their experiences–whether personal or communal–with their philosophical and theological work. This time, Junior Members have decided to reflect on the meaning of the terms "celebration," "jubilee," and "commemoration," and to point readers to some of the challenges, successes, and joys that come with celebrating the history of Christian scholarship.

With their work on this issue, Junior Members hope to remind ICS friends and supporters that this is a year of celebration at many different levels. The following articles contain a call to reflect upon the contributions of those who have furthered our educational institution, our church, and our world with their insights. This year we celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, ICS's 50 years of operation, and Senior Member Bob Sweetman's 25th anniversary at the Institute. May this time of jubilee be the beginning of another 50 years of philosophical and theological reflection, of community building through attentive listening, and of the relentless storytelling that makes ICS unique. ●

Hector Acero Ferrer

Introduction to the authors

Joshua Harris is a fourth-year PhD Candidate specializing in metaphysics and the philosophy of religion. His dissertation explores the pivotal role of the "transcendentals", which include concepts such as unity, truth and goodness, in the philosophical theology of Thomas Aquinas.

Mark Novak is finishing his MA this year, writing a thesis comparing the Christologies of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Richard Kearney. His interest is contemporary continental philosophy of religion and theology, and he plans to explore themes of embodiment, incarnation, and eschatology in doctoral studies at McMaster.

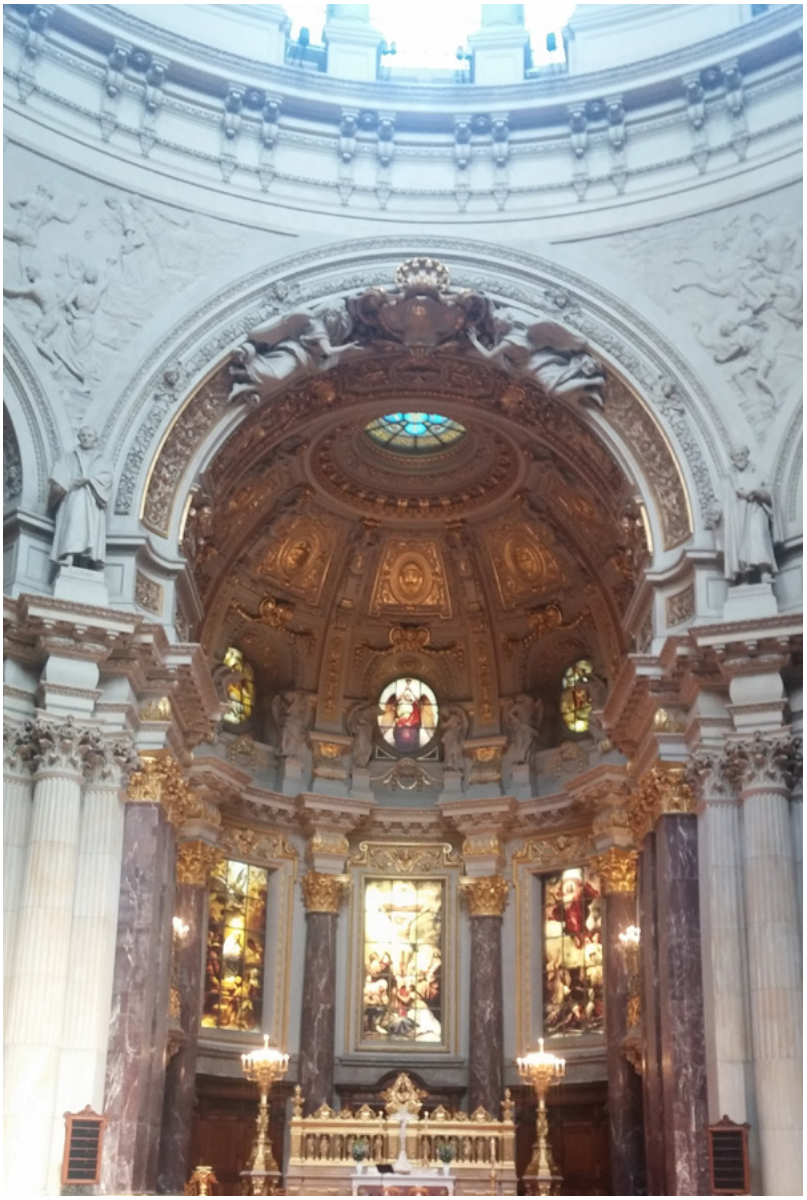
Julia de Boer is a second-year Junior Member. She is studying linguistic aesthetics with Dr. Sweetman, as a result of her interest in grammar and its role in experiences of faith and community. When not in class or working on her thesis, she knits obsessively and teaches Latin to elementary school children.

Kiegan Irish is completing his MA, with a thesis focusing on Hannah Arendt and the value of her conception of the human for political theory. He studied at the University of King's College in Halifax, and plans to continue researching the possibility of justice in political contexts.

Bob Sweetman is holder of the H. Evan Runner Chair in the History of Philosophy. By habit and inclination ICS has become the custodian of his heart. He has tried to show his gratitude in many ways, most recently in *Tracing the Lines: Spiritual Exercise and the Gesture of Christian Scholarship*, in the *Currents in Reformational Thought* series.

Reformation and Jubilee

by Kiegan Irish



The summer before last I travelled to Berlin. While I was there I entered the most magnificent building I've ever been in: the Berliner Dom. The Cathedral took centuries to build, and although the plans changed several times, it was finally completed in 1905 under Kaiser Wilhelm II, and it served above all as a permanent testament to his vision of the relationship between church and state.

I was moved by the passion for glorifying God evidenced by this structure, generations in the making, and the whole cosmos it brought to life under its dome. Yet for someone whose most significant religious experiences have occurred under an open sky or atop a frozen lake, there was a strange undercurrent to my experience of the Berliner Dom. It was as I began to read the language the cathedral speaks that the character of that strangeness became clear.

This year marks half a millennium since Luther's words sparked a movement that would seize Europe and eventually the globe, certainly cause for celebration! Yet our world feels awfully dark right now, mired in violent hatred and divisions. So this is also a time for reflection. An historical trajectory born of European religious differences has led Protestants to compose the most powerful classes of the most powerful nations in the Western world. I wonder if at this juncture we might risk reconsidering one of the oldest alliances of our faith: the alliance with the capitalist nation states that emerged out of the ruins of the old feudal order.

Hannah Arendt describes the Reformation as a kind of great de-worlding, a concern for salvation that electrified the soul of Europe. But this shock opened up a vacuum of authority, and European states and their managerial allies capitalized upon this opportunity by expropriating the property belonging to the church and large numbers of serfs. This expropriation of so many poor and vulnerable people effectively created the destitute population required to bring capitalism into being, as the lands that once furnished their livelihood were repurposed to serve the ends of the landowners and, eventually, industrialists.

Arendt writes, "the enormous and still proceeding accumulation of wealth in modern society… was started by expropriation—the expropriation of the peasant classes which in turn was the almost accidental consequence of the expropriation of Church and monastic property after the Reformation…[The] dictum that property is theft has a solid basis of truth in the origins of modern capitalism."

Arendt's observation here helps to contextualize my discomfort at the Berliner Dom. The cathedral

was built as a symbolic centre of Protestantism and as such seamlessly interweaves Imperial German and Christian symbolism. When you stand in the nave of the Cathedral, on four pillars flanking the altar you see the four great Protestant Reformers: Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, and Melanchthon. Facing them on pillars of equal height are the four kings who supported them. These statues flank a platform raised above the seating of all others where the emperor and his attendants sit, directly across from the image of Christ. A 1905 newspaper article reporting on the dedication of the cathedral, completed at last, describes the imperial party ascending to their seats in a ceremony that suggested a gala opera rather than a religious service, while several hundred parishioners huddled in the shadows, "poor and self-conscious." Finally, it is the relegation of the poor to the shadows while imperial pomp claims for itself religious legitimacy–inscribed as if for all time in the very architecture of the centre of the Protestant world–that was the source of my discomfort.

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The emergence of modern European states and the capitalist form of organization that underwrote them was conditional upon the Reformation, and as Arendt tells us, capitalized upon the instability of the time to enshrine a new order, the consequences of which have reverberated through the globe to this day. With this realization, our celebration and our reflective moment need to come together in the figure of jubilee.

If we as Protestants are to be healed of a parasite that has been drawing our lifeblood now for five centuries, biblical tradition can provide resources to aid in this struggle. After half a millennium of expropriation and accumulation we have forgotten the terms of covenant as it was spelled out for the people of God, replete with the forgiveness of debts and entire years of the Lord's remission (Deuteronomy 15:2). For too long we've grown wealthy in stolen countries on stolen lands. And to shape our conscience by scripture alone means to be willing to proclaim the Lord's remission, to loosen our stranglehold on the lands, and give them back. ●

In defence of intellect

by Joshua Harris

The intellect's reputation seems to have suffered a bit in evangelical Christian circles lately. This is not to say that evangelicals are *un*intelligent or *anti*-intellectual. On the contrary, recent phenomena such as the classical education movement in North America suggest some rather positive signs of life.

What I mean is something different: however "intellectual" we might be *in practice*, at the level of conscious self-description we tend to be persistently bashful about the intellect's role in the life of faith. After all, isn't the intellect the home of arid abstraction and vague speculation, at best, or even dangerous pride, at worst? How lush are the pastures of bodily routine and emotional response—bastions of that ever-comforting, life-giving *feeling* of being God's own. How could anything be more *real* than that?

Far be it from me to denigrate this powerful and even necessary recognition of the positive role that our habitual, material nature plays in an image-bearer's love of God. I have learned much from those who plead for it. Yet I can't help but be uneasy. Does this (absolutely positive and important) love of the senses, emotion and imagination risk obscuring what is perhaps our most *distinctive* responsibility as human creatures in God's story? I invite you to consider this, and a possible diagnosis: maybe we are bashful about intellect because we have forgotten what "intellectual" *actually means*.

A while back I was invited to serve as a guest lecturer at a high school in the aforementioned classical Christian education movement. The students were raw, but brilliant—genuinely awestruck by philosophical questions that (I am ashamed to say) have lost a certain amount of luster for me, given their familiarity in life as an ICS student. Everything about the experience was encouraging, though there was one aspect that felt, well, *forced*.

As an introduction to the 50-minute class, I was asked to prepare a 10-minute classroom "liturgy"—something designed to shape students' "affect" in addition to the "intellectual" material I was presenting. This "liturgy" went well enough, I suppose. I gave a little sermonette about what it's like to be in Christian academia, and capped things off by reciting a rather beautiful collect from the Book of Common Prayer. Yet I confess that I was taken aback by an administrator's offhand comment afterwards: this is how *every* class begins!

Now, again, there is nothing wrong in principle with recognizing the sense in which our lives are deeply liturgical. We are habitual creatures, no doubt. What puzzled me was the apparent assumption that the presentation of the assigned material was somehow insufficient in itself as a program of student formation in the classroom. Teachers and administrators seemed to feel as though they had to go out of their way not to seem, you know, *too intellectual*.

But what exactly does the word "intellectual" mean? Is it our capacity to be "smart," to answer people's questions quickly and accurately? Is it to be "scientific," to be able to explain and predict phenomena in the world? These attractive answers to this tricky question, though not entirely wrong, are symptoms of what I call a *calculative* model of intellect. That is to say, on this view, the intellect is more or less like a computer. It has "inputs" (e.g. data and/or questions), and "outputs" (explanations and/or answers). Although of course our ability to "calculate" is important, it is not anywhere close to what is most fundamental about intellect.

Instead of this calculative model, I propose that we think of intellect in a way that is rather ancient—that is, in terms of *understanding*.

When educated people in the era of the New Testament thought of our English word intellect, they were thinking in terms of the Greek words *nous* and *logos*. Famously, of course, Christ is the *logos theou*, the "Word of God" (John 1). What these authors believed—both Christian and non-Christian alike—was that the human intellect's distinctiveness in all of nature lay in its unique ability to penetrate beyond mere *appearances* to the *depths* of the world around us. Far from being a *retreat* into the clean white walls of scientific calculation (and thus away from sense and imagination), then, to be a true intellectual in this biblical sense is to find oneself in intimate solidarity with God and God's world *as a whole*. It is to see the "universal" in the "particular"—that is, to have insight into the seamless integration of things in and with other things—and to find our place accordingly. This is a crucial part of what it means to have *understanding* in addition to calculation.

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Intellect is not something "over against" the admittedly wondrous powers we share with non-human animals (e.g. sensation, emotion, etc.); rather, what it means to be "intellectual" is to take up *in a uniquely human way* our bodily lives in the context of God's good creation as a whole. Let us not apologize for our intellects; for as these ancient authors saw more clearly than we do today, this unique power we have is not something to be taken lightly. Indeed, quite literally, Christ's very identity is *intellectual*, the *logos theou*. ●

"Come in, the water's fine"

by Julia de Boer

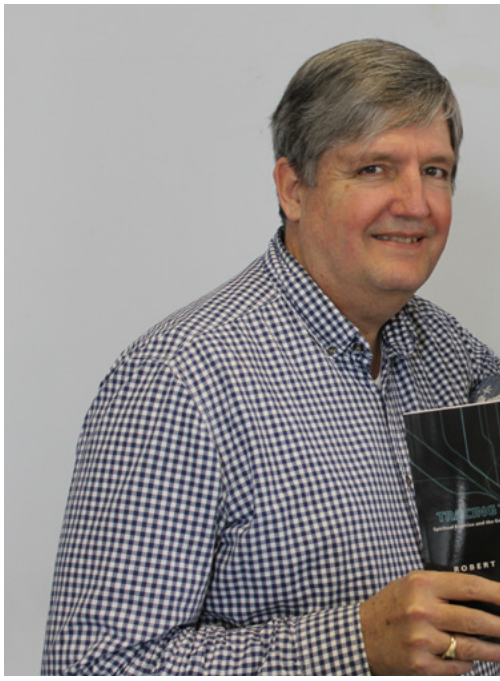
On October 28th, 2016, professors, students, and supporters gathered together to celebrate Robert Sweetman's 25 years of teaching at ICS. Our evening was dual-purposed, for we also celebrated the launching of his book, *Tracing the Lines: Spiritual Exercise and the Gesture of Christian Scholarship.* Doug Blomberg, Ron Kuipers, and Calvin Seerveld all responded to the book. The food was lovely and we all had a chummy old time.

How do I, as a Christian in the workplace, understand the interactions between personal/communal faith and work in academia?

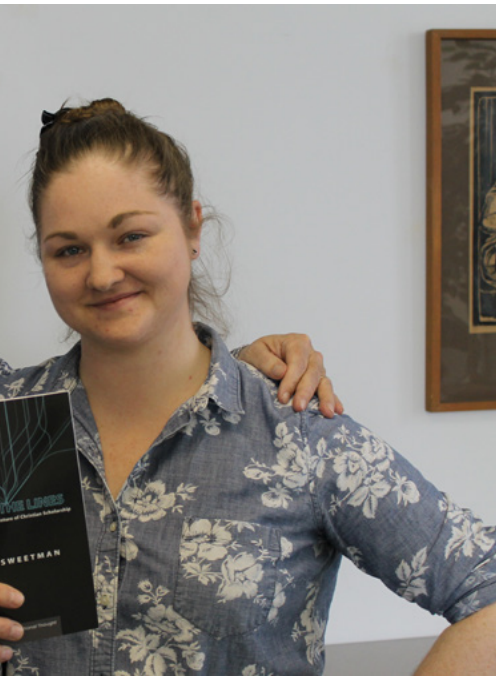
Bob is my MA thesis supervisor, a fact for which I will always be thankful. As I was finishing my undergrad, an ICS supporter at my church told me, "I think you and Robert Sweetman would get along really well." I visited ICS in the spring of 2015, and after sitting in on a class, I knew it would be a productive academic relationship. Reading his newest book has been lovely because it feels slightly as if I have the pocket-volume of Sweetman wisdom. *Tracing the Lines* is Bob's attempt to answer the ever present question of "how do I, as a Christian in the workplace, understand the interactions between personal/communal faith and work in academia?" Early on, he clearly states there is no one institutional structure that will ensure productive Christian scholarship: "*In general, I suggest that we identify the integrality of Christian scholarship with its animating spirit or ethos, rather than with delimited features intrinsic to its methods and claim.*" (pg. 10) In our particular context, this means we need to acknowledge that ICS's legacy is not because of any specific institutional move, though there have been many wise choices, but because the students, professors, and supporters look to Christ and are transformed.

Viewing integrality as a spiritual exercise allows one to account for an increased capacity to bring faith and work together. . . .

After his introduction, Bob turns to Justin the Martyr and St. Augustine to discuss the early history of the integrality of faith and scholarly work; both Justin and Augustine highlight the necessity of living *with* the scriptures. After engaging with these foundational thinkers in the Christian tradition, he begins to sift through the various moves toward answering this question throughout the history of philosophy, grouping them for similarity under the titles *complementarist, integrationalist,* and *holist.* You will see many familiar faces along the way: John Paul II, Alvin Plantinga, and some figures of principal interest to the ICS community like Herman Dooyeweerd and H. E. Runner. There are some very real differences between these groups of thinkers that it is not helpful to gloss over, especially when considering whether a Christian in a secularly-leaning department *must* make known their faith to their academic community, even if it is detrimental to their career. Bob is quick to point out that these differences in approach or methodology should not be grounds for division. "*No matter what account of Christian integrality one subscribes to, the intent is to craft scholarship to be a seamless piece of one's living with the scriptures and worship of the God revealed therein. This I take to be a given; Christian scholars are…all one at the level of intention. Differences result from the discourses developed to account for that intention*" (p. 107). Subsequent chapters discuss how Christian scholars share in their unity and difference, and how we can each begin to bridge these self-created divides.



The end of the book delightfully demonstrates and explores Bob's familiarity with medieval Western thought. Christian integrality must be thought of as a spiritual discipline, a type of rich asceticism, whereby the scholar deliberately focuses, over and over again, on how she can shape and fashion her work to be more Christ-honouring. Viewing integrality as a spiritual exercise allows one to account for an



increased capacity to bring faith and work together the more one concentrates on doing so. It is not a skill to be picked up at once, but rather a skill-set accrued as the result of very hard work.

As I mentioned, *Tracing the Lines* is the experience of studying with Robert Sweetman in book form. I am surprised that the opening page was not simply the phrase "Come in, the water's fine!", something every student will have heard him utter as a means of assuring them that the philosophical boogie monsters will not come out of the tide pools to scare them. The book is like his teaching style, both precise and exceedingly accessible. On the night we gathered to celebrate him, Robert Sweetman gave us another gift. ●

Christian scholarship in light of the wisdom of stories

by Bob Sweetman

One of the stories commonly told about philosophy and the scholarship associated with the humanities is that of the lonely scholar spending her life in book-filled silence, quietly thinking her singular thoughts, forging her never-before-imagined theories in splendid, romantically dark, and poverty-kissed isolation. We tell similar stories about poets, artists, and musicians. In an odd way, culture makers and the people who study culture making are bolted together in our shared imagination.

It seems to me that we tell such stories when we feel like a certain way of being in the world has run its course, or soon will. Stories of isolated geniuses arriving at some utterly fresh and unspoiled vista, some intimation from the future or from Above pointing us toward what is new and full of promise—such stories seem to arise when we have the sense that there is a general crisis and everything needs to change, root and branch, right now, if not yesterday. Stories of such isolated seers seem to illustrate the possibility of radical change; it can happen because it has been imagined, named, and illustrated in a poem, a scholarly essay, a painting, or a sonata. Such imaginings, namings and illustrations demand figures of genius, to be sure, but through their witness we too come to see what might be but has never yet been. And the hope our geniuses unveil before us is of a new world, hiding, but just around the corner. For us Christians such stories have bred a sense of the imminence of the world-made-right: Christian scholarship once and for all, a Christian politics whose success brings about the advent of Justice, a realized Christian art, literature, music with a determinate cast, of one stylistic type, we could say, world without end. In short, the Kingdom in our generation, all aboard the Freedom Train.

Such stories create a powerful momentum. It can all happen now, because we possess the resources to go-it-alone, to win free of the deep, ambivalent tracks constructed for our thoughts and imaginings by the societies and cultures we are heirs to. We can be free to conceive and to make the world radically anew. But as the generation ages, the Freedom Train rusts and grinds to a halt, while the Kingdom remains stubbornly hidden, what happens to these stories and the expectations they fuel? Were the stories that let us loose, that launched our scholarly work, our institution building, that incarnated our zest and hope, were these stories illusions?

There is something off about solitary geniuses imagining or conceptualizing their world in isolation from the societies and cultures in which they were formed. Societal and cultural landmarks, dispositions and imaginings are not set aside so easily. Even a lonely philosophy student scribbling away in her library carrel is never actually alone. Her every imagining and thought is part of a choir of voices of every imaginable hue and tone. Her eventual success or failure demands the right mentors, fellow students, stocked libraries, sufficient financial resources, the right stories even. Awareness of the intersubjectivity present and active in even the loneliest existence gives rise to other stories under the rubric of "It takes a village . . ." Indeed, the implications for understanding Christian scholarship are rather dramatic. It, like Christian artistry of every kind, is a "long game."

Christian scholarship is called to be transformative, even radical. . . Christian scholarship is not demonstration; it is witness.

MAN WITH A BOOK BY PARMIGIANINO (C. 1525/1526); PUBLIC DOMAIN (WIKIMEDIA COMMONS)

Christian scholarship is called to be transformative, even radical. The story of geniuses and messages from the future or from Above are not untrue, exactly. Rather they come from a certain quadrant of the Christian story library to be used at the proper time and to the proper effect, for stories are one of the shapes of wisdom. It seems to me that in our day it is wise to consider other quadrants, if we Christian scholars are to tell the stories we need in the present context. One such story deals with the business of societal and cultural transformation in a world in which we are always already participating in habits of imagining and thinking that are not of our own making, rather, that come to us from a social and cultural world that was from the get-go irreducibly plural in every sense. How does Christian societal and cultural transformation occur? How can it even be imagined and thought? Any proposal will have to acknowledge that we Christian scholars will reflect in our imaginings and thinkings the heterogeneity of the world we would address and serve in the name of Jesus. We must be critically aware of this fact. H. Evan Runner famously captured the necessity of this critical awareness in his wisdom saying: "Synthesis may be what we all practice, but we shouldn't want to." But even our critical awareness will not escape the heterogeneity it is designed to help us stay alert to. How are we then to think about Christianly transformative scholarship in this context?

Here is a story. We use what we've been given by our faith communities, by our families, our DNA, and our educational community and experience to identify what it is in Christian life and faith that moves us. We make that the foundation for our scholarly calling, testing it with our scholarly friends and peers (and not just our fellow Christians), and using it to anchor our own scholarly production so that what emerges tends toward an integral fit. Christian scholarship of this kind will never be once and for all; it will need to be transformed ever again as societal and cultural transformations challenge Christian scholars to new efforts and help them articulate the heart of their witness to Jesus in different terms. Indeed, in this story Christian scholarship is not demonstration; it is witness. And this witness occurs via cultural juxtaposition.

We can get what I mean by cultural juxtaposition by remembering what happened to the city wall of Rome after Christians came to dominate the society and culture. The city wall came to be rebuilt in such a way that the Vatican cemetery was included within its ambit. The new juxtaposition of city wall and cemetery bore witness to a very different relationship between city, human flourishing, and death. The place of the dead was no longer to be banished from the city. Rather, the living city included a place for its citizen dead, for in Christian imagination all human works should cry out in the words of Scripture: "Where O Grave your victory? Where O Death your sting?"

This story illustrates a useful way of understanding Christian scholarly transformation. Were the moves made by Christians in late Antiquity enough to establish a Christian city once and for all? No. And yet, this juxtaposition bore witness to the hope of the Gospel in its own way. We Christian scholars of today can hope to do likewise, as members and in service of the scholarly community as a whole. We do so one image and concept at a time, in response to what lives in our present, out of the resources of our heart, trusting in the Holy Spirit to use it well. What could be better than that? ●

Undergraduate Workshop

From May 16 to 19, ICS is partnering with Scarboro Foreign Missions to host an **Undergraduate Workshop**, where selected participants will have the opportunity to present and discuss their work before peers and receive feedback from ICS Junior and Senior Members. They will also have the opportunity to make connections and "learn the ropes" of the scholarly enterprise at the graduate and/or professional level.

The workshop is a great opportunity for these outstanding undergraduate students, as it will deepen existing lines of research and spark new ones with guidance from budding and established scholars at ICS.

Coming up in the next issue. . . reports on graduations

Kelsey Davies MWS
mentor Doug Blomberg

Cameron Bernard MWS
mentor Bob Sweetman

Héctor Acero Ferrer MA
mentor Ron Kuipers

Ethan van der Leek MA
mentor Nik Ansell

Timothy Skulstad-Brown MA
mentor Ron Kuipers

Jonathon Polce MA
mentor Bob Sweetman

Chris Cuthill PhD - VU
mentor Rebekah Smick

We look forward to celebrating with them at Convocation, May 12! Do come if you can.

Jesus plays the 'dishonest' manager

by Mark Novak

This past fall I was given the opportunity to co-teach some of the parables at my church. While the two other facilitators and I were able to choose which parables we wanted to lead, they implored me to teach the parable of the 'shrewd manager'. Never satisfied with traditional readings, I aimed to see what had perhaps been covered over. The 'shrewd manager' parable (Luke 16:1-15) is a most puzzling parable. On the surface it seems Jesus is describing unrighteous actions as something people should emulate. It's not unusual for Jesus to use deplorable characters in his parables, and it is usually these characters that we are called to emulate. For example, the despised Samaritan cares for the neighbour and so fulfills the law. But the answer to these parables is easy, you might say. Though these characters were misfits, they did the right thing, so emulating their actions is understandable. In the shrewd manager parable, though, the deplorable character is immoral, and yet we are called to emulate him. When the *immoral* actions of a deplorable person are given as positive examples that we are called to emulate, it leaves us feeling uneasy.

The Pharisees have clearly made an idol out of the Torah. *Jesus is spreading grace and mercy to those who need it most: crippled, lame, sinners.*

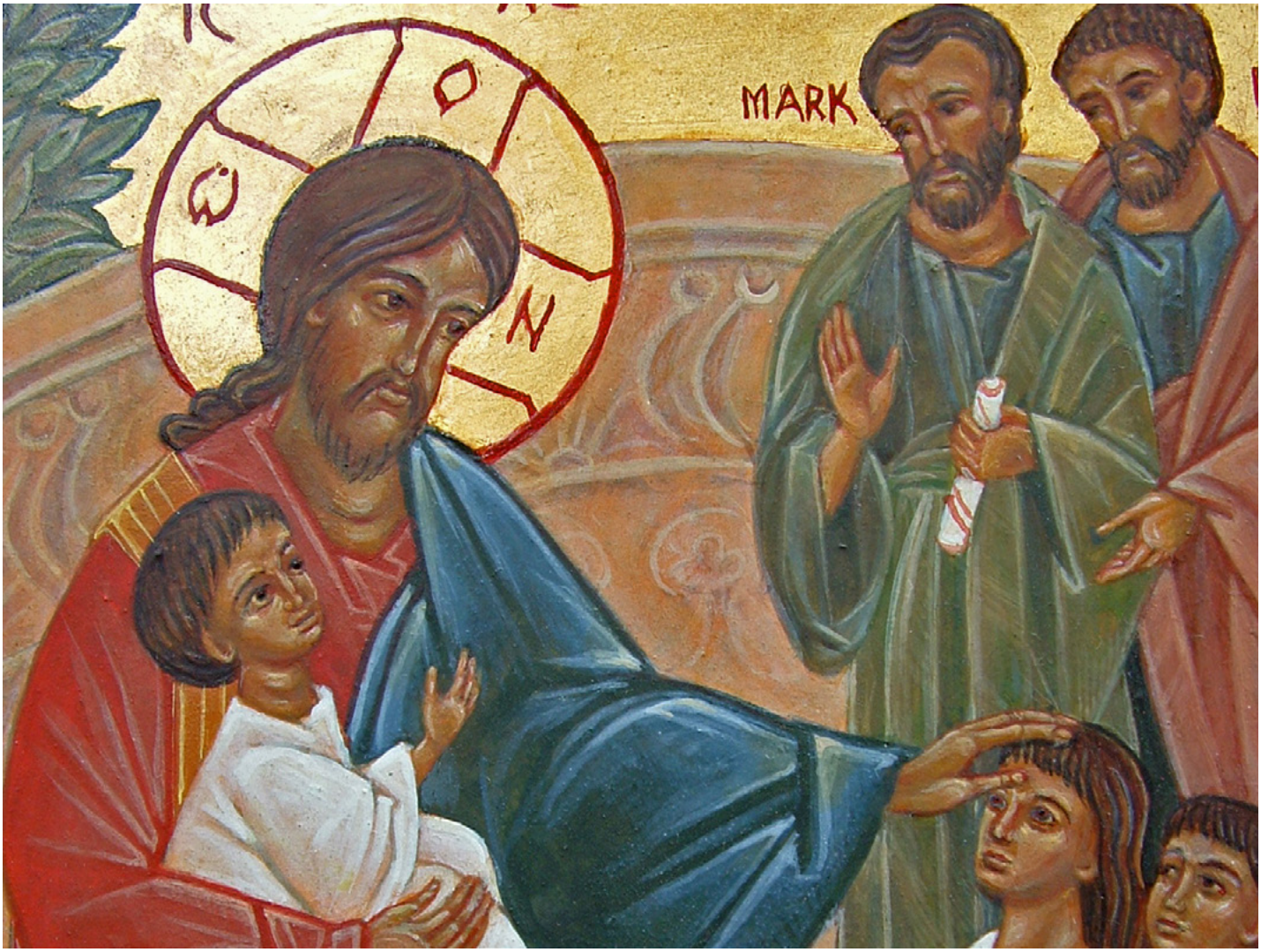
Bypassing the traditional explanation, I am going to dive right into what I think is closer to Jesus' heart. First, some re-translating. Why is "shrewdly" used to translate the Greek *phronimōs*? This is its only occurrence in the New Testament, adding difficulty to the translation. There are cognates of the word, but not this exact word. However, this translation of 'shrewdly' comes out of negatively biased readings of the text that continue to propagate its misreading. It leads to translations, such as the Message, seeing the manager as knowing "how to look after himself" in a selfish manner. Other translations, however, render it "wisely," "sensibly," and "prudently." These are truer and more positive translations of the word, and so we get a more positive reading of the text as a whole.

To come to this reading, we do not have to ditch everything from the traditional interpretations; we just need a few, vital tweaks. The master remains God; however, what are these possessions the steward is in charge of, what are the 'squanderings', and who is reporting on him? Firstly, the manager's guilt is never proven—charges of mishandling are brought against him, but never substantiated. From whom do these allegations come? The Pharisees. We know from the other gospels that they always had a bone to pick with Jesus. But then what are the possessions that they charge Jesus with mishandling? The *Torah*, I believe.

Pastor and NT scholar Dieter Reinstorf argues that all listeners at this time, when they heard 'entrusted possessions', would think of the *Torah*, God's entrusted revelation to them. So if the *Torah* is the possession that is being 'squandered', it makes sense that the Pharisees would bring charges against Jesus. They thought they had the right to these possessions, knew the right way to interpret and give them out, and so wanted to keep, preserve, and protect them. Jesus, they charge, had been loose with these and 'squandering' them away. The Pharisees have clearly made an idol out of the *Torah* and God's revelation to the people. Again, Jesus is never said to be dishonest, but is only accused of this. Further, he is not said to have done this for his own gain, but just to squander the master's belongings.

So what was Jesus' squandering that so irked the Pharisees? The life that comes via God's revelation. Jesus is spreading grace and mercy to those who need it most: crippled, lame, sinners, etc. This is what has the Pharisees so distraught! Jesus is nowhere dishonest in his actions. The use of "dishonest" in v. 8 should be in scare quotes, then, highlighting the fact that he is so-called dishonest. Even in v. 1, a truer rendering from the Greek reads that the manager was accused *as*, *as if*, or *like* squandering. This affirms a reading that Jesus was not actually squandering, but that this was only how his accusers understood it.

Previously in Luke, Jesus is shown to be on a journey to Jerusalem, a journey he is expecting to cut short his ministry. But what does he, like the manager in the parable, do when faced with the prospect of job loss? He does not object to the accusations and plead with the master to reconsider. Rather, he gives out even more possessions! He reduces debts further, freeing people from anything and everything, sharing the revelation of God's grace and redeeming power. 'Squandering' God's prized possessions is good, and so Jesus is called *wise*—not shrewd, conniving, or other negative synonyms—and displays a wisdom that is not of the old age, but of the new age. ●



JESUS BLESSES THE CHILDREN

'Squandering' God's prized possessions is good, and so Jesus is called wise and displays a wisdom that is not of the old age, but of the new age.

A special note of thanks from our students. . .

Perspective can be viewed online at perspective.icscanada.edu

The Junior Members have been thinking a lot lately about what makes ICS so unique, and we've discovered its uniqueness is *ineffable*. It is an experience that is deeply felt, but cannot be readily articulated. It's hard to put a finger on what about our small classes, our location, and our ICS community means so much to each of us. What's obvious though is that the people who populate our community here, and people like you who make up the larger ICS community, give so much of themselves – their gifts, their talents and their prayers – steadfastly year after year to this place. They *are* its lifeblood.

This inexplicable experience both is and creates a feedback loop of generosity: we give of ourselves because something about what's happening at ICS compels us to give, and that, in turn, *makes* ICS a place that gives of itself in witness to God's grace and healing in the world.

Now, the notion of giving can lead to a number of reactions. Cal Seerveld describes meaningful artistry as an act of joyful "gift-giving" that can break open systems of strict economy. Jacques Derrida describes how life-as-Gift can only leave us awash in the wake of an unpayable debt. Part of the Christian hope, though, is in the miracle--and it truly is a *miracle*--of a debtless gift: a gift given out of and for the sake of love and jubilation; for the sake of the ineffable.

A place alive with this kind of gift-giving is itself a gift, and one that, in the larger scheme of things, might not make a lot of sense. But it's a gift for which each of us is deeply grateful, and which each of us strives to share in turn. We are grateful for all you do to ensure that this "gift" continues to give to the world. ●

Happy 50th anniversary to ICS!!!

In October this year, ICS will be celebrating 50 years of ministry in Christian higher education. We look forward to remembering together all that God has done in our midst with our alumni and supporting community in different venues across Canada and the United States.

Stay tuned for more details as they unfold in the months ahead. We are looking for volunteers to help us with the planning and hosting of the events to take place in different cities. Please get in touch with Pat Webb at pwebb@icscanada.edu if you are able to help. Thank you! ●

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