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Institute for Christian Studies

Volume 36, Issue 3, September 2002

*Equipping Christian
leaders around the
world*

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Thirty-five years old

You might be surprised that this fragile infant, with a short life-expectancy, is alive and healthy after 35 years. The Institute for Christian Studies was started in 1967 in a house in mid-town Toronto with only one professor. Hendrik Hart, with a fresh Ph.D. degree from a European university, established ICS's classroom all over Canada.

By **Bob VanderVennen**

Maybe the Dutch immigrants of the 1950s were the only ones who could have pulled this off. They had the religious vision of an academic project that would be Christian from the inside out. They lived out of the convictions of Abraham Kuyper who suggested that there is not a square inch of this world that is not claimed by God as his own. All of life was driven by that vision – education, politics, labour relations, public media – everything was held together with religious sinews. The antithesis was a secular world-view and utterly rejected.

They took those convictions with them when they came to Canada by the boatload and soon found that Canada's universities were not open to their vision. Needing leaders to champion their ideas they made plans to start their own Christian university.

The vision was large. An Educational Creed was written to express the vision, with the educational purpose stated to "develop Scripturally-



(Top) Bob VanderVennen (far right) at the opening of the Institute in 1967. To his left, Calvin Seerveld, and far left Albert Wolters.



(Middle) A Board meeting with Louis Tamminga as Chair in the late 60s.



(Bottom) A typical class at ICS in the new building at 229 College Street during the 80s

directed learning." They ran with the previously unthinkable idea that the study of academic subjects was intrinsically religious – that you don't add Christian ideas and ethics after you'd done your research, but you started academic study and research with Christian ideas because God was creator and sustainer of everything, and only in him was meaning. Many Christians didn't understand that, and university scholars thought it was crazy.

From four men who first spoke that dream out loud the circle grew. An educational Association was born in 1956. In 1959 a summer conference for

(Continued on page 3)



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As we reflect on these words, and as we listen to the testimonies of current students and recent graduates, we realize that the vision of the founding generation is still vital in the life of ICS today. For that, too, we give thanks.

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A living vision

Thirty-five years ago a fledgling Institute for Christian Studies opened the doors of 141 Lyndhurst Avenue in Toronto to graduate students interested in pursuing integral Christian learning.

By some measures, 35 years represent a generation in the life of an institution. And indeed, within two years the entire first generation of ICS faculty will have retired. This anniversary, then, marks a good occasion to reflect on and celebrate a generation in the life of ICS.

While the overarching vision of the Association which established the Institute in 1967 was the development of a Christian university, the founders made a deliberate choice not to launch a full-fledged institution with wide-ranging programs. Already in 1965 the governing board adopted a strategy that called for the establishment of a small “Centre for sustained scholarly analysis, for student guidance..., for mutual discussion... translation and original publication.”

The aim was to assemble a relatively small team of scholars to work with qualified graduate students on underlying, direction-setting issues in the development of “scripturally directed scholarship.” Establishing this centre and assembling a team of committed scholars, the founders believed, was strategic for the long-term development of Christian learning, and for the formation for a generation of academic leaders.

As we look back over our 35-year history, it is clear that God has richly blessed the strategic vision of the founders. This vision has remained remarkable consistent through the years, and today we can say with confidence and thanksgiving that it has been, and continues to be, realized in the life of ICS. The Institute has developed into a respected graduate school with recognized strength in philosophy and the foundations of a variety of academic disciplines. Our degree-granting authority is firmly established in provincial legislation, and is consistent with the nature of our programs. Our partnership with the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam enables us to offer a program of study leading to the most advanced academic degree, an essential credential for people pursuing an academic calling. Our professors are cross-appointed to the advanced degree faculty of the Toronto School of Theology at the University of Toronto, and both our faculty and students have ready access to the University’s resources. ICS is on the academic map, both literally (the official university of Toronto campus map) and figuratively.

Over the years, ICS has reaped a rich harvest of scholarship. ICS faculty members have published dozens of books and hundreds of articles. ICS-related books are featured prominently in Christian college bookstores as course texts and scholarly resources. ICS graduates and alumni are in positions of leadership on every inhabited continent, and interest in ICS programs is growing every year. All this is evidence that the vision of our founders was not only strategic and suited to the times, but that it has flourished under the grace of God. Praise God for these blessings!

One measure of the vitality of a vision is whether it has staying power through the generations. The founders of the Institute believed strongly that all

learning is infused with convictions and outlooks rooted in commitments held in faith. Because they were also convinced that universities play a key role in expressing and shaping the spirit of our culture, they regarded the development of a Christian graduate school not as a luxury but as a basic necessity. These convictions are echoed in the institutional plan adopted in 2001, which states that our mission is “to provide accessible graduate education that addresses the spiritual foundations of learning and equips Christians around the world to be effective leaders in the academic arena and in other areas of society.” As we reflect on these words, and as we listen to the testimonies of current students and recent graduates, we realize that the vision of the founding generation is still vital in the life of ICS today. For that, too, we give thanks.

At least one other aspect of the life of ICS deserves special mention as we look back over the years: our financial blessings. True, the Institute has not developed a reputation for affluence! On the contrary, we have often faced financial shortages and our financial managers have needed excellent juggling skills. Administrative staff and faculty have generally been underpaid. But consider these facts. After 35 years, ICS has a balanced budget and no long-term debt! In the world of higher education, especially at the graduate level, that is nothing short of a miracle. This is a testimony to the vision and generosity of our supporting community. ICS now needs to work on developing longer-term financial stability. But the fact that we can approach this task from a debt-free position is a reason for much thanksgiving.

Our 35-year story is full of signs of God’s faithful care. Join us in praise and thanks for the way God has blessed the vision of our founders through a generation of service.


Harry Fernhout

ICS TO CO-SPONSOR CONFERENCE CELEBRATING THE LEGACY OF H. EVAN RUNNER

Throughout his lengthy teaching career at Calvin College, H. Evan Runner was a dynamic advocate of a Christian worldview and its implications for the study of philosophy and various other fields, as well as its implications for Christian social engagement. Runner’s impact was by no means limited to Calvin College. He was instrumental in founding of the Institute for Christian Studies in 1967 and was the teacher of most of the first generation of ICS faculty members. Beyond Calvin College and ICS, Runner’s ideas and emphases also played a formative role in the development of Dordt College, Trinity Christian College, The King’s University College and Redeemer University College. Individual scholars in a wide variety of fields also regard Runner as a very influential teacher.

ICS will co-sponsor a two-day academic conference with these institutions to explore and celebrate the academic legacy of Dr. H. Evan Runner, who passed away in March of this year. The conference runs from Friday October 4 to Saturday October 5 at Redeemer University College in Ancaster Ontario.

The conference will open with an overview of



Runner’s academic legacy led by **Albert Wolters** (Redeemer University College) and will close with **Robert Sweetman** of ICS (H. Evan Runner Chair in the History of Philosophy) who will give with an overview of the conference presentations and a prognosis for the future.

Between plenaries, concurrent sessions will address Runner’s impact and legacy in particular areas of study or concern. These “conversational” presentations will leave time for discussion.

To register for the conference or for more information: Kelli Baker (registrar) at ICS 416-979-2331 ext 234. You can also access additional information and a registration form online. www.icscanada.edu

CONFERENCE TOPICS
INCLUDE:

Runner and Vollenhoven
John Kok (Dordt College, IA)

Runner and the Problem-Historical Approach
Tony Tol (Free University, Amsterdam)

Runner’s Implications for Issues in Theology
John Vander Stelt (Dordt)

Runner’s Legacy for Social/Political Theory and Action
James Skillen (Center for Public Justice, D.C.)

Runner’s Legacy for the Natural Sciences
Uko Zylstra (Calvin College, MI)

Runner’s Legacy for Social Philosophy
Brad Breems (Trinity Christian College, IL)

Runner’s Legacy for Christian Philosophy
Hendrik Hart (Institute for Christian Studies, ON)

Runner’s Legacy for Understanding History
Harry Groenewold (The Kings University College, AB)

Runner’s Impact Through the Groen Club
Harry Van Dyke (Redeemer University College, ON)

Runner’s Legacy for Education
Harry Fernhout (ICS)

On the Friday night of the conference, representatives from various Christian institutions, including the CLAC, CPJ the Christian Teachers’ Association and the CRC clergy, will pay tribute to Runner and the impact of his work in the wider Christian community.

Fall
courses

WORLDVIEW COURSES

Worldview Foundations
Gideon Strauss
Thursday, 7:00 pm

Faith, Justice and Public Policy
Jonathan Chaplin
Wednesday, 7:00 pm

Crossings: Post-Modernisms and Christianity
Ron Kuipers
Monday, 7:00 pm

CORE COURSES

Philosophical Foundations
Lambert Zuidervaart
Monday, 9:30 am

Philosophizing Between Vogues and Traditions: Nature, Supernature and Miracles in the Philosophy of Thomas Aquinas
Bob Sweetman
Tuesday, 9:30 am

Philosophical Anthropology: Twentieth Century Theories of Intersubjectivity
Jim Olthuis
Tuesday, 1:30 pm

Christianity, Democracy and Democratisation: Global Perspectives
Jonathan Chaplin
Wednesday, 9:30 am

Breakthroughs and Barriers in Ecumenical Dialogue
George Vandervelde
Wednesday, 9:00 am

Postmodern Challenges to the Biblical Text
Sylvia Keesmaat
Wednesday, 1:30 pm

Radical Orthodoxy II
George Vandervelde, Jim Olthuis, Bob Sweetman, Lambert Zuidervaart
Thursday, 9:30 am

Biblical Foundations
Sylvia Keesmaat
Thursday, 1:30 pm

Theories of Language and Interpretation
Lambert Zuidervaart
Friday, 9:30 am



Jonathan Chaplin organized and co-chaired a public dialogue on “Religion, Liberalism and Public Reason”, held at ICS on June 15 (linked to the Summer Seminar). The main speakers at this event were Professors Paul Weithman (University of Notre Dame) and Nicholas Wolterstorff (Yale University). The event was sponsored by The Pew Charitable Trusts. With a view to a course on Christianity and democracy he is teaching in Fall 2002, he attended a conference in Washington, D.C from June 28-30 on “The Bible and the Ballot Box: Evangelical Faith and Third-World Democracy”, organized by INFEMIT (the International Fellowship of Evangelical Mission Theologians). He Co-taught (with Prof Jeanne Hefferman from Pepperdine University), a week of classes on Christian political thought for the ‘Civitas Program’, organized by the Center for Public Justice in Wash, DC. The program offers an annual five-week summer course on faith and politics for doctoral candidates in political science.

Sylvia Keesmaat presented a workshop entitled “The Song of Mary and a Liberated Imagination” at the Woodsong Arts and Music Festival in Orcas Island, WA in July, as well as leading a



discussion on “Reading the Bible” at the same event.



Calvin Seerveld (emeritus) has a letter to young artists requested by and included in a new book by Michael Card, *Scribbling in the Sand, Christ and Creativity* (InterVarsity Press, 2002). He has a review in *Christian Scholar's Review* (31:4, 2002) of Frank Burch Brown's book on *Good Taste, Bad Taste, and Christian Taste: Aesthetics in Religious Life* (Oxford University Press).

New books

The Bible and the task of teaching

By David Smith and John Shortt

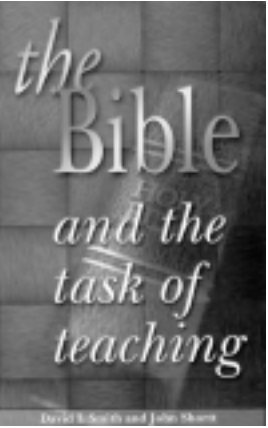
This innovative new resource from The Stapleford Centre is the result of a three year research project by ICS alumnus and Calvin College Professor **David Smith** and **John Shortt** of the European Educators' Christian Association (EurECA). *The Bible and the Task of Teaching* is written for the non-specialist, and for those who wish the Bible to shape their educational thinking and practice.

There is a long history of interaction between the Bible and the task of teaching in churches, homes, colleges and school classrooms. The idea that the teacher's task can be tackled in a Christian way, or, more specifically, in a biblical way, has been both championed and attacked, ridiculed and defended. Those on both sides of the argument have grappled with the question of how a text from another time and culture, a text, moreover, which does not directly discuss teaching techniques, could have anything authoritative to say about teaching and learning.

The Bible and the Task of Teaching takes a fresh look at this question, and points the way to a range of answers. Rather than offering a single model, the authors present a rich tapestry of ways of tracing the connections between scripture and the task of teaching, whatever the context.

Both scholarly and practical, this unique study explores the relevance of beliefs, virtues, personal and cultural stories, images and metaphors and canonical genres to the ways in which we understand and carry out the task of teaching. In doing so, it avoids oversimplifying either the multifaceted calling to teach or the richness of the biblical text, and sheds fresh light on both. With concrete examples drawn from many areas of teaching, it points the way forward to a more fruitful interaction between biblical vision and the everyday work of teaching.

The Bible and the Task of Teaching is essential reading for anyone engaged in teaching, whatever the context or level, who wishes to understand what the Bible might have to contribute to their task.



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A vision as grand as Runner's makes bold demands upon the Spirit's labour. It also asks that the community of faith that embraces the vision to commit to a multi-generational project. Runner's voice began the project; the many institutions he inspired will ensure that the project continues across the generations.

//
Robert Sweetman
H. Evan Runner Chair in the History of Philosophy, ICS



The Institute Board of Trustees shown in 1967 at the opening of ICS. From left to right (standing), M. Koole, L. Tamminga, G. Vandezande, J. DeKoning, P. Jonker, C. Seerveld and M. VanderMeulen. (Seated) J. Jooze, A. Venema and M. DeVries.

THIRTY-FIVE YEARS OLD
(Continued from page 1)

students brought a Dutch professor, an American and a Canadian to lecture. There was a new conference each summer, and the lectures were printed in books. These conferences then spread to different parts of Canada and even the United States, and continue to this day. The books were read all over the world. Student clubs were formed throughout Canada, and supporting local chapters were set up everywhere. But they were always surrounded by controversy. The immigrants were mostly young, feisty and strong-willed. They were trying to do something that seemed altogether new in North America, something without established steps to follow.

An early controversy came with the decision to accept Dooyeweerdian philosophy as a tool for academic development, and to accept **H. Evan Runner's** vision as the engine for the movement. Then it was the 1970 publication of the book *Out of Concern for the Church*, which rattled church windows and fit well with the popular counterculture speech of **C.T. McIntire**: “The Forgotten Art of World Shaking.”

In 1967 the “university” started with its one professor, emulating Kuyper's founding of Amsterdam's Free University in 1880. You need to start small if you are poor and don't have money from the government, church or wealthy philanthropist behind you. But they knew that God grows great trees from small acorns.

In 1968 **James Olthuis** and **Bernard Zylstra** joined Hart, and for a while the Institute grew by one new professor a year. In the early days, there was no accreditation and no degrees, so professors and students were free to do what they wanted. It was a glorious and idealistic time, but before long students wondered about the bread and butter value of these life-enriching studies. Accreditation could come only by connecting the Institute to a university as an affiliated college, or by a charter enacted by the



scholarly conferences, and their academic books brought acclaim. What seemed amazing was that very early the word about the Association and the Institute spread worldwide. From Australia, Lebanon, Cyprus and Japan came students in the early years. In fact, the Institute has always had a high percentage of overseas students. Institute books were read with enthusiasm all over the world, and Christian study centres were set up using our materials in places like Australia, New Zealand, Ireland and England.

The Institute has always been in the precarious position of needing widespread public support while at the same time, as an institution of higher education, challenging its public to reform its thought and action in more scripturally-directed ways. Over the years disagreements over strongly held views developed among the Institute professors, and some views of such professors as Hart, Olthuis and De Graaff gave rise to considerable antagonism in the general public. Unsung heroes are the people who raised money and paid the bills over the years. A wonderful move in 1972 was buying the five-story building at 229 College Street, Toronto, with the help of generous donations.

In 1975 **Peter Steen** showed the Institute how to teach its basic Christian philosophy course on

university campuses. Started by **Tom Malcolm** and followed by **Brian Walsh** and others, Institute graduate students for many years taught the Institute's basic courses at several universities on a noncredit basis, usually as part of the ministry of Intervarsity Christian Fellowship. Services to university chaplains and distribution of academic papers and books prepared by the Institute were part of a wide-ranging Educational Services program. When the Institute received its Charter in 1983 Bernard Zylstra became president. He resigned in 1985 and

(Continued on page 4)



Top to bottom: Herman Dooyeweerd. J.T.H. Vollenhoven and H. Evan Runner

THIRTY-FIVE YEARS OLD
(Continued from page 3)

Clifford Pitt accepted the position. Pitt’s presidency, accompanied by **Ross Mortimer** as vice-president, helped change the school to a more professional and Canadian institution. Pitt helped the reformational community supporters feel good about their Institute, but in spite of his best efforts he was not highly successful in gaining support outside the traditional constituency. When Pitt retired in 1989, Harry Fernhout became president. In his quiet, no-nonsense way he brought peace and a vision for ministry that has permitted ICS to focus on the teaching, research and publishing that is its mandate.

Over the years the Institute has had a profound effect on the reformational Christian community. Its churches and its Christian schools are much different today than they would have been without the Institute. ICS alumni and supporters took up key positions in Christian colleges, in Christian schools and pulpits and professions. So the Institute has indeed provided the leadership the founders hoped for, with the bonus that its vision for scripturally-directed learning has now spread to many parts of the world.

Today, building on the original zeal and convictions of our founders, ICS vigorously affirms a commitment to the integration of faith and life. The agreement ICS signed in 1999 with the Toronto School of Theology (TST, the consortium of theological schools on the campus of the University of Toronto) gives its students full access to the courses and faculty of all seven other schools; and TST students may now come to ICS to take courses towards their programs. This mutually beneficial relationship gives ICS a structural link with a large and respected institution, and enhances its recognition on the academic map.

Looking forward to the next 35 years, ICS has recently launched a capital campaign, reGeneration, to provide a stable base for making the most of its present opportunities by investing in future students and reaching out to a global audience through new media and other forms of communication. Today a generation of new students, new faculty, and burgeoning opportunities which literally span the globe are testimonies to the original vision of those who took a step of faith 35 years ago.

VIDEOS FOR SALE

The Breath of God: Calvin Seerveld and the Art of Bible Translation.

Price: \$19.00

A performance of the complete Song of Songs. Translation by Calvin Seerveld.

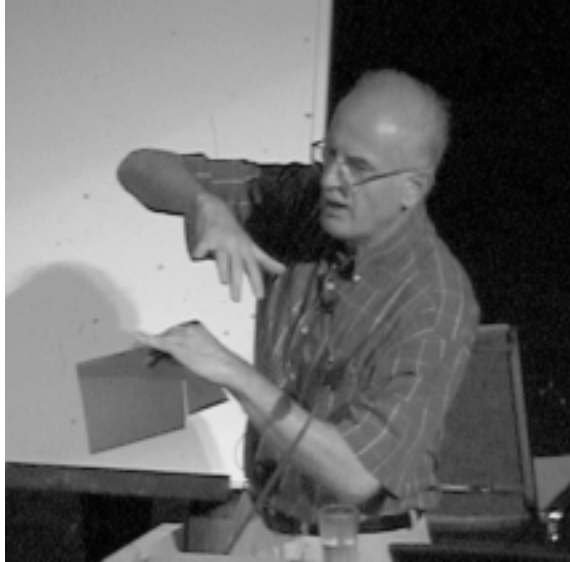
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ICS ONTARIO AND ALBERTA
FAMILY CONFERENCES 2002

Christ has given us a ministry
of reconciliation ...
so we are ambassadors for Christ

Does September 11 change things for Jesus’ ambassadors of reconciliation? How do we answer our society’s new questions about war and peace, about media violence and family nurture? Does September 11 suggest that it’s time for a new look at interfaith dialogue or ecumenical relations? And what about reconciliation with Native



George Vandervelde at the OSC

peoples, people of colour, and Jewish community?

This year’s Annual ICS Summer Conferences, both in Alberta and Ontario, “Ambassadors of Reconciliation” explored these and other timely questions. The Ontario conference ran August 16 – 18 at Redeemer University College, Ancaster, and was co-hosted this year by The Banner, the official publication of the Christian Reformed Church. For the 44th time, this annual conference featured a weekend of social interaction, keynote speakers, workshops and entertainment.

In the first keynote of the weekend, **John Suk**, editor of *The Banner*, explored the subject of “Reconciliation and Contemporary Culture”. Asking why our culture craves bigger than life themes and heroes of the sort we find in everything from the “Left Behind” series of books to the “Lord of the Rings” and “Harry Potter” phenomena, Suk suggested imaginative Biblical resources for the construction of a Christian cultural response which upholds “reconciliation” with our culture as a primary concern. Arguing that we live in a “secondary oral” culture – a largely “conservative” culture that has been co-opted by the dominant structures to “go along for the ride”, Suk suggested some possible strategies for Christians that included the need to be more literate, to access alternative points of view, to understand the importance of pulpit sermons in the light of our culture’s secondary oral skills, and to make our lives and presentations full of beauty and aesthetic delight. Suk also gave the Sunday morning sermon – an extended allegory which

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Suk suggested some possible strategies for Christians that included the need to be more literate, to access alternative points of view, to understand the importance of pulpit sermons in the light of our culture’s secondary oral skills, and to make our lives and presentations full of beauty and aesthetic delight.

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reGeneration!
The Campaign for ICS

In March 2002, ICS launched its capital campaign to raise 5 million dollars. To date, *reGeneration! The Campaign for ICS*, has raised \$1,163,460. During the past months as fundraising efforts continued, much of the campaign’s laying of groundwork included volunteer recruitment for the campaign. Recruitment efforts by the campaign’s division chairs has resulted in the commitments of more than 60 volunteers. As autumn approaches these volunteers will begin their work across the country and in the United States raising gifts from individuals. This positive response of participation has provided a great sense of excitement and hope for the Institute for Christian Studies.

Campaign Co-chairs:
Dr. John B. Hulst
President Emeritus, Dordt College, Sioux Center IA

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U.S. Division Chair:
Dr. John B. Hulst
President Emeritus, Dordt College, Sioux Center IA

Student/Alumni
focus

Janet Wesselius (M.Phil.F. 1991; Ph.D. [ICS/Vrije], 2001) will begin a contract sessional position for the coming year at the University of Alberta in the Women’s Studies Department teaching Feminist Epistemology, Philosophy of Science, and Feminist Theory.

ALUMNI ALERT!
If you are an ICS alumna/us, or have taken a number of courses at ICS, we’d like to hear from you! In future issues of *Perspective*, we will be dedicating a column to Alumni achievements. Please let us know about your noteworthy accomplishments.

Send information to:
Lisa Chisolm-Smith,
Volunteer Alumni Coordinator
(M.Phil.F., 1995)
alumni@icscanada.edu.

ICS hosts seminar
with Calvin College
on religion and
toleration

By **Sam Gasanov**, M.Phil.F. student in Political Theory

This June (2002) ICS continued the trend of hosting a bi-annual graduate seminar with Calvin College’s Philosophy Department. The theme of this year was well captured in the seminar title: “Religion and Other Crimes Against Civility: Dilemmas of Toleration in a Liberal Democracy”. The seminar, co-taught by Dr. **Jonathan Chaplin** (ICS) and Dr. **David Hoekema** (Calvin College), also included a day-long symposium led by Dr. **Paul Weithman**, professor of political philosophy at University of Notre Dame, and Dr. **Nicholas Wolterstorff**, a professor emeritus at Yale University. The seminar addressed the fiercely contested place of religion in modern liberal democracies, and asked whether religion can maintain a public presence without proving to be divisive and, hence, thwarting the hard-won political achievement of liberal civility. If religion is privatized, the seminar challenged, does that not unduly restrain those religious communities that claim that their religious convictions extend beyond the private sphere into the public?

The salience of these issues can hardly be over-emphasized. ‘9-11’ has and will for some time continue to powerfully remind us of the need for peaceful political negotiation of our fundamental differences. In the West, we have largely forgotten the horrors of the 30-years war which in 17th century tore both Christendom and Europe apart. We have also become accustomed to ways in which our religious convictions are relatively smoothly accommodated within liberal democracies. This seminar helped contextualize current world events and provide insight into the place of religion in our contemporary world.

//
Existential philosophy was attractive ... because at least it said that not everything is well and whole-some in the West. Nevertheless, it didn’t seem to have a way of providing structural critique of society. ... most of the other stuff just seemed like it was outdated and just didn’t seemed to be in touch with where things were at. Reformational philosophy gave me a real sense of an alternative ... way to think about the issues and understand the structural connections.

Lambert Zuidervaart

Two distinguished philosophers dialogue at ICS

By Luke Moord, M.Phil.F. student in Philosophical Theology

In a symposium held on June 15, entitled, “Religion, Liberalism, and Public Reason,” two distinguished Christian philosophers, **Paul Weithman**, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Notre Dame and **Nicholas Wolterstorff**, Professor Emeritus of the Philosophy of Religion at Yale University, offered an impressive and strikingly informative dialogue over current issues relating religious belief and political debate within pluralistic democracy. The event was held in conjunction with a graduate course offered by the ICS (June 6-12) entitled “Religion and Other Crimes Against Civility: Dilemmas of Toleration in a Liberal Democracy.” The course was co-led by **Jonathan Chaplin**, Senior member in Political Theory and **David Hoekema**, Professor of Philosophy at Calvin College. Both, as well, took part in the panel discussion at the close of the symposium.

The event, open to the public, began over coffee as upwards of 75 attendees, made their way into the Institute. Jonathan Chaplin opened the event by introducing the two speakers, and by giving a brief context to the current debate in philosophical political theory on justifying our reasons in public discourse.

Weithman, who favors a modified Rawlsian position (what has been called the exclusivist position), offered the first lecture entitled, “John Rawl’s Idea of Public Reason,” explaining “how what is right about the [Rawlsian] view might be taken on by believers.” While recognizing some trouble spots in the Rawlsian viewpoint, Weithman insisted that Rawls is heading in the right direction in asking citizens to, as a ground rule, restrict the type of language one brings to a debate. Essentially, Weithman, in the Rawlsian spirit, was advocating that we be willing to translate our beliefs into a language others can hear as freestanding, public reasons.

In his lecture, entitled, “Religious Reasons, Liberal Theory, and Coercion,” Wolterstorff gave a sharp critique of the “exclusivist” position shared by Rawls and others. “It’s obscure to me,” said Wolterstorff, “why liberal theorists hold that there must be such a freestanding neutral source of principles for the workings of liberal democracy; and it’s even more obscure to me why many of them hold that, when it comes to specific pieces of coercive legislation, the coercion is justified only if our reason for all thinking it’s a good thing is, or would be, a one for all reason.”

In concluding, Wolterstorff advocated that the entire debate over “justifying coercion” be redirected. The reason being that the direction pursued by the exclusivist position wrongly assumes that freestanding reasons, as some kind of “homogeneous human nature,” are actually a possibility. In his closing comments Wolterstorff stated, “What people do believe is going to have to count for more; what they would believe, for less.”

Going into the early evening the dialogue was opened up with a panel discussion which included Professors Weithman, Wolterstorff and Hoekema – monitored by Chaplin. Those in attendance were invited into the discussion with questions and comments. In all, the event was quite a telling and intriguing introduction of, and interaction with, the current trends and conversations in philosophical political theory.



(Top) Nicholas Wolterstorff, Professor Emeritus of the Philosophy of Religion at Yale University.
(Above) Paul Weithman, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Notre Dame.

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calendar of events

RUNNER CONFERENCE
ICS will co-sponsor a conference on the legacy of H. Evan Runner on October 4-5 at Redeemer University College. The conference will include a public event on Friday evening, October 4 at 7:30 pm, to remember and celebrate Runner’s remarkable contribution to the wider Christian community. This free event will include a meditation by Calvin Seerveld and tributes from representatives of several organizations such as the Christian Labour Association of Canada (CLAC), Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ); the Christian Teachers’ Association (OCSTA); and the Christian Reformed Church clergy.

ANNUAL CONVOCATION
THE INSTITUTE FOR CHRISTIAN STUDIES invites you to celebrate the graduation of Junior Members who have successfully completed their Master’s and Ph.D. programs and to celebrate our 35th Anniversary on Friday November 15, 2002 at 8:00 pm. Location: Knox College, 59 St. George Street, Toronto.

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expounded on 2 Corinthians 5 through the fantasy world and characters of J.R.R Tolkein’s *Middle Earth*.

In the second keynote talk, **George Vandervelde**, ICS Senior Member in Systematic Theology, argued that the unity of the church is not an extra but its very heartbeat and its mission. Arguing against the “lowest common denominator” view of ecumenical relations in which unity is perceived as homogeneity and like-mindedness, George emphasized the importance of a Christo-centric ecumenicism. This unity, he emphasized, will display the ragged edges of diversity – a unity that is forged by costly reconciliation. Beginning with a scriptural justification for church unity, Vandervelde concluded the talk by suggesting practical steps for encouraging everyday ecumenism with other churches and faith communities.

The conference theme was further supported by 13 workshops exploring the many facets of our call to be



Christ’s ambassadors of reconciliation. **Jennifer Parker**, former contributing editor to *The Banner*, provided a Christian perspective on responding to cinematic depictions of violence; **Lou Tamminga**, former CRC denominational Director of PastorChurch Relationship, examined broken relationships within our churches; **Jim Olthuis**, therapist and ICS professor, looked at broken personal relationships from a therapeutic perspective; **Bill Chu**, founder of Canadians For Reconciliation, shared personal stories of his work with the Aboriginal

community in Vancouver; **Christiana deGroot** of Calvin College examined gender relationships; **John Wood** of King’s University College looked at our relationship with the environment; and **Hugh Cook** of Redeemer College asked what the role of the arts should be to an event like 9/11. Other workshops included a session on relationships with the French and First Nations peoples in Canada by **Michael la Fleur**, Executive Director of “Transformation Prayer Ministries”; an exploration of race-related issues in the context of churches, such as the CRC, in which ethnicity traditionally contributes to identity, by CRC Director of Black and Urban Ministry **Robert Price**; a hands-on look at reconciliation as a theme for creative movement in worship by dancer **Belma Vardy**; a session looking at the “reconciliation” theme in scripture by Pastor **Michael Blaire**; an examination of reconciliation amongst religious traditions

by **Jim Payton** of Redeemer College; and a session on teaching justice and reconciliation to children by **Carol Veldman Rudie**. On Saturday afternoon, conference attendees engaged panelists **Jonathon Chaplin** (ICS), **David Koyzis** and **Timothy Epp** (both from Redeemer College) on the subject of “just war” in the shadow of Sept. 11.

In addition to these lectures and workshops the conference was further enhanced by the strong worship leadership of **Colleen Reinders** and **Grace Moes**; a Children’s Program led by **Jocelyn Paas** and **Lee-Anne Dryfhout**; and a Teen Program led by **Ken Dryfhout**. Entertainment included a poetry-photo-graphy performance by ICS alumnus **Hamish Robertson**, a Piano Concert by **Mark Chiang**, a film discussion led by ICS alumna **Fran Wong**, and a concert by folk-musician **Glen Soderholm** and band.

The Alberta Family Conference was once again held in Deer Valley Meadows, Alberta, and ran from August 2-5. John Suk was also the featured keynote

speaker at this conference based on the “Ambassadors of Reconciliation” theme as well. In addition to Suk’s keynotes, which were an extended two-part version of the talk which he delivered at the Ontario Summer Conference, the theme was explored in 3 workshop sessions. **Mel Huizinga**, a mediation expert, spoke on mediation as a healing alternative; **Jeffrey Dudiak**, ICS alumnus and professor of Philosophy at King’s College presented some alternatives for reforming the prison system, and **Harry Van Belle**, emeritus professor of Psychology at King’s spoke on reconciliation within families. ICS President Harry Fernhout delivered the Sunday morning message, and the worship team from St. Albert’s Christian Reformed Church led conferees in praising God in music.

We look forward to next year’s Alberta and Ontario ICS conferences where we will meet again to be challenged with new ideas from a Christian perspective, and celebrate God’s faithfulness to ICS and its supporters.

An interview with Lambert Zuidervaat

Moord: *How did you first encounter reformed philosophy – what were its beginning influences on your life?*

Zuidervaat: I grew up in the reformed environment, was born in the Christian Reformed Church, went to Christian schools in the Calvinist day school movement from grade one to grade twelve, and had lots of catechism in reformed theology – so I was very much in the environment of reformed thought in a very general way. But I didn’t get exposed to reformed philosophy as philosophy proper until I went to Dordt College. And the first true exposure to that was when I took my first course in philosophy with John Vandyke at Dordt, and suddenly this whole world opened up to me and a new understanding of the tradition I grew up in, and also a new sense of why certain questions I’d been puzzling over for a long time as an adolescent were worth puzzling over in a more sophisticated way as a philosopher. So that’s how I really got into philosophy, by way of going to a reformed college where the primary course in philosophy, the intro course, the philosophy that everyone had to take, was being taught by someone who was a follower of Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven.

Moord: *What features of the reformed tradition do you most value – that is, what is it about the reformed tradition that has given you access in your scholarly task and aided in your personal development as a scholar?*

Zuidervaat: I think the first thing that struck me when I was studying at Dordt was that reformational philosophy actually saw all of culture and society and human life as intrinsically worthwhile, intrinsically good, although broken and distorted by the fall, needing repair and so on, yet, intrinsically good and worth giving attention to and worth being involved in. I had been trained significantly in music as a classical musician – very involved in that as a kid and teenager. When I went to Dordt I thought that I wanted to get involved full time in the Lord’s work so I was going to become “pre-sem” and be a minister. But when I started taking philosophy I realized that I didn’t have to become a church worker in order to be significantly involved in God’s work – I could just as well be in music, or philosophy, or something else. And so I suddenly switched my orientation. So that was a very important breakthrough for me, personally as well as intellectually. Then beyond that I found that reformational philosophy gave me a way of sorting out some of the major problem areas in society and culture, it gave me way of thinking about the necessity of social change, but also the need for principles for guiding and understanding social change. I was a college student in the sixties and seventies – a time of great upheaval in American society where I

On July 1st Dr. Lambert Zuidervaat took over the post of Systematic Philosophy held by Henk Hart for nearly 35 years. Zuidervaat has a proven record as an academic, a teacher and an administrator in Canada and the United States. He is a highly published scholar, and has worked in the Philosophy Department at Calvin College in Grand Rapids for over 20 years. Recently, ICS student Luke Moord sat down with him to talk about the experience he will bring to this position and his vision for working at ICS.



“...the most important insight ... has always been the notion of ‘sphere of sovereignty’ or ‘structural pluralism’. ... it goes back to Kuyper, and Kuyper gets it from thinkers and social activist and church leaders.



was – I was against the Vietnam War and was very much apart of that protest movement. But I had a sense that there were some other sets of issues beyond the war that needed to be addressed – structural issues having to do with how society was set up. I found that reformational philosophy gave me a way of thinking about those issues, structural issues, and it didn’t seem to be something that other strands of thought were very good at, or were actually giving orientation for. Existential philosophy was attractive to me at the time because at least it said that not everything is well and wholesome in the West. Nevertheless, it didn’t seem to have a way of providing structural critique of society. The dominant Anglo-American philosophy seemed always to be working on small problems and never getting at the big issues, and beyond those camps of philosophy, which were really the two major camps of philosophy when I was a student – most of the other stuff just seemed like it was outdated and just didn’t seemed to be in touch with where things were at. Reformational philosophy gave me a real sense of an alternative – an alternative way to think about the issues and understand the structural connections. And probably the most important insight in that line has always been the notion of ‘sphere of sovereignty’ or ‘structural pluralism’. That’s of course more than a philosophical notion, but it goes back to Kuyper, and Kuyper gets it from thinkers and social activist and church leaders. But the way it’s worked out in Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd I think has tremendous reach, and tremendous scope, and could be used flexibly. People like Goudzwaard I think have used it flexibly in interesting ways. And so those are things that got me really excited.

The other thing that got me excited was the sense in reformational philosophy that knowledge is much broader than what the logicians and standard philosophers had made it out to be. So then, in my case, where I was very much interested in the arts, music, and visual arts, literature and so on – these areas of activity could also be seen as areas in which we come to know things that are important to us, even if they don’t measure up to the standards of science or empirical observational knowledge. That actually turned into a major theme for me in my subsequent work.

Moord: *Are there any aspects of reformed thinking that you’ve found inadequate in comparison to other traditional models of philosophy and/or theology, where those other traditions have helped you in your thinking?*

Zuidervaat: Yes, within the Christian tradition I’ve drawn quite a bit from some strands of Catholic thought, particularly Liberation Theology because it

seems to put its finger on the ways people are oppressed and are suffering under current conditions – ways that are much more direct and powerful than a lot of reformational thought has been able to do. I’ve also drawn on some strands of Anabaptist thought, particularly as it’s worked out in the Mennonite tradition. *The Politics of Jesus* by John Howard Yoder was a book that I read carefully and have taught a couple of times. I found that it was refreshing because it got me beyond questions of structural critique and structural relationships to questions of community life and how we try as a community to provide an alternative. Outside of the Christian tradition proper I’ve devoted a good deal of my professional life to studying and reflecting on and interacting with Critical Theory – particularly the first generation of the Frankfurt School, and particularly Adorno. The first generation of that school was harshly critical of the West. Prophetically they were way ahead of their time. And that, when I first was working on it, shook me up. But it also gave me new things to work with in terms of the degree of the situation and I’m still using a lot of that impetus. Then the second generation, Habermas in particular, provided me with all kinds of insights and things to work with – particularly how Habermas works with language and communicative action as a way to understanding how human relationships are built, and how all kinds of problems with knowledge theory and social theory can be addressed. So I’ve actually been able to use some of that in my own systematic work.

Moord: *This goes along with what you’ve already stated, but throughout your career has there been a running thread of interest lining your philosophical thoughts and endeavors? Do you see yourself being guided by a certain interest, or have your pursuits been more explorative?*

Zuidervaat: I think I’ve been both. I tend to pursue what I find really interesting in various major philosophers, and work out my ideas in conjunction with them and dialogue with those major philosophers – in that sense it’s explorative. But on the other hand I have a pretty strong sense of what the key issues are for me to work at and now, because I’m bringing two books to completion, I know very well what I’m going to work on for the next dozen years. One book I just finished in the last couple of weeks is on the notion of truth and art, and the second one is on the political and economic functions of art in society. The first book is really a window into the general theory of truth, which is a central theme of Western philosophy, and very contested, and that’s one of the things I’ll be working on for the next twelve or thirteen years. The key issues in the second volume have to do with theories of public spheres and civic society. Those are two very crucial problem areas in political theory and social theory right now for people coming from different camps. But then, those are two issues that need to be rethought in light of globalization. So, I think a lot of my work is going to be on theories of globalization, and what is the impact of globalization, however we understand it, on public spheres and civil society. I’ll be doing work both in generally the area of philosophy and discourse epistemology and roughly social philosophy, with those two themes in mind – truth in one hand and globalization/civil society on the other.

Moord: *As the new senior member of Systematic Philosophy at the institute, what projects do you plan to explore and what scholarly goals do you envision yourself accomplishing?*

Zuidervaat: I’ve already covered that in terms of

research agenda, but not in terms of my teaching program. The way I see my teaching program is very closely related to the research agenda. I see my teaching program as first of all needing to help students orient themselves and reorient themselves, within the tradition of reformational philosophy, but doing that by testing its relevance for contemporary issues. I’ll be trying to do that especially in the foundations course. Secondly, I see my role as helping my colleagues connect up with each other across sub-disciplinary and disciplinary boundaries. I’ll be trying to foster interdisciplinary dialogue from within my own expertise, but also with a view to the expertise of the faculty. A third thing then goes back to my research interests.

Up until now the Institute hasn’t had a really strong presence in the social sciences and philosophy of the social sciences, or more broadly, social theory and political or economic theory. And because I’m interested in those areas and because I think the Institute needs to do more work in those areas, I will be trying, on a regular basis, to address key texts and key problems in what is called social philosophy. So a couple years out I’ll be doing a course that’s really devoted to Habermas’s theory of communicative action, which is his retelling of the story of modernization – trying to think about what are the key structural problems of society today. And then I will be emphasizing in a way that hasn’t been emphasized so much in the past, philosophy of language and theories of information and communication, which will then be my way of getting into questions of ontology and epistemology. I will be coming at them much more from the angle of philosophy of language, hermeneutics, theories of information and communication, and trying to work on some positive proposals in those areas.

Moord: *What is your “vision” for ICS? Do you have any new contributions to offer – are there any new ideas that you would like ICS to explore as an institution?*

Zuidervaat: One thing I hope is that we can gradually open greater and greater dialogue with other philosophers in North America. It’s going to be a balancing act because we are affiliated with the Toronto School of Theology, and although I’m sure the people in those other schools are really appreciative of the fact that we do philosophy, they are not concentrated on philosophy the way the Institute is. So it’s a question of how you find other links, which don’t absorb too much time, to people who are doing philosophy proper. I think we need to build those links with people in the reformational tradition proper. We need to build links with Catholic philosophers, and not just Catholic theologians, but Catholic philosophers, and we need to do it with a whole wide range of people who are not religiously based, or at least not based in the Christian religion when they do philosophy. So there is a lot to be done, and lots of opportunities. I guess another thing is to get clear about the kind of school we are. There are always going to tensions in that regard, but we can’t do everything well. I think we will always have an interdisciplinary emphasis – I think it’s one of the strengths of the school, it’s one of the strengths of the tradition, but we can’t represent all the disciplines, so it’s a matter of what are the disciplines and sub-disciplines that are going to do the strategic work of being interdisciplinary in a way that’s fruitful for the tradition we’re in and also for religious scholarship in North America and around the world.