

# PERSPECTIVE

Institute for Christian Studies

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*Equipping Christian  
leaders around the  
world*

## Convocation 2001

*The November 30th event featured a tribute to Hendrik Hart as a philosopher, a visionary, a brother, a friend and, in the words of Marinus Koole, a “radical rascal.” Many gave thanks to him for his devotion to the Institute, his friendship, his enthusiasm, his support and, in the words of his long-time colleague Jim Olthuis, for his “unflagging devotion to doing philosophy in the Spirit of Christ.”*

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On the 30th of November ICS celebrated successful “completions” from both graduates and a Senior Member. Gathered at the Church of the Redeemer, family and friends of the ICS community heard the Exaugural Address of **Dr. Hendrik Hart**, Senior Member Emeritus in Systematic Philosophy, and celebrated with four junior members as they received their degrees (one in absentia). The Convocation followed a formal dinner celebration to thank Hart for his many years of dedicated service.

At the dinner, held at Sam Sorbara Hall, University of St. Michael's College, with Henk Hart surrounded by his immediate family, his community paid tribute to him as a philosopher, a visionary, a brother, a friend and, in the words of **Marinus Koole**, a “radical rascal.” From former Executive Directors of the AACCS and representatives of the Vrije Universiteit to colleagues, representatives from AWARE Toronto and students, people spoke words of thanks to Henk, for his devotion to the Institute, his friendship, his enthusiasm, his support and, in the words of Henk's long-time colleague **Jim Olthuis**, for his “unflagging devotion to doing philosophy in the Spirit of Christ.”

Beyond the gifts of words, Hart received two books. First, a book of stories contributed by his friends, students and colleagues. In Hart's own storytelling style, this book recounts many meaningful events in his career. Second, Hart received a hand-made copy of the Festschrift dedicated to his career as a philosopher. Edited by **Ronald Kuipers** and **Janet Wesselius**, this collection entitled *Philosophy as Responsibility* includes contributions from his interlocutors, including many of his students, former and present. Contributors also include his children, **Esther Hart**, who designed the book, and **Klaas Hart**, whose painting appears on the cover.

Convocation began with a musical performance of Bach's *Prelude Suite for Unaccompanied Violoncello* by **Ben Goheen**, followed by a series of liturgies,



readings and prayers offered by Hart's students, friends and family: **Ron Kuipers**, **Joongjae Lee**, **Jeanne Jordan-Awang** and **Willem Hart**. In an address entitled *The Spirit of God and the Times of Our Lives*, Hart officially marked his retirement from the Institute after 35 years of unwavering dedication to the spirit and work of ICS.

Hart's address began by questioning why it is that some times are called “our times” – why after September 11th, for example, people can say that the times have changed. Hart argued that time is a changing complexity of relationships in which certain themes and forces stand out – that the “times” can be characterized by a spirit. Being led by the Spirit of God, he contended, means both discerning our times in spiritual perspective, and trusting God's Spirit as a guide, in time, towards shalom – the connections between all things rooted in the faithfulness of God.

*(Continued on page 3)*

from the  
president



“  
**Notable among  
the honored  
guests was  
Kai Nielsen,  
the prominent  
secular  
philosopher  
with whom Hart  
co-authored  
two books.**  
”

## Hartian themes

*“I was raised in a Kuyperian home... Life’s focus, I learned, was to seek the glory of God in living coram Deo among God’s people, in but not of the world. I was raised to experience all of reality as creation, that is, as being from and unto God.... Nothing was excepted. And so to this day, the first thing that ‘happens’ in the morning when I get up is that I see myself in the bathroom mirror, and what I see is a creature before God”*

**T**hese words are from the opening paragraph of a brief academic autobiography written by Hendrik Hart two years ago, when ICS faculty members were exploring our fundamental motivations as Christian scholars. Hart goes on to trace how the worldview he absorbed in his parental home, coupled with the influence of **H. Evan Runner** at Calvin College, shaped his outlook as a young scholar. Two themes captured his intellectual imagination: that learning, too, takes place before the face of God; and that the Enlightenment’s declaration of reason’s independence from faith is fundamentally incompatible with this ‘creational worldview’ (in which everything, including human reason, is related to God). The writings of Herman Dooyeweerd, in particular, helped Hart develop these convictions: “my earlier mentioned looking in the mirror in the morning came to resonate with Dooyeweerd’s important insight that thought requires self-knowledge and that self-knowledge, as every Calvinist knows, requires knowing God.” Nothing is excepted.

For Hart, these fundamental convictions expressed themselves in two themes that remained remarkably consistent throughout his academic career. On the one hand, he challenged adherents of the autonomy of reason and built a case for the legitimate relevance of religious convictions (about God, persons, and the nature of reality) in philosophical study. On the other hand, he challenged his own neo-Calvinist tradition to be more self-critical of its own appropriation of the Enlightenment’s rationality ideal; were neo-Calvinists “possibly too rational in [their] thinking about truth, tradition, and order?”

Both of these themes carried significant risks for a scholar eager to make his mark. In the early years of Hart’s career, the broad academic community did not always welcome scholars who brought a deep religious worldview to bear on key philosophical issues. In one instance, a paper Hart submitted to the Canadian Philosophical Society, in which he clearly articulated his Christian starting point, elicited a very clear assessment from one referee: “This is reprehensible scholarship.” And Hart’s mode of critique of the impact of the Enlightenment in his ‘own backyard’ was not always welcomed by his neo-Calvinist compatriots either; he was sometimes perceived as the person who, at a family gathering, insists on dragging skeletons out of the closet.

As we mark an important milestone in Henk Hart’s academic career, it is clear, however, that his efforts have been richly blessed on both fronts. Philosophers from various Canadian and other universities made a point of coming to Hart’s exaugural lecture at the Institute’s recent Convocation. Their presence testified to Hart’s success in winning a hearing for Christian philosophers in the wider academic context.

Notable among the honored guests was Kai

Nielsen, the prominent secular philosopher with whom Hart co-authored two books.

Also present in significant numbers were colleagues from institutions that share the ICS’s religious identity and neo-Calvinist tradition. Equally significant was the participation of a large number of the Institute’s non-academic support community. Hart’s colleague, Sylvia Keesmaat, presented him with a memory book filled with anecdotes, photos and expressions of appreciation from friends and supporters of ICS. A few of the contributions to this book contain words like: “I didn’t always agree with you, but...” In these submissions also, the “but” is followed by powerful and moving expressions of appreciation for Hart’s persistent commitment to the mission of ICS, and to the asking of hard questions.

Everything from and unto God, with no exceptions. That certainly is solid philosophy of life. And when all is said and done, that stands as a very good summary of Hendrik Hart’s academic career at the Institute for Christian Studies.

## SENIORS...

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While the Enlightenment's Spirit of Reason promised certainty through unchanging and eternal propositions, the Spirit of God, Hart suggested, is something which moves within time, a Spirit who travels with us in history. To discern the Spirit is to make



time for all things, for all creatures. In times of spiritual stress because of our increased separation through individualism, he argued, we need to rediscover the importance of relationships through love – a force that “returns damaged realities to wholeness and healing” – to shalom.

Hart concluded his exaugural with tributes to many people who have supported him in his life-long quest of being true to his Christian calling. Recognized, among others, were his friend and colleague, Jim Olthuis, his life-long friend and brother Willem, and his wife **Anita**. When he turned to his fellow philosopher and discussion partner, **Kai Nielsen**, and said, “You’re an atheist!”, the audience reacted with an audible intake of breath. Prof. Nielsen, however, nodded vigorously in assent. Hart continued, “In you God shows me how to love, and to do justice to my neighbour.”

Following the address, special recognition was given to Janet Wesselius, who received the Ph.D. degree from the Free University in Amsterdam in May, after completing the ICS Doctoral Program under the supervision of Henk Hart. Three other junior members were recognized for their successful completion of the Master of Philosophical Foundations program: **Anthony Ricciuti** (M.Phil.F, Biblical Studies / Hermeneutics), presented by **Sylvia Keesmaat**, **Tod Moquist** (M.Phil.F., History / Historiography), presented by **C.T. McIntire**, and **Joongjae Lee** (M.Phil.F., Systematic Philosophy), presented by Henk Hart. The graduates not only received their degrees, but also the personal congratulations of their mentors, who have travelled with the junior members through a major part of their academic journeys.

After Convocation, everyone present gathered for a time of fellowship and a chance to offer their congratulations to Henk Hart and the graduates.

## A Festschrift for Hart by students and colleagues *by Ron Kuipers*



“  
**The original committee had little trouble gathering a group of talented scholars to contribute original essays for this collection. Their contributions admirably reflect a heartfelt desire to pay tribute to Henk for the gifts they have received from him over the years.**  
”

**A**t his retirement dinner on November 30, **Hendrik Hart** was presented with a festschrift to commemorate his three decades of service as a teacher and scholar at ICS. The presentation of this festschrift, a collection of essays by students and colleagues in his honour, marked the end of a long and arduous journey for myself and **Jan Wesselius**, the book’s editors. In the early spring of 1997, we struck a small committee to begin work on the project. In addition to Jan and myself, that committee included **Carroll Guen Hart** and **Vaden House**. While the shape of the book was hammered out during our early meetings, the book itself was not completed until the week before Henk’s valedictory celebration. For almost five years, then, this project was kept a secret from Henk in order to surprise him at this event. One of the committee’s first and most inspired decisions was to invite Henk and **Anita**’s children, **Klaas** and **Esther**, to contribute their artistic talents to the book’s making. Klaas painted an original portrait for the front cover that includes many symbolic elements easily recognized by those who know Henk.

Augmenting Klaas’s artwork, Esther produced a lovely book design, and also worked especially hard in collaboration with the books editors in the final months prior to the dinner at which Henk received the book. She also made a special, hand-crafted version of the book to present to Henk on that occasion. The original committee had little trouble gathering a group of talented scholars to contribute original essays for this collection. Their contributions admirably reflect a heartfelt desire to pay tribute to Henk for the gifts they have received from him over the years.

The book’s essays are by Henk’s current and former students, and some of his current colleagues. It includes a substantive introduction by **Jim Olthuis**, and also a bibliography of Henk’s speeches and writings prepared by **Perry Recker** (which will be an invaluable research tool for those who wish to research Henk’s contribution to the tradition of reformational Christian philosophy).

We would not have been able to publish this book had it not been for the financial (not to mention spiritual) support provided by ICS’s supporting community. Though it is not a well known fact, the ICS assumes a considerable financial burden in producing a book like this, an investment that takes some time to recoup, if it is recouped at all. Still, the book has come to fruition, and hopefully ICS’ faithful supporters may now pluck good fruit from its pages, as it helps illuminate the spirit of a thinker who has challenged and provoked (but also loved and served) this community for over three decades.

Throughout his years at ICS, Henk has made many sacrifices in order to give so much of his time to his students and colleagues. His dedication to ICS has also had an impact on his family. In recognition of the sacrifices they have made in sharing Henk’s talents

(Continued on page 4)



and energies, the editors have dedicated the festschrift to them—Anita, Esther, Klaas and Anita, and the first new grandchild, Maurja. Producing this festschrift has been a labor of love by everyone involved. Henk has been a true mentor to his students, as well as a stimulating dialogue partner to these and so many others. In all of his relationships he has striven to honour the whole person before him, a respect which has helped him achieve mutuality and trust with others. On that sturdy ground he continues to challenge us to consider how our thought and action bear upon our responsibility for contributing to the redemption of a hurting and vulnerable world. In our continuing interaction with him, we eagerly await the further contributions to both scholarship and society Henk will assuredly make during his well-deserved ‘retirement’. This book is a token of that anticipation, an invitation to continue the dialogue.

## Prof. Andrew Basden and Information Technology

On Thursday October 25th, Prof **Andrew Basden**, Professor of Information Systems at the University of Salford in the United Kingdom, presented a symposium lecture at ICS on the topic of “Christian Philosophy and Information Systems”. In an accessible exploration of the potential application of reformati-onal philosophy to Information Technology, Basden argued that a Christian philosophical framework can provide answers to the problems of Information Technology where conventional philosophy seems unable to help.

While investment in information technology has reached all-time highs (1.5 trillion dollars per year), Basden argued that the world is not seeing this amount of benefit from that investment. He pointed out the fact that many technologists, sociologists and economists recognise that there is something deeply wrong, but they are ill equipped to understand what is wrong or what we should do about it. Suggesting that Christian philosophy can provide an answer to the problem, Basden first opened up many of the presuppositions that have underlain Western thinking (and produced our perspectives on technology) for 2,500 years. As he argued, the very framework of thinking that has driven the Information Technology enterprise is deeply flawed, and because this tradition is part and parcel of the problem, the concerns must be addressed from within a radically different philosophical framework.

Basden presented what he called a “Shalom Hypothesis” to the problem – a theory which assumes a Good Creation which will yield well-being when its laws are obeyed. The problems are rooted, he contended, in the elevation of certain aspects of creation (idolatry) or the neglect of some aspect of a situation involving Information Technology. We should, he proposed, be addressing individual areas of concern, but should view them all together in an integrated manner.

## faculty focus



**Robert Sweetman** presented a Symposium on his H. Evan Runner Inaugural Address: “Of Runners and Batons: Viewing the History of Philosophy from the Cool of the Giant’s Shade.” on the 22nd of November at ICS.

He served as an examiner participating in the defence of Jennifer Allison Harris’s Ph.D thesis for the Centre for Medieval Studies of the U. of Toronto: “The Place of the Jerusalem Temple in the Reform of the Church in the Eleventh Century.” on December 3rd at School of Graduate Studies, University of Toronto.

**Calvin Seerveld** spoke for Christian Artists International at Doorn, Netherlands (25 August) on “Imaginative Re-enchancement of Society in God’s World: a redemptive artistic task in the European Union.” The conference was sponsored by the European Union. On October 29-30 he gave two lectures at Dordt College: “What do a Reformational Christian Philosophy and Christian Reformed Theology have to do with one another in developing Christian Scholarship.” and “Why ugly can be artistically normative, and what then constitutes the aesthetically perverse.”

In his role as chair of board of Public Justice Resource Centre, **Jonathan Chaplin** led a discussion on ‘confessional language in politics’ during staff

retreat for Citizens for Public Justice, Aug 28, Toronto, and participated in PJRC/CPJ board meetings Oct 26-27, at



the Ecology Retreat Centre, Bolton, Ontario. On Sept 26, he hosted British political theologian Dr Joan Lockwood O’Donovan in his course, ‘Christian Visions of Political Community’, who gave a paper on ‘Modern Liberal Democracy and Proto-Modern Christian Political Thought’. The course text, co-edited by Dr. O’Donovan, is *From Irenaeus to Grotius: A Reader in Christian Political Thought* (Eerdmans, 2000), which Jonathan also reviewed for the journal of the Centre for Cultural Renewal.

From September 27-29, he participated in a colloquium on ‘Liberty, Natural Law and Divine Revelation in Burke and Groen Van Prinsterer’, Toronto and from October 18-20, participated in colloquium on ‘Christian Social Thought and Civil Society’, Annapolis, Maryland. He organised a two day visit to ICS by Dr. Andrew Basden, Prof. of Information Systems, University of Salford, UK, 23-24 Oct, which included a fascinating Symposium entitled ‘Christian Philosophy and Information Systems’.

In September **Adrienne Dengerink Chaplin** attended the “Christian Scholarship . . . for What” Conference at Calvin College and participated



as a panelist in the session “Recovering from Iconoclasm: Reformational Scholarship and the Visual Arts.” On 4 and 5 October she led three workshops on “Understanding the Art of our Time”, “Art and the Bible” and “Art and a Suspicious Church” for art teachers at the annual convention of the Association of Christian Schools International in Surrey, British Columbia. Later that month she attended the Annual Meeting of the American Society for Aesthetics in Minneapolis. This month also saw the appearance of the new IVP edition of her co-authored book *Art and Soul*. It has a new cover and will soon be available from ICS.



**Jim Olthuis** and four students attended the *Postmodernism and Religion III: Confessions* conference which met in Philadelphia on Sept. 27-29.

At the annual meeting of the North American Academy of Ecumenists, held in St. Petersburg, Florida, September



28-30, **George VanderVelde** presented a paper on "Justification and Divinization."

He was invited to participate in a consultation, held at Notre Dame University from October 7-9, to consider the viability of a North American Faith and Order Conference. Such a conference would deal with central confessional, theological, and structural questions that face the churches today. The conference would be held in 2005, almost a half century after the first such Conference held in Oberlin, Ohio, in 1957. About 120 theologians from all over North America gathered at Notre Dame, proposed topics to be discussed, and explored ways in which to involve those churches and communions that are not presently involved in the ecumenical movement, especially Evangelicals and Pentecostals. At the conclusion of the consultation the participants agreed that a conference in North America on questions of faith and church polity was a project whose time has almost come.

## calendar of events

### Christianity and Learning Lectures

This year's *Christianity and Learning Lectures* will feature professor **Richard Kearney** of Ireland. A philosopher, novelist and poet, Richard Kearney is a significant figure in the world of contemporary Irish letters and a professor at University College, Dublin, where he teaches modern European philosophy. Our Christianity and Learning Lectures will take place February 7-8, 2002 at ICS. Professor Kearney will present three lectures entitled:

1. Aliens and Others
2. Evil, Monstrosity and the Sublime
3. The Last God

## Staff news

ICS is pleased to welcome two new staff members who will be filling the positions of **Dawn Cuthill** and **Yana Filipenko** during their maternity leaves. **Kelli Baker**, wife of Junior Member **Larry Baker**, has taken over Yana's position as Academic Assistant and **Faye Cao** will be taking over Dawn's Bookkeeping and Administrative Assistant duties.



Kelli Baker



Faye Cao

### Wesselius graduates with Ph.D.

At Convocation on November 30, special recognition was given to Janet Wesselius for the completion of her Ph.D.

Janet came to ICS in 1988 after studying with ICS alumnus **Lambert Zuidervaart** at King's College in Edmonton and **Peter Schouls** at University of Alberta. She finished the M.PHIL.F in 1991 with her mentor **Henk Hart**. In her thesis, *Points of Convergence Between Dooyeweerdian and Feminist Thought*, Janet began to make room for herself within the tradition of philosophy as both a Christian and a feminist, by identifying the similarities between the Reformational tradition espoused by Dooyeweerd and the concerns of feminists – particularly in their critique of the philosophic tradition. Janet continued at ICS in the doctoral program (in conjunction with the Free University in Amsterdam) and finished her comprehensive exams in 1995. While working on her dissertation, Janet taught classes at ICS as well as

## Winter semester classes at ICS, January 7 through April 5, 2002

### State and Society in Christian Perspective

*Jonathan Chaplin*  
Monday 9:30 am

### Relational Psychotherapy and Faith

*Jim Olthuis*  
Monday 7:00 pm

### Paul: Story and Empire

*Sylvia Keesmaat*  
Tuesday 9:30 am

### Art, Language and Meaning

*Adrienne Dengerink Chaplin*  
Tuesday 9:30 am

### Hermeneutics, Religion, and Deconstruction

*Jim Olthuis*  
Tuesday 1:30 pm

### Faith, Justice and Public Policy

*Jonathan Chaplin*  
Tuesday 7:00 pm

### Philosophy in the Flesh

*Hendrik Hart*  
Wednesday 9:30 am

### Rhetoric as Philosophy from Isocrates to the Age of Abelard and Heloise

*Robert Sweetman*  
Wednesday 1:30 pm

### Naming the Revealed Mystery: Gendered Language for God

*George Vandervelde*  
Wednesday 7:00 pm

“...objectivity is an ambivalent concept because [it] ...expresses our concern to know the world accurately.”

George Brown and Calvin College. This May, Janet defended her dissertation entitled “Objective Ambivalence: Feminist Negotiations in Epistemology”, accompanied by mentors **Bob Sweetman** and **Henk Hart**. She now lives in Edmonton where she teaches philosophy, women's studies, and religious studies at the University of Alberta and Concordia University College.

In her dissertation Janet examined what notions of objectivity amount to in the work of (some prominent) feminist philosophers. Janet argues that for many feminists, objectivity is an ambivalent concept (as well as being ambivalent in the work of many philosophers) because objectivity is an important concept that expresses our concern to know the world accurately. But at the same time, objectivity has often been construed as an ideal that is impossible to attain – and then used to dismiss the knowledge of women. Here Janet finds the relevance to Christian scholarship. Janet believes that both Feminist and Christian philosophy share a number of similarities, especially the fact that both of them are viewed with suspicion by mainstream philosophy, and both Feminist and Christian philosophers are often criticised for not being objective (even though the standard of objectivity being used to judge them is impossible to attain). In the final chapter of the dissertation Janet uses the Reformational philosophy she learned at ICS to propose an alternative understanding of objectivity – a perspective which she argues, takes the integration of reality seriously.

Janet's dissertation is available for sale through ICS. See back page of *Perspective*.

## Gathering to celebrate *The Beautiful Risk*

**O**n the evening of October 26th ICS held a wine-and-cheese book celebration to honor **Jim Olthuis** for the publication of his new popular title *The Beautiful Risk: a New Psychology of Loving and Being Loved*. This well-attended event drew both ICS supporters as well as members of the Christian psychologist and psychotherapist community.

Following a performance by the Classical trio *Ardeleana*, **Dianne Bergsma** shared from her perspective as a Ph.D. student, Jim's willingness to guide his students into the "wild spaces" and "wonder zones" of learning.



Dianne described Jim as an ebullient steersman in the facilitation of the learning process who welcomes diversity, recognizes vulnerability, and is wary of final answers.

**Dianne Marshall**, a longtime colleague and former student recalled the spirals which Jim used to draw on his classroom blackboards – spirals

which served as important visuals for what it means to love and be loved. In a society which preaches the autonomy of the self, Marshall mused, Jim's spirals suggest that love, healing and reconciliation are to be found in relationship with others – they are a metaphor for the beautiful risk which we all take when we make ourselves vulnerable to connection. **John Olthuis** affirmed this by noting that his brother combines theory and practice, "in a river of caring".

**Henk Hart**, senior member emeritus in Systematic Philosophy, in reflecting on "the lover of people, called Jim" reminded those in attendance that the "risk" Olthuis took was in placing himself "in the lines". In everything he does, Hart argued, Jim puts himself at the heart of it – with authenticity and ardor. "In the wild dance of love," Hart quipped, "I feel privileged to be a dance partner on the floor with him."

**Janet Hellmann**, a co-leader with Jim in a therapy group, shared her reflections of Jim as a therapist who understands the wonderful capacities of psychotherapy to heal. Noting that being a colleague of Jim means meeting the challenge of "being yourself", Janet painted a picture of a therapist whose heart soars when his own stories touch a chord with others lives – a leader who lovingly affirms others with fragile authenticity.

In an emotional response, Jim concluded the evening by noting that it was on the morning of September 11, while opening a package from the publisher with the first copies of *The Beautiful Risk* that he heard word of the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington. Jim called this a "beautiful irony" noting the many times that we have "pierced each other" instead of taking the time to listen and understand the anger and pain of the other. Proposing a "covenant of care" where we nourish difference, Jim argued that a being-with, suffering-with and celebrating-with approach to therapy can create "healing spaces" in which God can work in renewing and transformative ways – a "healing of the Spirit" so that we may "take the beautiful risk of dancing in the wild spaces of love with joy and compassion."

*The Beautiful Risk* is available for sale through ICS. See back page of *Perspective* for more information.

“  
**In a society which preaches the autonomy of the self, Jim's spirals suggest that love, healing and reconciliation are to be found in relationship with others – they are a metaphor for the beautiful risk which we all take when we make ourselves vulnerable to connection.**  
”

### SYMPOSIA SERIES

## Sander Griffioen and the notion of Worldview

**O**n Tuesday September 25th, Dr. **Sander Griffioen**, Emeritus Professor of Social Philosophy at the Free University of Amsterdam, presented a Symposium at ICS entitled, *The End of a Worldview Era?* which discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the notion of worldview and its implications for Christian higher education. Ever since the late 19th century, Sander pointed out, the notion of worldview as a means of orientation in life has played a central role in European culture as can be seen in the rise of separate institutions including those of Christian education. This, he argued, has had both positive and negative aspects. Although worldviews are indispensable for a consistent way of life, he explained, they should not overshadow any 'catholic' sense of the unity of the Christian faith and of "Reformation" as an attempt at re-direction of life by returning to the biblical sources. In this symposium he contended that the notion of worldview can only be redeemed if the attendant ideal of complete knowledge is severed from its historical dependency on the Enlightenment ideal of encyclopedic knowledge, and be changed into an imaginative, future-oriented mode of knowledge and learning.

### Alumni alert!

If you are an ICS alumnae/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.

### Documentary film highlights Seerveld's Bible translations

On October 1 Vision TV, a multi-faith religious cable television network in Canada, aired a documentary entitled *The Breath of God: Calvin Seerveld and the Art of Bible Translation*. The 50 minute documentary discusses how to put the original biblical languages into a current idiom. The film also included Seerveld's Genevan melodic version and a Blues rendition of *Psalm 92* as well as highlights of the preparation and performance of *The Greatest Song*, Seerveld's translation of the Old Testament *Song of Songs*. The documentary was produced by filmmaker **David Chistenson** and is available for sale through ICS for \$19.00.



Woodcut from Calvin Seerveld's *The Greatest Song* by Flip van der Burgt



# For a good and sweet year

## Reflections on the ICS Fall Retreat

by Michelle Jones, Student Services Coordinator

**O**n September 17th, I experienced my first retreat with ICS. It came hot on the heels of Orientation week and Registration at the Institute. During the lengthy escape from the bustling metropolis up to the still hills

of The Mount Alverno Retreat Centre, I asked myself, "Who are these people, where are we going, and what's going to happen when we get there?" Under the guise of co-coordinator (still in training as a rather odd appendage of **Pam Trondson**) I must admit I was privy to the event's agenda – and having just visited family in Caledon the weekend before, I did know where we were going, if only on a purely mechanistic level!

What I did not know was what to expect from this group of people. How did they view themselves in relation to each other? Would there be Junior Members in one corner, Senior Members in another and Administrative Staff in yet another. Would three separate communities emerge? And if so, where would I fit in?

September 17th happened to be the eve of the Jewish New Year. With the help of **Chris Cuthill** we began our time together by participating in an outdoor *Rosh Hashbona* liturgy. The eerie sound of the Shofar trumpeted into the hills as darkness descended on our little group. As we passed around apple slices dipped in honey, and spoke the traditional blessing to one another: "wishing you a sweet and good year", I gazed out at the trees sleeping peacefully against the night

*The Hebrew New Year begins with the blowing of the Shofar*

sky. Still in shock from the terrible events that had transpired in New York and Washington the week before, I thanked God that I was safe – that we were all safe.

I spent that evening and the following day getting to know students and their spouses, faculty, staff, and their children. ICS has a huge proportion of international students. As I listened to their stories I imagined how displaced and vulnerable each must feel. To be far from the circle of loved ones is difficult and challenging enough at the best of times, let alone in these uncertain days. But there were no long faces. Everyone seemed to fill their time with fun and games, food, tranquil walks, lengthy conversations, and a marathon soccer match.

In the closing chapel service **Jim Olthuis** brought us back to the horrid reality of war and terror which our world is gripped in. But he also reminded us of another reality that, standing in the dark with a group of "strangers", I had missed the night before. Together, in the light of day, we proclaimed our faith: that God has given us, not a spirit of fear but a spirit of power and love and self-control. The apples and honey were absent from the circle but this confession and the presence of my new found brothers and sisters, standing as one united community, was sweet enough.

I sit writing this reflection on Halloween. The leaves have all but left the branches. Night time falls over the city earlier than ever each day, and darkness seems to be inching its way over our world with long, cold, probing fingers. Students struggle to maintain focus on their studies amidst personal hardships and challenges. Staff struggle to maintain order amongst personnel changes and work space "shufflings". Yet we all stand united as one community of souls; a generation of believers shaken to the core, reclaiming our faith and our strength in Jesus Christ. May our studies, our work, our relationships at ICS this year be Good and Sweet indeed!

### NEW BOOKS AT ICS

## He Shines in All That's Fair Richard Mouw

**H**ow do Christians account for the widespread presence of goodness in a fallen world? Different theological perspectives have presented a range of answers to this fundamental question over the centuries. In *He Shines in All That's Fair* **Richard Mouw** brings the historic insights of Calvinism to bear on this question and reinterprets them for a broader audience at the turn of the twenty-first century.

Mouw examines long-standing Reformed arguments between those who champion the doctrine of common grace and those who emphasize an antithesis between the church and the world. Defenders of common grace account for the goodness in the world by insisting that God's grace goes beyond salvation to more general gifts of beauty, virtue, and excellence to all human beings – including those who do not believe in God. Those who reject the doctrine of common grace, on the other hand, emphasize the fallenness of the world and the need for the church to maintain a dramatic contrast to it. These divergent theological perspectives, while seemingly remote and abstract, lead to questions with

very practical implications: What common ground do Christians share with those outside the faith? How should Christians treat their non-Christian neighbors? How should Christians relate to the world around them? Does God disapprove when Christians form close friendships with people who are "of the world"? Ought Christians to identify with the joys and sorrows of those who do not confess Christ as their Savior and Lord?

In the course of this book Mouw looks at these topics, connecting the larger theological discussions to pressing issues in contemporary society. He insists that we have much to learn from thinkers who have rejected the idea of common (non-saving) grace, but he also defends the traditional common grace teachings, showing how they provide an important basis for wrestling with key challenges in present-day culture. Ultimately, Mouw argues forcefully for a Calvinism that is capable of standing in awe before the mysteries of God's gracious dealings with all human beings – and indeed the whole creation.

Presented as the 2000 Stob Lectures at Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary, these soundly reasoned, elegantly written chapters offer an updated, robust understanding of common grace that will be of great value to anyone interested in the relation of church and culture.



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