



by DOUG  
BLOMBERG

## MWS Program Relaunch: Academics with an Action Focus

**T**he Master of Worldview Studies (MWS), which is being restructured and relaunched in 2010, has been an important dimension of the Institute's identity since the mid-80s, and ICS is excited that it will be so once again.

Since one of the primary functions of ICS is to prepare scholars for roles in colleges and universities, the Institute has in recent years focused its energies on gaining Canadian degree-granting authority for the MA and PhD. Over this period the MWS has declined, at least in its on-campus mode, though it has grown steadily as a distance-education program, attracting especially teachers. But we haven't forgotten the vital significance of such a program for others who wish to mine the richness of the reformational tradition.

The restructured MWS is an academic program with an action focus, designed for those who want to enhance their understanding of how to serve Christ in their professional lives and other areas of sociocultural engagement. It fosters a personal and communal "philosophy of life" rather

than academic philosophical understanding. The wisdom it seeks is revealed in Scripture and the gospel of Jesus Christ, and is not that generated by autonomous human reason. While this is a way of seeing, it is more fundamentally a way of *being* that involves the whole of life.

Participants will begin by identifying an action-oriented project which they will pursue throughout the duration of the program and which will determine the focus and direction of their courses. A core curriculum of four courses will provide coherence and breadth and will also help significantly to build community among Junior Members. Two elective courses can be taken, at the Institute or elsewhere.

Like the MA and PhD, the MWS functions in a self-consciously Christian environment where hard and honest questions are welcome. It supports inquiry that takes underlying religious convictions into account, working from within the reformational tradition, and it presumes that academic work should be an integral expression of the deepest intellectual and religious impulses.

At the same time, the MWS embodies other priorities: a commitment to cultural engagement and social justice; the development of an arena for the formation of international students (notably from Africa and Asia); and a direct engagement with the Institute's urban setting, drawing not only on the city's scholarly resources, but on its many cultural, professional, and even financial institutions.

ICS looks forward to working with students who have the message of Colossians 1:15-20 written on their hearts—who hear, through the centuries, the echo of William Wilberforce's anti-slavery campaign and Abraham Kuypers' "not one square inch." (Contact [info@icscanada.edu](mailto:info@icscanada.edu) for more information.) ●

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# Water Walking

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by BOB  
SWEETMAN

**C**risis has a way of terrifying, but also clarifying. We confront the fragility of our most cherished works; they are “like the flowers of the field,” as the Psalmist has it. If one concentrates on the terror, one is lost, like Peter sinking into angry Galilean waters. But if one keeps head high and eyes peeled, crisis bares the presence of opportunity; and that’s a blessing, if an uncomfortable one.

Opportunity is, however, shy, given to hiding, hard to discern amidst the anxiety and clutter of a crisis. Discernment takes prayerful concentration, time, and the courage to risk error. ICS has bought itself some time by drastic and, in the long term, unsustainable cuts to salary, operations, and even its physical size and shape. The question is, however, where ICS is to look to spot the opportunities at play in its crisis. It is a fair question, and for an answer we have gone back to our strategic plan of 2007. We are casting our eyes upon “partnerships”.

ICS has always been involved in partnerships. I cite but the two most obvious ones for Junior and Senior Members at ICS: our affiliation with the Toronto School of Theology (TST), and our long cooperation with the Vrije Universiteit te Amsterdam (VU) in the delivery of a PhD program guided and directed from ICS.

In the past six months we have generated a number of proposals either to develop existing partnerships or to establish new ones with institutions connected to ICS by reformational and more broadly evangelical heritage and identity. Some of these proposals have been tendered in the hope of achieving new sources of income as well as strengthening ICS’s scholarly capacity. Others are designed to associate us with partners from whom we can learn while helping to defray costs of what we now do alone.

The pattern of our partnering proposals recognizes our current place in the world as a precious resource to be built upon. Namely: ICS, developed by reformational people within the Reformed and evangelical community of Christians, exists within that community, to be sure, but in such a way as to be in dialogue with other major voices in the Christian world and in the scholarly world at large. This unique position arises from ICS’s proximity to, and many contacts within, the University of Toronto and from its engagement with mainline Protestant and Catholic thought via its TST affiliation. From a cultural point of view this is very strategic.

Our proposals in process or soon to be developed are as follows:

We are carrying on a dialogue to develop further our relationship with the VU to include significant cooperation in research.

We have initiated conversations with leaders at TST. Our hope is not only to raise the profile of Christian philosophical work within TST, but also to contribute to the leadership of a TST centre in which Christian philosophers of several stripes could engage other philosophers who are



equally committed to the value of religiously integral understandings of the world. The point would be to model the productive contribution of religious voices to life in an increasingly plural cultural, religious, and societal landscape.

We are presently also working on proposals aiming to solidify our place within the world of Reformed and evangelical higher education. We hope to address them to our sister reformational institutions, but also to dynamic evangelical institutions such as, for example, Tyndale College in Toronto.

We must, of course, be listeners as well as proposers. It may be in the listening and learning that we hear the sound of opportunity knocking. What seems clear already, however, is that in all this energetic exploration of partnerships and in all the active listening that is required, we will be changed—and, God willing, for the better. We will be changed in a way that allows us the continued privilege of being a reformational voice in the academy at its highest levels and of being a blessing in a world much larger than the faith community that gave us birth. Certainly, that is my prayer for ICS in this new academic year. ●

*ICS President's Prayer, Praise, and News Letter is distributed monthly. To subscribe, email: [prayerletter@icscanada.edu](mailto:prayerletter@icscanada.edu)*

*Channel 229 News is a biweekly source of news related to ICS. To subscribe, email [channel229-owner@icscanada.edu](mailto:channel229-owner@icscanada.edu)*

# Everything Made Beautiful in its Kairos

by RICK VAN MANEN

“For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven...” So begins what is arguably the best-known poem in Israel’s wisdom tradition (Ecc. 3:1-8). The poem expresses the reality of human existence as a pendulum swinging between extremes. In the poem, Qoheleth (the Hebrew word for ‘teacher/preacher’ in 1:1) describes human activity as locked in constant movement, from killing to healing, from tearing down to building up, from mourning to dancing. The joy we experience with the birth of a new baby can quickly be forgotten in our sorrow over the death of a loved one, and vice versa. Life is made up of weeping and laughing, of tearing and sewing. Just as creation is locked in its incessant cyclical pattern (1:5-8), so human activity is forever caught in an oscillating rhythm from one extreme to the other.

Wisdom, it is often suggested, is a proper discernment of the times. It’s the ability to know when it is time to speak, time to keep silent, time to plant, or time to pluck up. Such discernment keeps the wise from social or economic blunders. And wisdom enables us to see how these moments are connected. Wisdom helps us to understand that these moments in our lives aren’t random. There’s a pattern and order to life that can be discerned by the wise. Yet I suspect that Qoheleth has more to teach us than merely an acceptance of the rhythm of human existence.

When the Jewish scholars translated this poem from Hebrew to Greek they used two very different words for ‘time’ whose distinction is lost in our English translation: *chronos* and *kairos*. Qoheleth 3:1 actually reads, “For everything there is a *chronos*, and a *kairos* for every matter under heaven.” *Chronos*, from which modern English words like *chronology* and *chronicle* are derived, refers



to the measurement of time and is the dominant understanding of time in our culture. *Chronos* makes up the years, months, weeks, days, and hours around which we organize our lives. It’s the tick-tock of our clocks; it’s the time we obsessively seek to control through time management, budgeting our time, saving time, and even killing time. It’s *chronos* that flies when we’re having fun and slows to a crawl when we’re bored.

*Kairos* is a critical or defining moment, a moment of truth, a turning point or crossroads, a climax, a moment filled with promise and potential, sort of the high noon in the old westerns. If *chronos* is quantitative time, *kairos* is qualitative. *Kairos* is when *chronos* appears to stand still, a moment of great portent and significance, yet a moment that can be missed or passed over. *Kairos* is the instant when God breaks into our reality, when God unexpectedly arrives in our midst and surprises us with his presence, when God questions or searches us.

It’s interesting that the word *chronos* is used only once in Qoheleth’s poem (3:1a). Every other time the word ‘time’ appears (28 times in vss. 2-8) it’s a translation of *kairos*. So while it often appears that life is simply oscillating from one extreme to another, Qoheleth offers us a vision over visibility, a refreshing perspective on the world. Every moment of our lives is pregnant with possibility. Every moment can be a defining moment. Whether we’re making peace in the midst of war or researching a paper, whether joyfully anticipating the start of a new job or crunching numbers to escape financial ruin, each moment can be transformative. The way of wisdom is to live life in a constant state of anticipation of God’s arrival (Mt. 25:1-13; Rom. 13:11-14). Wisdom is an openness to the possibility that every moment, even the most mundane, has incredible potential for God to enter our lives and transform us. Qoheleth says it best. “God makes everything beautiful in its *kairos* (3:11).” ●



ICS alumnus Rick Van Manen is a campus minister at the University of Alberta.

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## Master of Worldview Studies – The Education Focus

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by SOPHIE  
VANDENBERG

**H**eidi Kerssies, an educator who has taught in Ontario, British Columbia, and Latin America, chose to study at ICS to sharpen her Christian perspective, particularly in the area of social justice. ICS did not disappoint: “They challenged my thinking,” said Heidi, a 2009 MWS graduate.

She found the many courses designed specifically for educators had direct application to her work as principal and gave her the language to articulate her thinking more clearly. She and her staff at Silvercrest Christian School in Wasaga Beach, Ontario have added Harro Van Brummelen’s book *Steppingstones to Curriculum* to their professional development toolkit, using its worldview questions as a

lens through which to consider all curriculum areas. She first read the book at ICS.

Heidi’s elective courses, such as “Jesus in Latin America and Africa” taught by Sylvia Keesmaat, proved relevant as well. Having lived in Latin America for four years and returning annually to offer professional development to Honduran teachers, she found the course connected with her experience. “It was great. I did a project in Honduras,” she said, calling Sylvia’s reading of Scripture “a highlight” of her time at ICS. Heidi also appreciated ideas raised in Ron Kuiper’s course, “Christianity and the Ecological Crisis,” where she discovered the writing of Wendell Berry and the work of Norman Wirzba.

Another 2009 MWS grad, Jason Grootenboer, who taught high school in Chatham for six years, similarly came to the Institute to strengthen his Christian perspective. He too appreciated what ICS had to offer.

Jason completed seven of the eight MWS courses by distance education. He took last year off to stay home with his daughter and appreciated being able to work on his MWS whether he was in Chatham, London, Thunder Bay, Ottawa, or Virginia. “I really enjoyed the professors and interaction with fellow students from across North America via telephone and email,” he said. Jason returns to the classroom this fall at Redeemer Christian High School in Ottawa, where he’ll be putting his newly minted MWS to work. ●

# Master of Worldview Studies

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### Successful Master of Worldview Studies graduates

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DONALD BRUCE  
CURRY



ANDREW J.  
DOERKSEN



JASON JOHN  
GROOTENBOER



REBECCA D.  
HUBBLE



HEIDI RACHELE  
KERSSIES

# Master of Worldview Studies – the **Social Ethics** Focus

**R**ecalling the year he spent at ICS as one of his most formative, Dr. Andrew Jefferson (MWS 1993) said that the experience liberated him to ask all the curious questions that had been taboo in his conservative Christian upbringing. It also revealed his calling to become an academic.

In addition to serving professional teachers in its Education stream, the MWS serves a diverse array of students who wish to reflect on their sense of professional vocation, or the role faith plays in a commitment to a life of social activism. Andrew's educational and professional path embodies both of these streams.

After completing the MWS at ICS, he went on to earn a PhD in 2004 in the Department of Psychology at the University of Copenhagen with a dissertation entitled, "Confronted by Practice: Towards a Critical Psychology of Prison Practice in Nigeria."

Andrew is currently in Sierra Leone advising a local NGO on group counselling in overcrowded, poorly resourced prisons in the country's eastern provinces. With a colleague he is exploring issues related to the mobilization of former fighters in the regions bordering Guinea and Liberia. "No heroics, just doing my bit to identify with suffering unimaginable back home, amongst people experiencing exorbitant poverty and ontological insecurity," Andrew wrote in an email. He

recently held a workshop for prison officers and another for "ghetto boys," and is also engaging in active field research for a project that examines state and non-state practices of detention during conflict, including the implications these practices have for lives and policy.

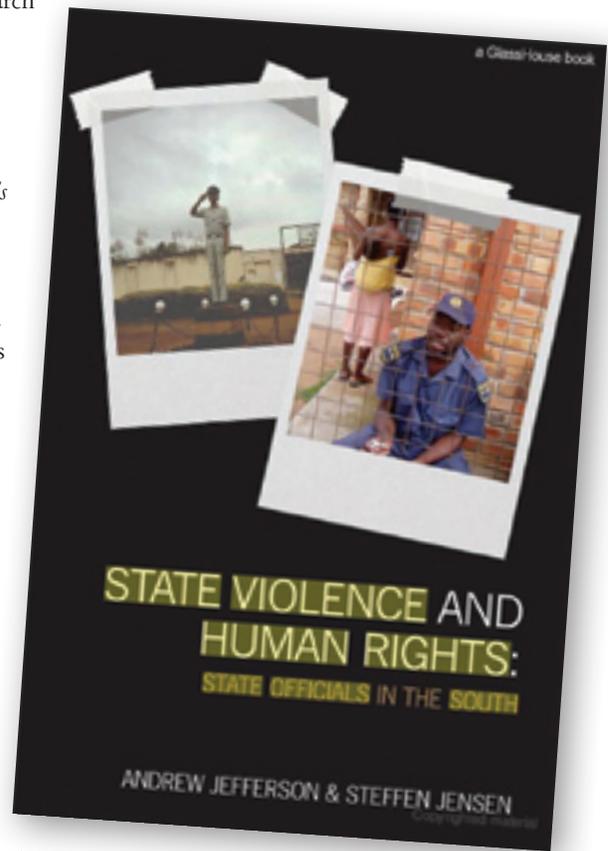
These activities are part of Andrew's role as Senior Researcher at the Rehabilitation and Research Centre for Torture Victims in Copenhagen ([www.rct.dk](http://www.rct.dk)). As a result of his work there, he recently celebrated publication of the book *State Violence and Human Rights: State Officials in the South* (London and New York: Routledge), which he co-edited with Steffen Jensen, and for which he contributed a chapter entitled "On Hangings and the Dubious Embodiment of Statehood in Nigerian Prisons" ([www.routledge.com](http://www.routledge.com)).

The book discusses how legal practices, rooted in global human rights discourse as well as local demands, take hold in societies where issues of state violence remain to be resolved. State representatives in such societies—the police officer, the prison officer, the ex-combatant militia member, the hangman and the traditional leader—must negotiate the tensions between international legal imperatives, the expectations of donors,

the demands of institutions, and their own interests. Addressing this fact, the book explores how legal discourses are translated from policy into everyday practice. ●

by RON  
KUIPERS

For more about Andrew's work see:  
[www.rct.dk/about\\_rct/contact/research/andrew%20om%20jefferson.aspx?sc\\_lang=en](http://www.rct.dk/about_rct/contact/research/andrew%20om%20jefferson.aspx?sc_lang=en)

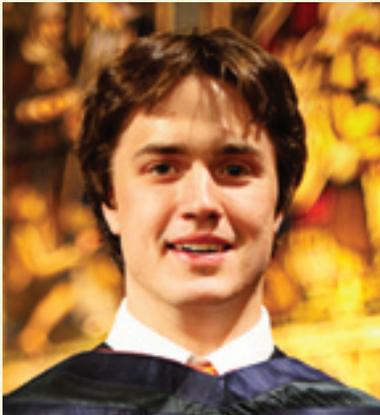


# one degree, two streams

# Successful MA graduates

*Legend*

- m** mentor
- ee** external examiner
- ie** internal examiner
- c** chair



**CHRISTOPHER JOHN  
MACNEILL D'ANGELO**

*Title:* Written into the Land: Use, Identity and the Human Awakening to an Eloquent Creation

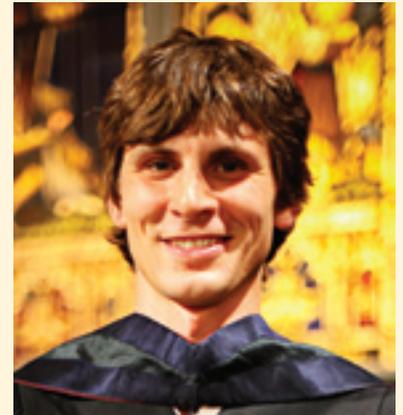
*Examination committee:* Ron Kuipers (**m**), Nik Ansell (**ie**), Norman Wirzba (**ee**), Rebekah Smick (**c**)



**SARA GERRITSMA DEMOOR**

*Title:* From Paradox to Possibility: Gauging the Unique Contribution of Christian Voices to the Public Discussion of the Ecological Crisis

*Examination committee:* Ron Kuipers (**m**), Shannon Hoff (**ie**), Tom Reynolds (**ee**), Rebekah Smick (**c**)



**PAUL HUBBLE**

*Title:* A Certainty of Death: Appreciating Human Animalhood

*Examination committee:* Ron Kuipers (**m**), Lambert Zuidervaart (**ie**), Barry Allen (**ee**), Nik Ansell (**c**)



**RICHARD GREYDANUS**

*Title:* 'All that Man Has and Is': A Study of the Historiographical Concerns Guiding the Work of Christopher Dawson

*Examination committee:* Robert Sweetman (**m**), Shannon Hoff (**ie**), C. Thomas McIntire (**ee**), Nik Ansell (**c**)



**JEFFREY S. HOCKING**

*Title:* Freedom Unlimited: a Sympathetic Critique of Libertarian Freedom in the Open Theism of Clark H. Pinnock

*Examination committee:* Nik Ansell (**m**), Ron Kuipers (**ie**), Clark Pinnock (**ee**), Doug Blomberg (**c**)

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# ICS Inaugurates Favoured Daughter, Dr. Shannon Hoff

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ICS Acting President Bob Sweetman recently described Senior Member Dr. Shannon Hoff as one who “grew up a favoured daughter of the reformational tradition.” While Shannon may have been inducted into the tradition at a young age, attending the Institute’s annual summer conferences with her family, she is not simply a receiver of it. She has become one of its creative interpreters.

In her inaugural address at this year’s convocation Shannon stated that, paradoxically, the tradition remains true to itself only by being transformed. “I am giving an *inaugural* address and thus beginning something new, while participating in an inherited tradition...[We are] living with the accomplishments of the past and preparing for the future, in confessional dialogue with those who transferred a tradition to us and with those who carry it out now in ways that we could never predict,” she said.

Bob Sweetman calls Shannon, who teaches G.W.F. Hegel, Jacques Derrida, social and political philosophy, forgiveness, race theory, feminist philosophy, and postcolonial theory, “a rising young star in philosophy.”

After a first degree from Calvin College and a PhD from New York’s Stony Brook University, Shannon taught at Muskingum College in Ohio before coming to ICS in 2007. Now, as Senior Member in Social and Political Philosophy, she appreciates ICS anew, stating that its understanding of the rootedness of all aspects of human life sets it apart. “At ICS we’re not just brains on legs, but people, with spiritual, emotional, mental, physical, psychological, intellectual lives, treating problems and questions that are just as complex,” she said.

Shannon recalls that good mentorship played an important role in her own education. As a mentor

herself, she is committed to guiding Junior Members to become reflective citizens equipped to open their various environments to practical, intellectual, and spiritual exploration and transformation.

Shannon describes the level of seminar discussion at ICS as so high that it makes teaching an exciting process of discovery for her as well. “To have the ears of such sophisticated and talented thinkers has made my first years of graduate instruction tremendously satisfying and challenging,” she said. Similarly, co-teaching an interdisciplinary course with five other ICS Senior Members proved to be a rich experience of scholars in discussion eager to contribute to each other’s work. “We and the Junior Members learned a lot about each other’s ways of thinking philosophically, and in so doing we built up a genuine intellectual community,” she said.

In addition to teaching, this lively member of the ICS faculty is the Institute’s Placement Officer. “I consider it my responsibility to keep Junior Members in touch with the requirements and opportunities that the life of professional philosophy represents,” she said. She also attended and presented at several conferences this past year, and organized a conference for graduate students and Hegel scholars entitled “The Politics of Modernity: Hegel and the French Revolution.”

Shannon’s work in philosophy explores resources in Hegel’s thinking for a critical social and political perspective, one attuned to voices in contemporary feminist, race, and postcolonial theory. She is working on arranging a series of her papers on Hegel into a book and submitting a number of her essays to scholarly journals.

She was appointed to graduate faculty status at the University of Guelph when Karen Robertson, a

Guelph PhD student who had taken a number of ICS courses with Shannon, asked Hoff to be on her thesis committee.

These are just some of Shannon’s activities at ICS. Outside academia she maintains the same energetic pace, playing soccer and volleyball, running, cycling, and taking in Toronto’s live music scene.

Shannon counts it a pleasure to be part of the Institute’s community. “[There] are so many funny and warm people at ICS. I can’t believe I’m lucky enough to have a job at which I enjoy the company of my colleagues so much,” she said. ●

*To view Shannon on the Internet see [www.youtube.com/christianstudies](http://www.youtube.com/christianstudies).*

by SOPHIE  
VANDENBERG



## ICS Benefits From Vandervelde Library Donation

by SOPHIE VANDENBERG



*Bea Vandervelde (left) surveys items from The George Vandervelde Collection with ICS Librarian, Isabella Gutbrie-McNaughton*

ICS recently received over 3,000 books, journals, and personal files containing articles and looseleaf notes belonging to the late Dr. George Vandervelde. The collection reflects George's research, teaching, and personal interests.

George, on faculty at ICS from 1977 until his retirement in 2005, was passionate about ecumenical dialogue, working with the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) and the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

The numerous publications from the World Council of Churches (WCC), the WEA, and the Vatican will be of particular interest to other colleges of the Toronto School of Theology (TST), while George's many Bavinck, Berkhouwer, and Kuyper monographs are of significant interest to ICS. Other titles in the collection reflect George's various interests, such as baptism and the Holy Spirit. As ICS's library catalogue moves over to that of the University of Toronto, *The George Vandervelde Collection* will be accessible to scholars worldwide. ●

PERSPECTIVE CAN NOW BE VIEWED ONLINE. SEE [WWW.ICSCANADA.EDU/PERSPECTIVE/](http://WWW.ICSCANADA.EDU/PERSPECTIVE/)

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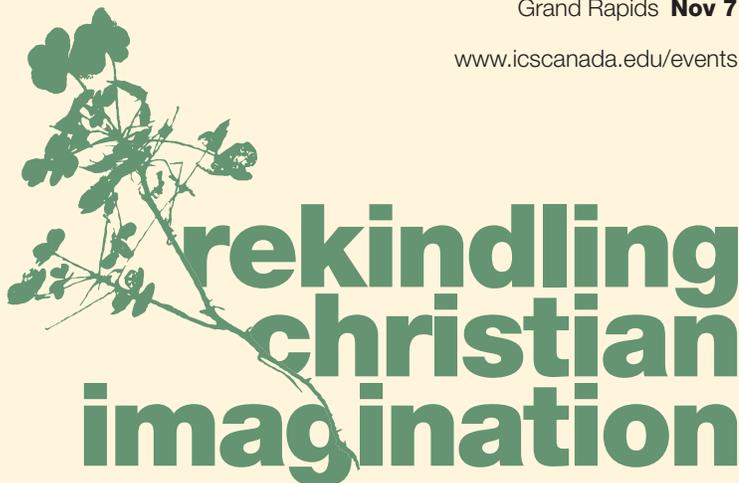
The way we picture the world to ourselves has a great deal to do with how we live in it.

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