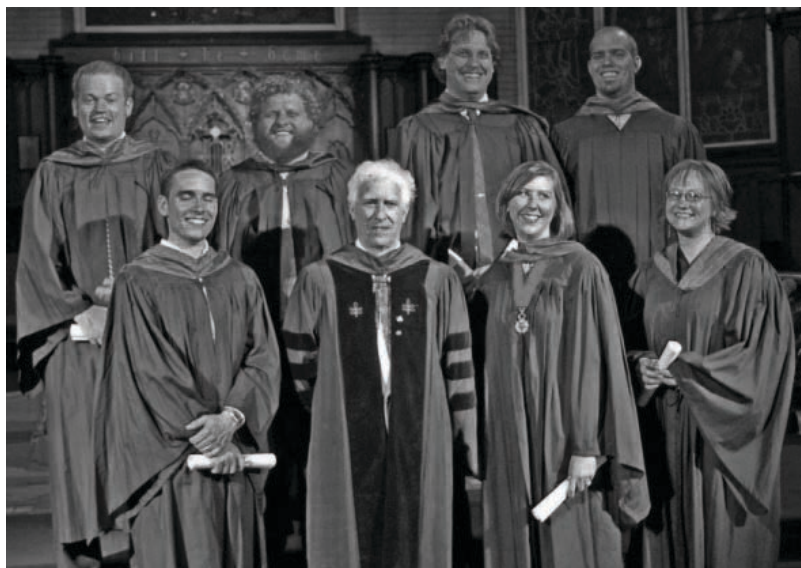


Convocation 2008: forty years of learning for the love of it

*Back row (left to right): Christopher Allers, Dan Jesse, Richard Van Manen, Jason Postma.
Front row (left to right): Michael Mols, Dr. Nicholas Wolterstorff, Yvana Mols, Lorraine Voorberg*



by SOPHIE
VANDENBERG

What bang do ICS supporters get for their bucks?" asked honorary degree recipient Dr. Nicholas Wolterstorff in his address to ICS graduates and community at its 40th anniversary convocation. "What's the point of *Christian* studies? What's the mission of an *institute* for Christian studies?" he said.

After reiterating Abraham Kuyper's familiar answer to these questions—namely, that God issued humankind a "cultural mandate", or as Wolterstorff prefers to call it, a "cultural blessing", to develop human culture in all its forms—he redirected his focus from that familiar big picture to its meaning for the individual scholar.

**DO YOU LOVE IT?
ARE YOU GOOD AT IT?
IS IT WORTHWHILE?**

He observed that, at the level of the person, the big picture in which we receive and obey commands is not terribly helpful. Instead, he suggested three questions for students to ask themselves as they contemplate a particular path or career choice: "Do you love it? Are you good at it? Is it worthwhile?" He stated that those in

the academy should be in it for the love of it.

Noting that those in the Reformed tradition talk easily about duties, mandates, obligations, laws, and obedience, but not so easily about love, Wolterstorff used the anniversary occasion to talk about love—specifically, the love of learning. Not just love of learning for the sake of producing worthy pieces of scholarship—which Kuyper would have viewed as part of the production of culture—but love of learning driven by the love of understanding.

LOVE OF LEARNING AND THE DESIRE FOR GOD

Reflecting on why humans long for understanding, Wolterstorff drew attention to the way in which the love of learning and the desire for God unite.

Referring to Old Testament wisdom literature, he pointed out that the wise person seeks to be guided daily by God's wise directives in Torah. But the wise person also spends time daily, discerning and reflecting in awed, reverential meditation and praise, on the wisdom embodied in

(continued on page 2)

God's creation. Both stances constitute a form of worship.

In this vision, for example, cell biology is not only an extraordinary scientific construct, admirable for its intrinsic worth and technological usefulness. More than that, it reveals some of the astounding intricacy of the divine wisdom embedded in creation. Wolterstorff suggested that recovering this orientation to reality also means engaging and honouring the person—"the maker who loved and cared"—behind every poem, symphony, bridge, meal, etc. "To remove the person is an act of dishonour," he said.

Saluting the Institute for acting faithfully and making a significant difference in Christian thought and action, Wolterstorff predicted that if learning at ICS is for the love of it, if the love of it is for the love of understanding, and if the love of understanding is united with the desire for God and the honouring of one's fellows, then the Institute will continue to make a difference for another forty years. ●

Hear the complete address at
<http://www.icscanada.edu/audio/>

MAY 2008 ICS GRADUATES

MASTER OF ARTS (PHILOSOPHY)

Michael Mols
Yvana Mols
Carlos Bovel
Stephen Zylstra
Noah Marin
Robert Brink
Stuart Basden
Dan Jesse
Christopher Allers
Richard Van Manen

MASTER OF WORLDVIEW STUDIES

Jason Postma
Lorraine Voorberg
Steven Van de Hoef
Matthew Harrison

Board Plans for Leadership Transition

This is a busy summer for the ICS Board of Directors. The board is taking steps to address both immediate and longer-term needs, following the resignation of John Suk for personal reasons in June. Board action is focused on three areas:

1. Sustaining smooth operations through the appointment of a Director of Finance and Administration and finding an interim president for a transition period;

2. Moving ahead with a strategic plan for long-term financial stability, in accordance with the new strategic plan for ICS programming developed last year;
3. Launching a thorough search for a new president to provide leadership into the future.

A special board meeting will be held later this summer to ensure a smooth transition and continue progress toward a sustainable future. ●

New Appointment

The ICS Board of Directors is pleased to announce the appointment of Claire Veenstra to the new position of Director of Finance and Administration. Claire brings to ICS years of management experience in large financial services and consulting firms and in non-profit organizations. Claire is known to the ICS community through previous service as board treasurer, and she has served in a variety of

leadership roles within church and Christian education circles. In this position, Claire will lead ICS's small administrative team to provide sound management and maximize the use of available resources to achieve the mission of ICS. This position, approved at the May Board meeting, flows from the strategic plan and fills a need for administrative support in order for the President and faculty to be effective in their work. ●

Honorary Degree

Every year the Institute for Christian Studies may grant one or two honorary degrees. The first recipient was Gerald VandeZande, lifelong advocate for social justice and member of the Order of Canada. This year's recipient is Dr. Nicholas Wolterstorff. ICS invites further nominations of worthy candidates. Our criteria for consideration include:
1) scholarly service and accomplishment, particularly as it impacts the

Reformational tradition in scholarship; or 2) business and philanthropic service, service to Christian organizations, service to society at large, and service of long-standing or unusual merit to ICS itself.

We hope to select our next candidate this fall. Please send your nomination, with an explanation of why you are nominating the person, to nominations@icscanada.edu. ●

Consider studying at ICS

Information and personalized campus visits are available. Contact the Director of Student Services, Shawn Stovell, [sstovell@icscanada.edu](mailto:ssstovell@icscanada.edu). ●

The teacher and the student: a story

ICS is an incredibly dynamic and stimulating place to work. Since few ICS supporters have the opportunity to experience the kinds of interesting interactions that occur between students and teachers here—the mutual learning that takes place in our classrooms, and the general enthusiasm for Christian scholarship that we cultivate—I want to tell you a story about a student and a teacher whose interaction created an interesting opportunity. It is the sort of opportunity that, in typical ICS fashion, benefits ongoing discussions in the larger academy and in the society at large.

The “teacher” in the story is me. One of the great things about teaching at ICS is a pedagogical flexibility that allows me and my colleagues to “seize the intellectual moment”. For example, this past fall I led a 13-week seminar on eminent Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor’s massive new book (896 pages!), *A Secular Age* (www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog/taysec.html).

The book itself was scheduled to be released on the same day the course began. Thankfully, there were no delays in publication, and students could acquire copies of the book in time for the beginning of the course. (I myself had been using an advance copy—in the form of Taylor’s own unedited MS Word files—provided to me by my good friend Simone Chambers of the U of T’s Political Science Department.) As a result, the 14 students who participated in this seminar were afforded an immediate and exciting opportunity to engage in a careful study of what is quickly becoming a landmark text in interdisciplinary religious studies. ICS students were thus able to “get in on the ground floor” of a larger conversation that has enormous potential for transforming dominant modern understandings of religion and secularity.

The student in this story is Jon Stanley. Jon is a PhD candidate at ICS, studying theology under the mentorship of Nik Ansell. Jon was not a participant in the Taylor seminar. But that’s the thing about ICS: the discussions spill out into the halls, the lunch room, local coffee shops, and even pubs where ICS students gather to argue with each other and swap ideas. Jon must have caught the importance of *A Secular Age* through this kind of osmosis. At any rate, he is also on the editorial board of an online publication called *The Other Journal* (www.theotherjournal.com). One day this spring, Jon came into my office and asked me if I would be willing to interview Taylor for *The Other Journal*.

I must admit to having been somewhat taken aback by the idea. Me?! Interview *Charles Taylor*?! I had never done anything like that before (although as a freshly minted ICS Master’s graduate I sought out, and managed to have lunch with, Richard Rorty at Stanford University—but that’s another story). When Jon’s request came I was also preparing for an intensive two-week Interdisciplinary Seminar devoted to the work of two extremely difficult philosophers, Theodor Adorno and Emmanuel Levinas. I was already feeling overwhelmed. So part of me wanted to decline the request, but another part of me said, “You should do this.” So I told Jon I would pursue the possibility.

Well, it took a couple of months of negotiating, but Taylor eventually consented to the interview. He was wrapping up his work as co-chair of the Province of Quebec’s Consultation Commission on Accommodation Practices Related to Cultural Differences (popularly known as the Quebec Commission), so the interview would have to wait until the completion of the commission’s final report (www.accommodements.qc.ca/

documentation/rapports/rapport-final-abrege-en.pdf)—right in the middle of the intensive Adorno/Levinas seminar!

For nearly an hour and a half, Taylor and I discussed everything from his work on the Quebec Commission and his book *A Secular Age* to his impression of the so-called “new atheism” and his ideas about the relationship between religious identity and what he calls an “age of authenticity”. I must say that this interview has been one of the most gratifying experiences of my academic career so far, and I am thankful to Jon for encouraging me to do it. To have a philosopher like Taylor, whose work you have studied closely, agree to speak with you one-on-one about whatever you would like—well, that opportunity was both incredibly daunting and exciting, but in the end also deeply rewarding.

Jon might not realize how much of a gift this opportunity has been to me, but again, that’s ICS at its best: a deeply nurturing academic environment in which blessings flow in all different directions. My hope is that the interview itself will help many people come to appreciate and understand not only Taylor’s important work, but also the various issues that vex a pluralistic culture in which the topic of religion can be extremely divisive.

The interview has been divided into three parts, the first two of which are now online at www.theotherjournal.com. The interview has already been cited on two other blogs: one, administered by the Social Science Research Council in New York, called “The Immanent Frame” (programs.ssrc.org/religion/); and the other by my friend James K.A. Smith, at “The Church and Post-modern Culture” (churchandpomo.typepad.com/conversation/2008/06/charles-taylor.html). Have a look and join the conversation. ●



Dr. Ron Kuipers
*Assistant Professor,
Philosophy of
Religion*

On (not) obeying the Sabbath



Nicholas Ansell
Professor of
Theology

Jesus' claim that "the Sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the Sabbath" (Mk. 2:27) is one of the most revolutionary of biblical texts, not least because it allows us to see how Jesus himself worked with Scripture.

What does Jesus mean? Read in context, which includes an appeal to the astonishing actions of King David from whom the Messiah would be descended, Jesus might be heard as saying that instead of 'obeying' this most holy of days, we are now free to let it serve us and thus serve life.

For some, this will sound very liberating. The idea that the fourth commandment is actually a blessing and that God's will might always have this empowering, freeing character might inspire us to embrace God's law in hope. But for others, saying that we are set free from obeying the Sabbath could sound so troubling. Surely this is putting things too strongly!

I think this is a very understandable reaction. At the same time, I

do not see how we can convey the meaning of Mk. 2:27 without saying something like this. Jesus' own account of the actions of King David, who took the bread of the Presence from the altar and offered it to his companions right in front of the High Priest (Mk. 2:25-26, 1 Sam. 21:1-6), points to a kind of Messianic freedom that is breathtaking. In Jesus' understanding, this is connected to the Son of Man being "Lord" over the Sabbath (verse 28). The claim that the Sabbath was "made for humankind" sees the Sabbath's holiness being expressed in the way it blesses the Messiah and serves all those made in God's image.

In the light of Jesus' words, we can begin to see that keeping the Sabbath means experiencing freedom in its radical, biblical sense. That is why, in the second account of the Ten Commandments (Deut. 5:12-15), observing the Sabbath is connected to the liberation from slavery in Egypt. In the first account (Exod. 20:8-11), we are to remember it in

the light of God's Sabbath—a time of unlimited, ongoing blessing (Gen. 2:3), for unlike the first six days in which there is evening and morning, this day is open-ended; God's Sabbath-time continues.

In Jesus' understanding, God, who does not obey the Sabbath, actively shows us how to keep this holy day in freedom. And as God's Messiah, Jesus embodies what he sees God doing in his own words and actions. This is explicit in Jn. 5:17-19 when Jesus defends healing on the Sabbath by saying, "My Father is still working, and I also am working. . . . Very truly, I tell you, the Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise."

But doing God's work in history is not understood within a spirituality of obedience. That is why Jesus' words are heard by his opponents as an idolatrous claim to equality with God (verse 18). Jesus is not doing what he is told so much as discerning God's work and extending it by making it his own.

Faced with this new language for imaging God, we might think that this pattern applies to Jesus but not to us. But when Jesus goes on to say that the Father will show the Son "greater works than these" (verse 20), we are being encouraged to connect this whole passage to Jn. 14:12, where Jesus says, "Very truly I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these"

If this is how Jesus understands keeping the Sabbath, what about other biblical commands? If we believed that, like the Sabbath, Scripture is given to serve us, would that mean the end of biblical authority? Or the beginning? ●

Nicholas Ansell is Professor of Theology at ICS.



Lambert
Zuidervaart

KUDOS

Congratulations to ICS Senior Member Dr. Lambert Zuidervaart, whose book *Social Philosophy after Adorno* (Cambridge UP, 2007) was recently selected as the winner of the Symposium Book Award. This is the second time one of Lambert's books has won the award. His earlier book, *Artistic Truth* (Cambridge UP, 2004), was the 2006 winner. (See www.icscanada.edu/bookshop/.)

The book will be discussed in a review essay to be published in *Symposium*, the journal of the Canadian Society for Continental Philosophy. Lambert will also be a featured keynote speaker at the society's annual congress, to be held in Montreal October 30 to November 1. ●

ICS Summer School 2008

While the sun was shining and some were heading to the beach to relax, others were making their way to downtown Toronto to be challenged by the offerings of the Institute's summer school. The courses, in the areas of philosophy, biblical studies, rhetorical theory, aesthetics, educational psychology, and theology, did not disappoint.

Students took the courses for academic credit, general interest, or professional development, as in the case of the pastors who took in the course on Romans. Low student-teacher ratios offered good opportunities for interaction. "Students benefited tremendously from tutorial access to respected and dynamic scholars," said Shawn Stovell, ICS Director of Student Services.

A SAMPLING OF SOME OF ICS SUMMER SCHOOL 2008'S OFFERINGS

Dr. Ron Kuipers summarized the course *Ethics After Auschwitz: Adorno and Levinas* as exploring how we are to think about ethics in the wake of the bloodiness of the 20th century. "It had to do with how to think about ethics and issues like community, solidarity, justice, hope, and reconciliation in a time after Auschwitz—where, at the height of modernity, the unthinkable happened," he said. Kuipers team-taught the course with ICS professors Dr. Shannon Hoff and Dr. Lambert Zuidervaat, as well as with ICS alum and King's University College professor Jeff Dudiak.

In Dr. Sylvia Keesmaat's course, *Romans: God, Israel, and Empire*, students considered the book of Romans, but not as a letter about theology. Instead they reflected on

its significance to believers living at the heart of the Roman empire, struggling with what it was to be followers of a saviour who had been crucified. "We explored how Israel lived under the shadow of empire through her whole story," said Keesmaat. The course also asked what that story might have to say to those living under the shadow of empire in the 21st century.

In a course titled *The Weakness of God*, ICS professor emeritus Dr. Jim Olthuis focused attention on the work of John D. Caputo. Students were excited at the opportunity to meet and study with Caputo, who co-taught the course. "Traditionally, the power of God is often played off against the love of God. If God is all-powerful, and there is evil in the world, what then?" said Olthuis, noting that Caputo begins by looking at the weakness of God instead. "God's love makes God vulnerable," said Olthuis. Identifying the Christian

position as one recognizing that as heirs of God we are called to suffer with him, Olthuis asserted that it is our calling also to suffer with the creation and with our fellows.

Other summer courses included:

Feminism, Faith and Rhetoric, taught by Dr. Helen Sterk

Art, Beauty and God: Recurrent Themes in Theological Aesthetics, taught by Dr. Adrienne Dengerink Chaplin and Dr. Wessel Stoker

Advanced Educational Psychology, taught by Dr. Gloria Stronks

To learn more about programs and courses at ICS, see www.icscanada.edu/students

Feminism, Faith and Rhetoric (from left to right): David Laville, Robbin Burry, Rae Perigoe, Helen Sterk, David Jansma



Successful MA thesis defences

Legend

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



DAN JESSE

May 2, 2008

Examination committee: Isabella Guthrie-McNaughton (**c**), Nik Ansell (**m**); Dan Jesse; Ron Kuipers (**ie**); Tom Reynolds (**ee**)

Title: Theologizing in Vain: a Dialogue With Ellul Between Truth and Reality



ROB BRINK

April 21, 2008

Examination committee: Ron Kuipers (**c**), Shannon Hoff (**ie**), Robert Brink, Simone Chambers (**ee**), Jonathan Chaplin (**m**)

Title: Education and Political Authority: Procedure, Jurisdiction, Substantive Goodness, and the Specificity of Schools

Successful Master of Worldview Studies graduates



**MATTHEW
HARRISON**



**JASON
POSTMA**



**STEVEN
VAN DE HOEF**



**LORRAINE
VOORBERG**

Ministry on the expressway

BY SOPHIE VANDENBERG

Comparing the university to an expressway, with a diversity of perspectives and worldviews that function as its on- and off-ramps, University of Guelph campus minister and ICS alum James Vanderberg found that his ICS experience proved invaluable. “ICS equipped me well to listen to other perspectives and understand them on their terms,” he said.

ICS alum Rick Van Manen, now University of Alberta campus minister, agrees. “You can’t be dogmatic. You have to be able to express what you believe about things without closing down the conversation,” said Van Manen, who also chairs the Interfaith Committee at U of A.

Van Manen finds that few on campus are certain about things. “The temptation is to get them to sort everything out. ICS taught me that that’s not the best way to go with students, staff, and faculty at the university.” A better approach is to build a community where people can raise their questions without fear. “You don’t have to have everything figured out to be part of the group,”

he said, describing his ministry.

The seminar style of learning that Vanderberg and Van Manen experienced at ICS created space where they were able to wrestle with complexities and tough questions. “The learning process was done as a community where junior and senior members alike had a role to play in the dialogue that was taking shape at ICS,” said Vanderberg.

Dr. Jim Olthuis, Vanderberg’s mentor at ICS, shaped the way Vanderberg works with the students he himself now mentors on the Guelph campus. “Jim inspired his students to find their passion, learn more about it, pursue it, and develop their gifts,” said Vanderberg.

Vanderberg is now passionate about mentoring. “Campus ministry is primarily Christ-centred, student-led ministry. The campus minister’s primary role is to inspire, mentor, encourage, and then get out of the way.”

Dr. Sylvia Keesmaat was Van Manen’s ICS mentor. “Every time she opened the Bible I was blown away,” said Van Manen, who took all the

courses she offered. “ICS opened up fresh ways of looking at the biblical text.” His graduate work in Israel’s wisdom tradition now shows up in his ministry on the U of A campus. Over the past year a group studied Proverbs, and this fall a study will focus on Ecclesiastes. The ministry’s website picks up the wisdom theme as well. (See www.seekingwisdom.ca.)

One of Vanderberg’s primary avenues for engaging students on the Guelph campus is through social justice issues. At a *Make Poverty History* meeting, Vanderberg asked students why they would care for the poor. It sparked significant conversation. Two of the students were Christians. “One said that if everyone is made in the image of God, there’s incentive and responsibility,” said Vanderberg, noting that there were a host of responses around the table. “Not all were on the same page. But my time at ICS enabled me to partner with them, seeing the commonalities, the differences, and the good in the various perspectives.” (See www.slcs.uoguelph.ca/faiith/christianreformed.cfm.) ●



Promotion for an anti-trafficking event on the University of Guelph campus. From left to right: Jamie Vanderberg, Leah Culver, Kate Laing, and Joe Brunsting

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with ICS Alumnus

DAVID SMITH

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David is the Director of the Kuyers Institute for Christian Teaching and Learning at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, MI.

Vancouver | Jan 24
Calgary | Feb 28
Edmonton | March 21

Other locations to be announced: Toronto, Ottawa, and the USA

questions / comments: contact jkrabbe@icscanada.edu

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Institute for Christian Studies

9:00 AM, SATURDAY, 27 SEPTEMBER 2008

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528 Burnhamthorpe Road West, Oakville, ON

Info: www.icscanada.edu/events/



ANOTHER BRICK IN THE WALL

JUST ANOTHER BRICK IN THE WALL

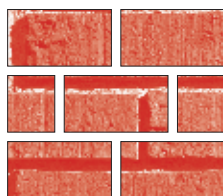
Why We Don't Join Institutions Anymore

WILL OUR CHURCH HAVE CHILDREN?

Emergent Possibilities

Keynote Speaker: **Bob Sweetman**

Historian of Philosophy at ICS



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