

## Wright Proposes New Paradigm for New Testament Studies

SEP 16 1991 *Brian Walsh*

When Oxford New Testament scholar N. Thomas Wright comes to the ICS we know that we are in for some exciting biblical scholarship. Wright knows that he is in for an in-depth and creative discussion that he says he finds nowhere else. This pattern was repeated during his two day conference on "The People and the Book" at ICS on July 5 and 6.

This event was co-sponsored with Wycliffe College of the Toronto School of Theology; it was co-chaired by Brian Walsh of ICS and Reverend Grant Lemarchand of Wycliffe. More than twenty people participated in two days of reflection on the task of New Testament scholarship at the end of the twentieth century.

What was unique about this conference wasn't the illuminating exegesis that Wright served up for us — we have come to expect that! What was unique was that Wright offered us the basic contours of a new paradigm that he is developing for New Testament theology. The lectures

were taken from the first volume of a large project that Wright has embarked upon under the general title *The Origin of Christianity and the People of God*. The first volume is tentatively titled *Whose Vineyard? The New Testament and the People of God*. In this volume (to be published by Augsburg/Fortress in North America) Wright unpacks the interrelationship of historical, literary and theological study of the New Testament. And he further proposes a "Worldview" analysis of the text that attends to the interrelated roles of story, worldview questions, symbols, praxis, beliefs and intentions in the text, the actors in the story, and in the historical/cultural context of the first century.

The participants in this seminar agreed that the model Wright has developed is exciting and holds great promise for the task ahead of him. We wait for the results and hope to have Wright back frequently to give us progress reports. ☐



N. Thomas Wright, right, with Brian Walsh.

Perspective

OUR  
35<sup>th</sup>.  
YEAR

# Perspective

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RJK



## From the President's Pen

by Harry Fernhout

### Seeing Miracles

Twenty years ago, for a college philosophy course, I wrote a paper on the subject of miracles. The central argument of that paper was that we're on the wrong track if we regard miracles as "supernatural" interventions of the "natural" order. There is no such thing as a "natural order" which is somehow distinct from the "miraculous". According to the Scriptures, the "natural order" is itself a miracle. The Bible is full of references to the wondrous deeds of God, and those deeds cover the whole spectrum of God's activity in creating, caring for, and redeeming the world in Jesus Christ. "How many are your works, O Lord! In wisdom you made them all" (Ps. 104:24). Wherever God is busy, wonders — miracles — occur. Each new flower, each new baby, each healed sickness, each believing person manifests the miraculous working of the Lord God.

In this light, the proper question to ask is not "Do you believe in miracles?" but "Can you see this miracle?" When we see and stand in awe of the wondrous deeds of God in our individual lives and in the world around us, then we recognize the miraculous.

Why am I reminded, in 1991, of my college-level treatise on miracles? Because some recent events in the life

of the Institute for Christian Studies have rekindled the topic. One of these events occurred on the morning of July 29, when Ross Mortimer, our Vice President of Administration, came to work. Unremarkable, you say? Not when you consider that only three weeks earlier Ross was in surgery for the removal of a damaged disk from his spine!

As you know, Ross left his youth behind some years ago. It would be impolite for me to divulge his exact age. Let's just say that he's about half way between three score and ten, and four score years. So when Ross' health deteriorated quickly in June, all of us were deeply concerned. What a delight, then, to see him back at ICS in late July, with a new sparkle in his eye, after less than half the expected recovery time! For this wondrous deed of God we give praise and thanks.

Another miraculous event occurred on June 30, when the Institute's financial year ended. For the first time in at least a dozen years, ICS finished a fiscal year without incurring a deficit. Yes, you read that right. We completed 1990-91 with a balanced budget!

I consider this a double miracle. From a financial point of view, the very fact that ICS has continued to



The Mortimers, right, attend ICS (Niagara) Conference.

Photo: Rita van der Veen



Photo: R.J. Klein

Harry Fernhout and Fred Reinders announce miracle at ICS Conference.

exist for 24 years, even with persistent deficits, is thoroughly amazing. Humanly speaking, the idea of a graduate school that exists on the basis of voluntary gifts from a community of supporters is unthinkable. As I often point out to whoever will listen, ICS is unique in its degree of dependence on voluntary gifts. Most Christian educational institutions rely, to a large extent, on tuition income to fuel their operations. But at the graduate level things are different, primarily because the number of students per professor is, of necessity, much lower. This means that ICS must look elsewhere for its major source of income. More than any other educational institutions I know, we rely on the open-hearted giving of those who are convicted of the importance of Christ-centred graduate-level education. By most standards, this is a very unlikely formula for financial success. So the very fact that ICS continues to exist, year after year, even with financial hardship, is nothing short of amazing. If we have eyes to see, we can recognize a miracle.

And then to be blessed with a balanced budget, in a year when all the economic talk is about recession! Talk about having our expectations shaken up! We entered 1990-91 with a projected deficit of just over \$100,000. In addition, ICS needed to pay almost \$120,000 to finish and furnish out new facilities. You can imagine that Trustees and staff experienced a fairly high level of fiscal anxiety. No doubt a forecast of a balanced budget would have been greeted with a heavy dose of scepticism.

God has surprised us, and we stand amazed. The money hasn't fallen from

## Transfiguring the Imagination: A Personal Reflection on Oxford '91

Cal Seerveld

It was a tiring and yet exhilarating task for me to give two plenary lectures at the two-week Summer Institute held at Kebel College, Oxford, sponsored by the C.S. Lewis Foundation for Christian Higher Education of Redlands, California. The unifying theme of the conference and its many workshops — "creation, fall, redemption, and consummation" — focused on "imagination." I was assigned addresses in the area of creation and on how sin has affected imagining, then later added to a panel on the day reserved for "consummation."

Good for me was the experience of being a faculty member among dozens of Episcopalian and Roman Catholic professionals, as well as evangelicals devoted to the apologetics of C.S. Lewis, who were serious about coming to grips with how the biblical faith shapes our thinking and artistic endeavours. Our Reformational tradition has the systematic rigour of perspective and a supple grip on the complexities of historical deed that wins the respect of others. And I was fortified by intense discussion on prayer with a charismatic Catholic, on Christian direction for actual policy-setting by a New York management consultant, on how to deal with deconstructivist art history profs by a doctoral student at the University of California, on the relation of modernity to traditional craft by a Swedish-Dutch sculptor. Two weeks give you time to continue conversations.

Highlights for me were dancing

English Country Dances one evening, with Luci Shaw as partner (whose poetry readings exemplified "the extraordinary ordinary" she highlights so well); experiencing my friend Grady Spires of Gordon College leading the daily 7:00 a.m. prayer sessions; listening to Os Guinness (a powerful speech on "The Weight of Glory and the Glory of Weight") and Paul Clowney (critical analysis of imagination in contemporary advertising art) challenge speakers who seemed content with the compartmentalization of professionalism and faith out of fear for proselytising; watching pacifist Stanley Hauerwas who happened to lecture on the Fourth of July deal with the patriotism of Americans present; eating meals with Tom Howard to chat about the Roman Catholic and Calvinian way of being current and attached to or critical of our Western literary tradition, contrasting Flannery O'Connor and Alan Paton. . . .

Two weeks among stimulating lectures, with "whimseys" (humourous skits) prepared for performance at every coffee break, with concerts, films, art shows, and theatre every night, always facing the struggle that young artists meet today, amid continuous dialogue from morning to night, can be a bit much to come home from. But the educative refreshment I found, like good recreation, edifies, and gives one renewed courage to face routine, and the academic's tension of deadlines. [P]

the sky; it has come from the heart of our support community. In that sense, our blessings are "ordinary"; yet in these ordinary means we see a miracle; we stand in amazement, and we give thanks.

Miracles can be scary. If the truth be known, a small number of exceptionally large gifts put our budget over the top in 1990-91. There is, of course, no guarantee that these unusual gifts will be repeated. This underlines the Institute's vulnerability

and dependency. But that's par for the course. There's no point in letting the blessings of last year instill anxiety about the coming one. So we need to move ahead with confidence, knowing that each day of our lives is a miracle, and waiting with anticipation for the new challenges and surprises God has in store for us.

All of us at ICS thank God and you, God's channels, for your part in helping us recognize the presence of miracles. [P]

# ICS (Niagara) Conference



## GOD IS HERE!

God is here! As we your people meet to offer praise and prayer, may we find in fuller measure what it is in Christ we share. Here, as in the world around us, all our varied skills and arts wait the coming of your Spirit into open minds and hearts.

Here are symbols to remind us of our lifelong need of grace; here are table, font, and pulpit, here the Word has central place. Here in honesty of preaching here in silence as in speech, here in newness and renewal God the Spirit comes to each.

Here our children find a welcome in the Shepherd's flock and fold; here, as bread and wine are taken, Christ sustains us as of old. Here the servants of the Servant seek in worship to explore what it means in daily living to believe and to adore.

Lord of all, of church and kingdom, in an age of change and doubt, keep us faithful to the gospel, help us work your purpose out. Here, in this day's celebration, all we have to give, receive; we who cannot live without you, we adore you! We believe!

Fred Pratt Green  
Psalter Hymnal #516  
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# When Values Collide



## Legend:

*Clockwise, from top left:*

Glenda Hull leads in song,  
Marshall delivers keynote  
address,  
Participants attend workshop,  
Communion is personalized,  
ICS Summer Olympics displays  
talents,  
The elements are ready.  
Children enjoy crafts.

Photographs by Rita van der Veen

## Excerpts from the Keynote Addresses

### *Paul Marshall*

☪ The first thing that needs to be said about life in a plural society is that we must love our neighbours and enemies and that our politics should be one manifestation of this love...

☪ One of the major problems in our society is that liberalism often claims and pretends to be the only form of pluralism.

It says that pluralism requires the least possible amount of interference with individual freedom and that this in turn requires keeping religion confined to private life.

Why should religion be kept out of public life? Because, for liberalism, ignoring religious differences is the only way we can live in harmony, doing justice with one another...

☪ You may say, "I have to declare my faith." Well if nobody listens to you or understands you, then you're not declaring your faith, you are just using meaningless words. Communication is not what is said; it's what's heard...

☪ We're fearful of change; I don't think we should be. The world, and history, and change is in God's hands. The kingdom of God is coming, which means that if things don't change, it'll never get here.

Change, then, is very important. We need to put aside our fear and be open to what happens.

Often our drive is less to do good than it is to avoid sin...

☪ If we don't have a church life which is solid as a community and a witness, then we will undercut everything else we are involved in.

Unless we have people who are involved not just in Christian organizations but who are in daily interaction within organizations together with non Christians, then we will never understand much of what is happening in the world.

Unless in our denominations and in our preaching we understand the relation of the Word of God to the world outside, then there will be little direction in the laity of the church.

Unless we work in an organized fashion within Christian organizations then we will have very little impact...

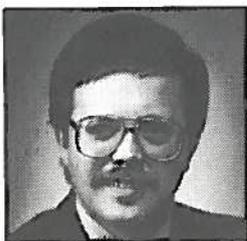
☪ The church by and large did not learn from within that you should not oppress people with whom you disagree. We did not learn that from ourselves, we learned it from people similar to those we castigate now as humanists. It was a good lesson.

We need to hear Muslims, secularists, liberals, others. Why? Because we'll learn something.

Remember, this is God's world, not just God's church. God works in the world as well as in the church.

We need to hear...

☪ We should care for the interests of others and not just ourselves. It was said that Christians often say "justice", but often mean "just us"... 



# Development Notes

by John Meiboom

## Balanced Budget

As many of you know the OPEN DOORS 1990/91 annual fund campaign was a success. The Institute ended its fiscal year with a \$19,000 surplus. I hope that you will, together with us, give thanks to God for this blessing!

This past year began with ICS needing \$900,000 in voluntary income to cover its operating budget and the capital budget for renovations to its facilities. This was about 50% more than we had raised in any previous year. And this in a recession year!

We want to say thank you to so



Photo: Rita van der Veen

many of you who have faithfully upheld ICS in prayer through this past year. It is a strong partnership that exists between those who pray for ICS, those who fund the ICS and those who are at ICS (many of you occupy two places in that three-way partnership).

## Summer Conferences

Over 1,000 people took in some part of the ICS Family Conference at Niagara this past August long weekend. There will be many stories to tell of this event, coverage of which appears elsewhere in this issue of Perspective. If you were not there, I hope you can someday take in one of the ICS summer conferences, whether in Ontario, Alberta or British Columbia.

I stated in a note to those attending the conference that these events have at least two purposes: 1) to offer opportunity for Christians to grapple with timely issues lead by academics and other leaders of our Christian community; 2) to promote the idea of Christian higher education, particularly the Institute for Christian Studies. I believe that both purposes were met at the 1991 Niagara conference.

Left: Coffee fellowship at the 1991 ICS Family Conference at Niagara.

# Chairman's Corner

F. J. Reinders

In October of last year the Institute on Religion and Public Life sponsored a conference on "Religion and the Open University". The message was conveyed that many educators consider "openness" as the single highest value of the modern University. However, the fact is that most Universities are not open to religion.

The historic development of civilization has increasingly focused and over-emphasized the scientific ideal in all disciplines of study. Today, the driving economic forces are helping to push Christian thinking outside the framework of higher education. Furthermore, the standards set by professional associations are based on secular, cultural consensus and technological achievements, giving the impression that Christian life views are irrelevant.

Christian parents and Christian ed-

ucators too often want their children and students to gain economic and social benefits from education because the vision of Christian service and witness has become blurred. Nevertheless, the pursuit of our twentieth century ideals is not satisfying to, nor congruent with Christian ideals and eventually will lead to a loss of identity for Christians.

The Institute for Christian Studies aims specifically at equipping students with reformational Christian foundations. The importance of clear Christian thinking for business, government, sociology and technology cannot be over-emphasized.

A group of Christian leaders in our Christian community has recognized the significance of the ICS and will encourage its growth and influence through a Chairman's Council. The Chairman's Council will advise the



Photo: R.J. Klein

Chairman Reinders. Seated is former ICS president Clifford Pitt.

## Membership

My hope is that more of those who attended and enjoyed this conference will now become members of ICS. We are a member based organization and it has been a long time since we have had growing membership numbers.

Might this be the year to change that? Wouldn't it be exciting to see membership grow from the present number of nearly 1,000 to 1,500 or even 2,000 this year? It could happen with a little help from our present membership.

It can also happen if you, who are not members at this time, become partners in this educational enterprise. Why not join us now? Don't wait to be asked personally. Send the \$60 membership donation now (\$10 for students)! We will send you the membership information.

## Future Plans

It is often said that if an organization stands still, it begins to go backwards. There is a desire to begin fulfilling the vision for ICS that has been there for 35 years or so.

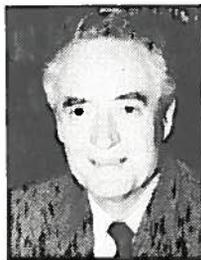
There are plans for a 25th anniversary campaign to raise funds towards making that vision a reality in the next decade. I hope you are praying about that. We need God's grace and wisdom as we move forward in service to the Kingdom.

Chairman, President and Board on various matters and on a regular basis will organize meetings featuring prominent speakers of National and International renown, to stimulate Christian thinking in all areas of living.

Christian Higher Education at the ICS has the support of our colleges and educators. It needs a stronger, broader backing as well as understanding by the Christian community so that we can counter the subtle, undermining trends of a secular society.

It is an illusion to suggest that the professions, business and government can do without the perspective of Christian viewpoints. We confess that the heartbeat of life is found in our relationship to God and our neighbours and not in our possessions and importance of status.

I urge you to pass on the vision that Christian Higher Education is essential to turn the tide of faithless irrelevance. [P]



# Serving through Public Education

by Robert E. VanderVennen

## What Right Does Ethics Have?

You can buy a new book with this intriguing title from ICS. It contains papers given at the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Philosophy Department (formerly called the Central Interfaculty) of the Free University of Amsterdam.

ICS was invited through James Olthuis to participate, and Jim's paper is included under the title *An Ethics of Compassion: Ethics in a Post-Modernist Age*. Calvin College was represented by a paper from Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen, a response to a paper by Peter De Vos and an Epilogue by Nicolas Wolterstorff.

The central paper in the book is by Karl-Otto Apel, a German philosopher who spoke to the urgent need for macro-ethics. He argues that the problem of a rational grounding for ethics is not a meaningful problem, and in any case, it cannot be solved. Sander Griffioen — former ICS Senior Member and editor of the book — and Rene van Woudenberg have written an interview they had with Apel on the universality of ethics.

Olthuis in his paper says that with the demise of foundationalism the dominant narratives in our Western tradition have come into crisis. He asks: Is ethics possible? If so, in what shape? He explores three themes on the way to the formation of a post-modern ethics. Taking note of Heidegger's "originality" ethics, in the wake of the demise of foundationalism, Olthuis suggests ideas attuned to the hermeneutic theories of Gadamer and Ricoeur, and practised by Hauerwas, are promising avenues for the development of an "ethics of responsibility." An "ethics of dissemination," which is also an ethics of hope and compassion, recognized God's energizing and healing presence. Such an ethics of compassion opens its arms, wallets and hearts to embrace those who are vulnerable.

We are making Olthuis's paper available separate from the book. See the Order Form in this issue.

## Olthuis publishes paper on Caputo's hermeneutics

We are making available a paper published in *Christian Scholar's Review* by James Olthuis in response to a recent book by American philosopher John Caputo. Caputo deals brilliantly with the hermeneutic school of thought of Hans-Georg Gadamer and the deconstructionism of Jacques Derrida, both of which have roots in the thought of Heidegger, though they are largely antithetical to each other.

Olthuis in his paper says that Caputo moves in the right direction by trying to keep Derrida and the late Heidegger in tension. Not wanting to give up on hermeneutics nor to take a nihilistic road, Caputo develops a deconstructive hermeneutics called "cold hermeneutics."

Olthuis suggest that "Truly surrendering to the dynamics — and difficulty — of life means letting God's suffering love flow through us as the inner dynamics of life." He invites Caputo to come out of the cold to a warmer hermeneutics. The issues, says Olthuis, are crucial for Christians in their struggle with the poles of the tyranny of traditions and the denial that there is truth. See our Order Form for ordering information.

## Correspondence Courses

ICS continues to serve through its correspondence courses. Its seven courses serve a variety of people, with the course on Christian schools being the most popular.

The very low fee of \$100 for each course has not been changed since the program started in 1987. Recently the ICS trustees decided that to keep up with costs the price for each course should be increased to \$150. For this fee we continue to send without extra charge all books and papers needed for the course, and to provide an evaluation of the work the students send in. You can get information on the course by checking the appropriate line in our Order Form in this issue. [P]

# Perspective

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RECYCLED PAPER

## Goudzwaard to Lecture at ICS

Diane Klein

Dr. Bob Goudzwaard, Professor of Economics at the Vrije Universiteit (Free University) of Amsterdam will be in Toronto in December for two weeks of lectures at the ICS. The seminar, entitled "Connecting Economics and Ethics: Afterthought or Starting Point?", will be jointly sponsored by ICS and CPJ. It will be offered from 9:30 - 12:30 a.m., December 2nd through the 13th.

Economists, business people, and politicians accept the imperative of economic growth to fuel our standard of living. But the negative consequences of economic growth in a free market are usually addressed only as an afterthought, via a social "safety net" or environmental clean-up laws — provided that economic growth is sufficient to finance these ameliorating measures.

Christians are often prominent in the ranks of those who accept this two-track theory and practice in their approach to economics. An alternative approach, rooted in a biblical worldview, is sorely lacking in our time.

Goudzwaard's seminar will explore the possibility of starting with a more integral approach to economic issues. A view of economics normed by stewardship, justice and solidarity will be explored, to help equip Christians for service in this challenging dimension of life.

The course may be taken for credit in ICS's programs; interested individuals — graduate students, business persons, economists, social service workers, politicians, public sectors workers — are encouraged to audit the course. Please contact ICS at 1-416-979-2331 for registration information. 

## New and Current from ICS

### Books

What Right Does Ethics Have?	Griffioen and van Woudenberg, eds.	\$21.95
Langdon Gilkey: Theologian for a Culture in Decline	Brian Walsh	\$24.95
Search for Community in a Withering Tradition	Kai Nielsen and Hendrik Hart	\$22.95
Norm and Context in the Social Sciences	Sander Griffioen and Jan Verhoogt, eds.	\$25.95
Setting Our Sights by the Morning Star	Hendrik Hart	\$13.95
Christianity and the Classics	Wendy Helleman, ed.	\$16.95
No Splits	Steve Shaw	\$ 9.95
Stained Glass	Paul Marshall and others, eds.	\$17.50
Social Science in Christian Perspective	Paul Marshall and Robert Vander Vennen, eds.	\$23.95

### Papers

An Ethics of Compassion: Ethics in a Post-Modernist Age	James Olthuis	\$ 1.00
A Cold and Comfortless Hermeneutic or a Warm and Trembling Hermeneutic: A Conversation with John E. Caputo	James Olthuis	\$ 1.00

Please send me information on Correspondence Courses \_\_\_\_\_

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