



REPORT from the DIRECTOR, CENTRE for PHILOSOPHY, RELIGION and SOCIAL ETHICS

ANNUAL REPORT
WRITTEN ON APRIL 17, 2014

Prepared by Ronald A. Kuipers for the ICS Senate and Board Meetings, May 8-9, 2014

EVENTS

- *Toronto Interfaculty Colloquium (2 total).*
 1. November 15, 2013: Lambert Zuidervaart (Philosophy, ICS), “Critical Transformations: Macrostructures, Religion, Critique.” Respondent: Ron Kuipers (ICS).
 2. February 26, 2014: Eduardo Echeverria (Sacred Heart Major Seminary), “Divine Revelation and Foundationalism: Towards a Historically Conscious Foundationalism.” Respondent: Nik Ansell (ICS)
- *2013-14 ARCU Lecture*, March 20, 2014. Dr. Ryan McIlhenny (Providence Christian College), “Preserving the Common, Producing Difference: Neo-Calvinism and the Cultural Turn in the Humanities.” Board Room, Toronto School of Theology.
- *Art Talks!* March 27, 2014. *The Byzantine Icon is Alive and Well: The Practice and Reflections of Working Iconographer Lynette Hull.* Co-Sponsor: Toronto School of Theology.
- *Joint Book Launch* for the essay collection *Truth Matters: Knowledge, Politics, Ethics, Religion* (McGill-Queen’s) and Cal Seerveld’s 6-volume *Sundry Writings and Occasional Lectures* (Dordt), May 7, 2014. Respondents: Lambert Zuidervaart and Rebekah Smick.
- May 12-13, 2014. *Are We There Yet: Economic Justice and the Common Good.* 2-day conference on economic justice in partnership with The King’s University College in Edmonton, Alberta.

PROJECTS

- *Faith and Justice: Individual Spirituality and Social Responsibility in the Christian Reformed Church of Canada.* Year 1 of this 2-year, SSHRC-funded project is nearing completion. The core research team met bi-weekly during this period. Year 1 focused on data gathering and analysis. 3 RAs (2 ICS, 1 CCBP) developed a literature review of books and articles on the project theme, including a synopsis of same, all of which will be made available to the public at ICS’ Institutional Repository. 12 ‘Key Informant’ interviews (and counting) were conducted, and have been transcribed and are now being analyzed according to 3 core research questions. Finally, a 30-question online survey has been developed; at the time of writing of this report, the research team is securing ‘champions’ from 60 randomly selected, yet geographically representative, CR churches across Canada, who will in turn randomly select 6 participants to fill out the questionnaire. Roughly 20-30 people have already completed the survey. Ultimately, the survey will yield 360 responses from CRC congregants across the country, and the findings will be empirically accurate for the entire Canadian CRC population.
- *Are We There Yet? Economic Justice and the Common Good.* May 11-12, 2014. Final plans have been put in place for the follow-up to the successful 2012 Social Justice and Human Rights conference. The planning committee, consisting of Allyson and myself, two TKUC faculty (Michael De Moor and Gerda Kits), Wayne Prins of CLAC, Roy Berkenbosch of the Micah Centre, and Joe Gunn of CPJ, met bi-weekly throughout the academic year. During that time we secured commitments from two keynote speakers, developed a conference website and poster, developed a conference schedule of topical panels and solicited speakers for them, to name just a few of the many planning activities. In addition the CPRSE applied for funding from the Reid Trust (\$3000.00 granted) as well as from SSHRC (\$17,200.00 granted).
- *Truth Matters* (McGill-Queen’s UP). Editorial work wrapped up this year for this volume of proceedings of the CPRSE’s 2011 conference of the same name, and the book was published in late 2013. Congratulations to editors Allyson Carr, Lambert Zuidervaart, Matt Klassen, and Ronnie Shuker. A Book launch is scheduled for May 7 to coincide with ICS Board and Senate meetings.

FUND RAISING AND FRIEND RAISING

- *Grant Writing*. Two total:
 1. October 31, 2013, Reid Trust (\$3000.00 grant awarded for the Economic Justice conference)
 2. January 21, 2014, SSHRC Connection Grant Submission. (\$17,200.00 grant awarded for activities related to the Economic Justice Conference, including \$9000.00 for a new ICS RA position called “post-conference animator”). I should add that, due to our success with receiving SSHRC grants over the past couple of years, SSHRC is giving us an “indirect costs” allowance of \$34,720.00 for the 2014-15 academic year. This is unrestricted money that we can use to support our general budget.
- *Ongoing Advancement*. March 17, 2014. Doug and I met with Ton Lobert, head of corporate philanthropy for Voortman Cookies (following-up of a meeting Tom Wolthuis had with Harry Voortman); May 14-15, 2014. Travel to Edmonton following Economic Justice conference. John Leder of Supreme Steel has agreed to be on our business panel at the conference, and it would be a good idea to get a meeting with him to follow up on the meetings Tom had with him in Spring and Fall of 2013. At the very least, I plan to speak with him about supporting ICS while I am at the conference. I have set aside May 14-15 for Advancement work in the Edmonton area, and a reception for ICS supporters from the Edmonton area is being arranged. Major Donor stewardship and cultivation remains an issue in the wake of the departure of the ICS’ former Presidency, as I can only devote a limited and insufficient amount of time to this important work.
- *Co-Sponsors and Potential Partners*. This year, we continued significant partnership arrangements with the Toronto School of Theology (for *Art Talks!*); the CRCNA in Canada and the Centre for Community Based Research (Justice and Faith in the CRC); and the King’s University College (2014 Economic Justice Conference). We have been approached by the Canadian Evangelical Theological Association to co-host their 2014 Annual meeting, and have agreed to do so. We were also approached by Roseanne Kydd of the Anglican Communion Alliance to sponsor and help organize a lecture series featuring James K.A. Smith. The CPRSE has agreed to help with promotion, but our offer to contribute other intellectual content was not taken up, so for that reason we have decided not to be a financial sponsor for this event.

COMMUNICATIONS

- *Web*. Thanks to RA Matt Johnson, CPRSE’s *Ground Motive* blog (<http://www.groundmotive.net/>) has been very active throughout the year (I count 43 posts since July 1, 2013, which averages out to more than one post per week). This year we also handed out the “Dooyaward” for the best ICS Junior Member blog post, which went to Stefan Knibbe for the November 6, 2013 post “Rhetoric, the Other, and Boycotting *Ender’s Game*” (we awarded Stefan a \$100 gift certificate to Crux Books during a Pizza reception at ICS).
- *Social Media*. We have continued our efforts to communicate CPRSE events as well as new entries to the *Ground Motive* blog through such social media as Facebook and Twitter. As a result, the ICS Facebook page now has 533 ‘likes’. This continues to be an effective means for driving traffic to the ICS website and generally to draw attention to CPRSE and ICS activities.
- *Videos and Interviews*. Our strategy has been to use Daryl Kinsman as our in-house videographer. This is a more agile and cost-effective approach than retaining the services of a professional videographer, and we also decided that extremely high professional video quality is not necessary for the type of content we produce. One exception is the “Why Study at ICS?” video produced by Luke Seerveld with further editing by Daryl. Videos this year include interviews with: Ryan McIlhenny (Associate Professor, Providence College); Lynette Hull (Prosopon School of Iconology and Iconography); Professor Harry Anastasiou (International Peace and Conflict Studies, Portland State University’s Conflict Resolution Graduate Program and International Studies). Daryl, Allyson, and I are also working on a project video for the Justice and Faith in the CRC project, and Daryl will attend the Economic Justice conference in Edmonton in order to produce recorded content to add to our web site.
- CPRSE activities have also become a primary generator of news items for *Perspective* and other regular ICS publications.

PERSONNEL

- *Associate Director*. At .8 FTE, Allyson Carr works from the office three days a week as well as from home. We meet regularly to discuss everything from vision and strategy to event planning an organization. She

makes a formative contribution to CPRSE grantwriting efforts. Our highly productive working partnership continues apace.

- *Research Assistants*. This year the CPRSE employed 3 RA positions, 2 funded through our SSHRC grant. As already mentioned, JM Matt Johnson (MA) manages the *Ground Motive* blog, as a regular ICS RA appointment. Junior Members Joshua Harris (PhD) and Hector Acero (MA) have been retained as RAs for the SSHRC-funded Justice and Faith in the CRC project, compiling a literature review, writing blog posts, and attending research team planning meetings.
- *Research Associate*. We received a request from Peter Oulton (ThD, Wycliffe) to assume the unremunerated “Research Associate” position. This appointment still has to be officially made, pending formal approval of the category from the Professional Status Committee. I drafted a proposal about this for PSC, and it will likely go to Academic Council and Senate for formal approval this year.
- *Director* Ron Kuipers, .5 FTE. I continue to find the work associated with this position rewarding and meaningful. I am, however, feeling rather stretched between this position, my .5FTE faculty appointment, and my new Advancement responsibilities. I have also come to the reluctant conclusion that this past year at ICS has taken a significant toll on my overall mental, emotional, and physical health.

LOOKING AHEAD

Preliminary talks have begun with Rich Janzen at the CCBR about following up the successful SSHRC Partnership Development Grant with a full SSHRC *Partnership* Grant application (the same grant that Lambert pursued in 2010-11). The application procedure is a two stage process, and involves submitting a “Letter of Intent” application in the first year (which is not simply a letter, but an application as large as the one we wrote for the Partnership Development grant). Success at this stage means being awarded up to \$20,000.00 and being invited to apply for the Partnership grant proper. These latter grants are much more lucrative than the Partnership Development grant, and can be as high as \$500,000.00 per year to a maximum of \$2.5 million (spread over all the partners). The larger amount is explained by the fact that the Partnership grant is meant to fund much bigger projects involving many more partners. This time, the partners would include other groups the CCBR is working with on another Partnership Development grant exploring the role religious communities play in the integration of refugees. The idea would be to propose a multi-partnered project on the public impact of religious communities in Canada. Potential partners include the EFC and Cardus.

Plans for a peer-reviewed online journal and a thematic lecture series have been put on hold, due to lack of capacity to develop these initiatives properly.

Next year will likely see us finding a partner and laying the groundwork for another major conference in 2016. No major conference is being planned for 2015.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The CPRSE continues to be a busy hub of activity at ICS. This year more than ever we have seen its public outreach potential come to fruition through *Facebook* and *Ground Motive*, and through such events as the ARCU lecture, the Toronto Interfaculty Colloquium, Art Talks!, The Economic Justice conference, book launches, and the SSHRC-funded research partnership that has brought us into direct dialogue with people in the CRC. It is unfortunate that all this good work has been clouded by the departure of Dawn and Tom Wolthuis from ICS. That said, the CPRSE continues to pursue initiatives that advance the mission of ICS, and thus it remains helpful to our ongoing advancement efforts, as originally intended.

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