

PERSPECTIVE

Institute for Christian Studies

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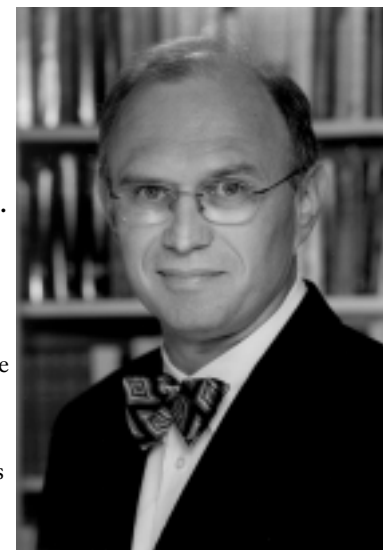
Christianity and Learning Lectures 2003

Miroslav Volf on love's memory

Dr. Miroslav Volf's appearance as a guest speaker was another feather in the cap of this lecture series presented and hosted annually by the Institute.

This year's Christianity and Learning Lectures (Feb. 27 & 28) marked another milestone in the over twenty-year tradition of the lecture series presented and hosted annually by the Institute for Christian Studies. The ICS event proudly featured **Dr. Miroslav Volf** as its guest speaker, who flew up to Toronto from Yale University for the two-day event in response to the personal invitation extended to him by **Dr. George Vandervelde**. Dr. Volf's appearance was another feather in the cap of this distinguished lecture series. He joined a list of prominent previous speakers, among them such thinkers as **John D. Caputo**, **Timothy Noone**, **Merold Westphal**, **Richard Kearney**, **Jean Bethke Elstein** and **Langdon Gilkey**.

Miroslav Volf is considered by many to have one of the most fertile and provocative Christian minds today. Born in Osijek (in present-day Croatia) and raised in communist Serbia, this son of a Pentecostal pastor earned a master's degree at Fuller Theological Seminary and a doctorate at the University of Tübingen, studying under Jürgen Moltmann. Volf has been the Henry B. Wright Professor of Theology at Yale Divinity School since 1998. As a young man in communist Yugoslavia, Volf saw firsthand the ethnic frictions that turned bloody after the breakup of that country. His quest for a resolution to the violence and bloodshed in his country led him on a journey of intense theological reflection which soon caught the notice of the academic world. His widely-read 1996 book *Exclusion & Embrace* probed theological implications of reconciliation in a fractured world.



"Dante in the River Lethe" Gustave Doré (1832-1883) The Divine Comedy.

Most recently, this book has won the prestigious 2002 Louisville Grawemeyer Award in Religion. In the first lecture of a series entitled "Love's Memory," Volf retold a story from Dante's *Divine Comedy* in which the pilgrim walks through hell and purgatory until he reaches the garden of earthly pleasures where he discovers two rivers. First, there is the stream of "Lethe," the waters of which help one forget sin, and "Eunoe," the waters which bring to mind good deeds. For Dante, the river of unmindfulness removes a permanent stain that the forgiven sin leaves upon the soul if it continues to be remembered. Drinking the water is a purification from the guilt of sin's hold. According to Volf, the heavenly paradise in Dante can only begin after sins have disappeared from memory.

This image of the two rivers formed the basis for Volf's own position on memory in which he defended a version of Dante's vision. Volf proposed that memories of sin and suffering will not be remembered in the world of perfect love — a "strange and dangerous" suggestion in a post-Holocaust world where we are encouraged to "never forget" the evils of violence, genocide and cruelty by which we characterize our present age. Volf's thoughts on memory, far from abstract theoretical arguments, are deeply rooted in Volf's experience as a Croatian who has experienced the horror of Balkan warfare. Such memories are essential "in this world" Volf argued, for seeking justice — but will not

(Continued on page 3)

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// Specifically, we are asking for legislative authorization to change our 'Master of Philosophical Foundations' degree to 'Master of Philosophy' and the right to grant the Ph.D. degree



A walk toward the future

On February 19 I took a short, four-block walk that could have major, long-term benefits for the Institute for Christian Studies. My destination was the Office of the Clerk of the Ontario Legislature, where I delivered an application for a 'Private Bill' amending the existing Institute for Christian Studies Act.

The ICS is seeking two key amendments to the current Act: we want to change the name of one of our master's degrees and we are asking for the right to grant the Ph.D. degree.

Long-time ICS supporters will remember the arduous struggle in the early 1980's to secure a degree-granting charter from the Ontario Legislature. When the original ICS Act became law in 1983, we won the right to grant the "Master of Philosophical Foundations" degree. This degree name represented a creative compromise. Existing government policy stated that only publicly-funded universities could give 'standard' degrees. The government took the position that, because of our Christian identity, the ICS should be restricted to granting theological degrees. The ICS took the position that, since our programs were philosophical (not theological) in nature, we should be allowed to grant a 'standard' degree in philosophy, comparable to degrees offered by other graduate schools in philosophy. The "Master of Philosophical Foundations" designation represented a creative compromise that met key concerns of both the government and the ICS; the government could accept it because it was not a 'standard' degree and ICS could accept it because it reflected the nature of our program.

The 1983 Act also allowed the ICS to offer programs leading to the Ph.D. degree, provided that another institution authorized by the Ontario government would grant the actual degree. As noted above, government policy restricted 'standard' degrees to the mainstream universities. And at the doctoral level there's no room for compromise; the degree is either a Ph.D. or it isn't. In 1983 the creative solution was to place the ICS doctoral program under the "Ministerial Consent" policy for out-of-province institutions. In 1983 the Vrije Universiteit (VU) in Amsterdam received Ministerial Consent to provide a program of doctoral studies in Ontario. Everyone understood that this program would be offered at and by the Institute for Christian Studies. The ICS program was modeled on the formal requirements of the VU Department of Philosophy. The ICS and the VU developed an agreement outlining the conditions under which the VU would give ICS students advanced standing and admit them directly to the thesis writing stage. However, ICS had to publish a statement in all recruitment material stating that the "Ministerial Consent" did not imply that the Government of Ontario took responsibility for the quality of the program. The VU had to reapply for Consent every three years. Neither of these conditions was an asset to the program!

The degree-granting provisions of the 1983 Act gave the ICS legitimacy and enabled us to serve a generation of graduate students. However, we realize that our unusual degree names and the unusual doctoral studies arrangement are a handicap. We always need to explain the unfamiliar nature and status of our degrees to both individuals and institutions.

Our students and graduates face barriers when, at times, their qualifications for jobs or further graduate programs are assessed not on the basis of the content and quality of their studies but on the basis of the unusual name of their degree.

In the spring of 2000 the Ontario government initiated major changes with regard to degree granting. In my column in the June 2000 issue of *Perspective* (under the title "Degrees of Persistent Prayer") I called it a "tidal change in policy." The government proposed to create a framework in which privately-funded institutions could apply for degree-granting authority appropriate for their programs. This framework has gradually been implemented and now the ICS hopes to capitalize on new opportunities.

Specifically, we are asking for legislative authorization to change our "Master of Philosophical Foundations" degree to "Master of Philosophy." This time-honoured and recognizable designation is very appropriate because it accurately reflects the central philosophical focus of the program. We are also asking for the right to grant the Ph.D. degree. This does not mean that the ICS plans to terminate its arrangement with the VU; we believe that this partnership and our affiliation with the Toronto School of Theology (TST) make excellent sense for our relatively small institution. However, we believe that in light of more than twenty years of experience and success in offering an excellent doctoral program (confirmed by the VU's willingness to grant its respected Ph.D. to our students), it is now time to set the uncertainties of the Ministerial Consent policy aside and to secure the permanent right to grant the doctoral degree. Once this is secured, ICS can take its current partnerships to a new level by exploring, for example, the option of joint degree-granting with the VU or the TST.

Clearly, there was much at stake when I walked to the Legislature that cold February morning. The academic status of the ICS, and the long-term future of our programs, will be greatly enhanced by the proposed changes. At this point, we are not certain that our proposed bill will be dealt with when the Legislature reconvenes in March; it is widely expected that the Premier will cut the spring session short with an election call. However, we are determined to be ready for every opportunity, so we invite friends of ICS around the world to hold this matter before God in prayer. We know from experience that God does answer persistent prayer about Ontario degree-granting policy!

upcoming events

ICS Ontario Summer Conference
August 16, 2003,
Redeemer University
College, Ancaster

The Beautiful Risk:
*Finding our passion,
opening our hearts*
To love or not to love:
that is the question.

Open hearts, or hearts that are closed, disengaged, troubled and joyless. Connecting and reconnecting with our authentic selves, others, creation and God – the healing of our hearts – is a journey that is an awesome dance in which we are caught up in the flow of God's love.

Join us for a new one-day format, with keynote

of today. Such exploration is essential if the church is to become "a royal priesthood" today. Contributors include Oliver O'Donovan (respondent to 14 chapters), Gilbert Meilaender, Christopher Rowland, Bernd Wannewetsch, N. T. Wright, Jonathan Chaplin and James Skillen.

A Royal Priesthood? is the third volume from the Scripture and Hermeneutics Seminar. This annual gathering of Christian scholars from various disciplines was established in 1998 and aims to reassess the discipline of biblical studies from the foundations up and forge creative new ways for reopening the Bible in our cultures.

Any attempt to open the Book in new and fresh ways for our cultures at the start of the third millennium must explore how to read the Bible ethically and politically. This volume looks at the obstacles to such a process and in dialogue with Oliver O'Donovan's creative work in this regard, looks in detail at how to read different parts of the Bible for ethics and politics.



Extraordinarily illuminating and a model of intellectual engagement... Firstrate!



Nicholas Wolterstorff,
*Noah Porter Professor of
Philosophical Theology,*
Yale University
& ICS Senator

ICS presence at major conferences on the Bible & Religion

Thousands of scholars converged on Toronto between November 23-26 to review the latest religion and Bible research at the 2002 annual meetings of the American Academy of Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature. The joint meetings of the AAR and SBL drew more than 7,000 this year.

ICS was involved with these meetings on several levels. **Sylvia Keesmaat**, Senior Member in Biblical Studies at ICS delivered a paper at the Society of Biblical Literature entitled "Paul's World Creation: Suspicious Rhetoric or Trust-Evoking Speech?"

In addition to lectures, the AAR and SBL meetings were accompanied by more than 140 publishers, whose displays created the world's largest bookstore specializing in religion. Zondervan/Paternoster Press took the opportunity to celebrate the publication of *A Royal Priesthood?* (See New Books)

ICS also held their own wine and cheese reception on site to allow scholars from around the world to visit the Institute. ICS Junior and Senior members met with visiting academics from as far away as New Zealand in what was described as a lively and fruitful exchange.

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE

(Continued from page 3)

well as several guests.

Dr. de Groot's current research focuses on the theological work of Florence Nightingale, the woman primarily remembered as the mother of professional nursing. An often neglected aspect of Nightingale's life, her understanding of scripture and of God's call were in fact what impelled her to pursue and improve the field of nursing. Nightingale's theology was, as Dr. de Groot's work highlights, radical and often simultaneously completely Victorian. Believing herself to be directly called by God, Nightingale at a young age, dedicated her life to the work and service of nursing. Her noted experiences in the Crimean fields as "the lady with the lamp" was a further result of her calling, as were the volumes of passionate theological meditations and personal reflections in which her clear vision and absolute confidence in the rightness, the essential importance of the work she did, is compellingly evident.

Interspersed throughout the presentation were Nightingale's own words, still intriguing and challenging today. Dr. de Groot concluded the presentation with a few of these thoughts, "The time is coming when we must close our Bibles and Prayerbooks and assure ourselves from other sources why we believe in God and what is the nature of the God we believe in. Then we may again open our Bibles and Prayerbooks with a sacred and holy interest. We may find in Christ's words and deeds, in his life and character, what will inspire us and assist us."

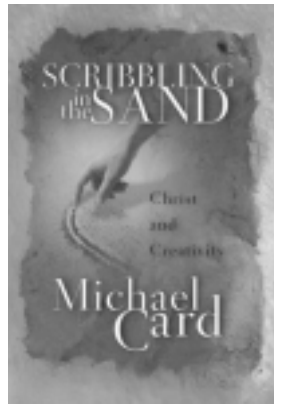
Dr. de Groot is a visiting scholar on sabbatical from Calvin College where she is professor of Old Testament in the Religion department. Her work on Nightingale is part of a larger undertaking to reclaim women's voices in biblical studies and theology. In addition to her research, de Groot participated in the fall interdisciplinary seminar at the ICS.



In December, **Jonathan Chaplin** served as an External Assessor for a Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada grant application. From January 3-4, he participated in "Security, Terrorism and Peacemakers: A Conversation on the CRC and Speaking Out on War", at Good News CRC in London, Ontario. He attended a meeting of the Toronto chapter of the Canadian Society for Political Thought on February 7, and was a contributor at a conference on "Theology, Morality and Public life", sponsored by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life and the Pew Study Group on Politics and the Problem of Human Nature, University of Chicago, February 25-27 where he served as respondent to a paper by Robin Lovin from Southern Methodist University. Jonathan began a half-year sabbatical in January running till June. His main project is to complete a book on Herman Dooyeweerd's political thought.

Bob Sweetman presented a paper entitled "Haunting Conceptual Boundaries: Miracle in the Summa Theologiae of Thomas Aquinas" for a conference entitled "Limina: Thresholds and Borders" at the 6th Annual St. Michael's College Symposium (Toronto) on March 1. Bob has been chosen to be one of three ARIHE lecturers, a lectureship addressing aspects of the character of Christian Scholarship.

Calvin Seerveld has a letter to young artists requested by and included in a new book by Christian singer-songwriter Michael



Card in his new book, *Scribbling in the Sand, Christ and Creativity* (InterVarsity Press, 2002). The book explores the biblical foundations of Christian creativity. Seerveld has a review in Christian Scholar's Review (31:4, 2002) of Frank Burch Brown's book on Good Taste, Bad Taste, and Christian Taste: Aesthetics in Religious Life (Oxford University Press).

In September, **Sylvia Keesmaat** had an article in *The Banner* entitled "Treasure and the Gospel." In October, she taught a one week course in Belize entitled "The Biblical Foundations of Creation Care" to students doing environmental studies in the Creation Care Stewardship Program. In November, Keesmaat participated in a panel on globalization in Toronto, giving a talk entitled "The Threat of Globalization and the Promise of the Bible." This theme was picked up in two talks that she gave in Rochester in February at Roberts Wesleyan College, entitled "Subverting the Empire: the Bible, Rome and Globalization" and "an Alternative Imagination: Local Community and the Threat of Globalization." Keesmaat also preached at chapel while at Roberts Wesleyan.

Congregations Division update

by **John Meiboom**, Vice President of Advancement and Campaign Director

Rev. Arie Van Eek chairs the Congregations Division of the campaign. He is a retired pastor who has served churches in various parts of Canada. From 1978 to 1999 he was the Executive Secretary of the Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada. In that role he traveled widely and got to know many people in many places. While in that role, Arie had many opportunities to represent the CRC in ecumenical gatherings. Arie continues to serve the church today as Refugee Coordinator for the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee.

Arie has a number of excellent characteristics that serve this campaign position well. He is gregarious, generous, committed, persuasive and persistent. The result is that ICS has over 110 volunteers working for the campaign with the largest percentage working for the Congregations Division. Many are still being recruited. We are grateful to God for the dedicated number of volunteers that have joined our team.

Overall, the campaign has received pledges and gifts in excess of \$1,525,000, representing approximately 150 individuals and organizations.

Upcoming course

Spring Seminar, May 1-16, 2003

Realism & Objective Truth in Science & Religion: Entering a Modernist-Postmodernist Discussion

With seminar leaders **Henk Hart**, Professor of Systematic Philosophy, ICS (emeritus) and **Clarence Joldersma**, Professor of Philosophy of Education, Calvin College.

see our website for more information:
www.icscanada.edu

ARIHE selects ICS faculty and alumni



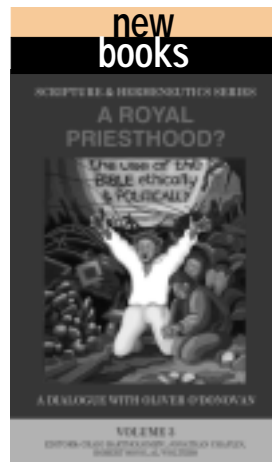
Clarence Joldersma

ARIHE (the Association of Reformed Institutions of Higher Education) is an association of academic institutions dedicated to developing a common understanding of the relationship between faith and academic work. To that end, the ARIHE governing committee approved the establishment of an annual lectureship to sponsor a common discussion of Christian scholarship on the eight member campuses. Each institution was invited to nominate lecturers for 2003-2004. A selection committee reviewed the nominees and selected three persons.

Bob Sweetman, ICS Senior Member in the History of Philosophy, was selected as one of the first series of three lecturers. Bob's published dialogue with George Marsden on models of Christian scholarship and his closing lecture at the Runner conference held in October at Redeemer University College, were important factors in his selection.

The other two lecturers are also familiar names: **Brad Breems** from Trinity Christian College in Chicago and **Clarence Joldersma** from Calvin College, Grand Rapids. Both are ICS graduates and both currently serve on the ICS Senate.

The member institutions of ARIHE may now invite one of these persons to be their guest lecturer in 2003-2004. It is assumed that each of the three persons will go to two or three campuses. It is significant that the three lectures chosen as models of Christian scholarship are all heavily connected to ICS, an affirmation of the importance of the Institute's goal to connect faith and learning. Congratulations are due to Bob, Brad and Clarence.



A Royal Priesthood?: The Use of the Bible Ethically and Politically
Editors: Craig Bartholomew, Jonathan Chaplin, Robert Song, Al Wolters
Hardcover, 480 pages

Since September 11, 2001, we are intensely aware of the need for political wisdom. Can Scripture help us in this respect? Yes, but not simplistically. In an exhilarating dialogue with Oliver O'Donovan (Regius Professor of Moral Theology, University of Oxford), a team of international scholars look in detail at biblical interpretation as we make the journey from what God said to Abraham, as it were, to how to respond to the political challenges

MIROSLAV VOLF
(Continued from page 1)

be needed in a time when justice and peace embrace. Volf's works on memory can best be understood in the light of his previous work, in particular his book *Exclusion and Embrace*. In that book, he argued for an unconditional obligation for Christians to love their enemies. If memory is part and parcel of the way that Christians relate to their enemies, then the question arises: how does one who loves remember? As Volf pointed out, the injunction to remember is one that is repeated these days like a drumbeat by philosophers, psychologists and cultural critics – but there are voices in the Christian tradition, he argued, which do not view memory as unambiguously good.

In his second lecture, Volf examined the resources of three prominent defenders of forgetfulness, Søren Kierkegaard, Frederick Nietzsche and Sigmund Freud. For all three, Volf argued, forgetting is an essential part of a larger account of what it means to be human. Though Volf admits that these thinkers do not understand forgetting consistently, he allowed their ideas to set the stage for his own thesis which he developed in the third lecture.

In the final talk Volf asked some critical questions surrounding this idea of forgetting. Most importantly he acknowledged the popular view that sin and suffering are elements in a narrative story of our lives in which pain is an integrated part. According to Volf, pain in our modern mindset gives "meaning" to our lives, but this obsession tends to overlook a rich Christian tradition that understands redemption as a redemption of people and not of all their negative experiences. Sin, death and hell are not integrated into a meaningful unity of our story, but are swallowed up by Christ.

In such a redemption, Volf argued, we forget part of our past, but we can still maintain our identity. This, he argues, is built into the nature of remembrance itself – in which we always selectively remember our past. If our identity as Christians is grounded in Christ and not ourselves, Volf pointed out, we don't make ourselves by what we do or what we have experienced. We achieve our identity in Christ: in God's relationship to us.

Each lecture concluded with a lively discussion period in which Volf was given the opportunity to field questions and hear comments from various perspectives. Those in attendance represented faith traditions from Roman Catholic to Evangelical as well as field perspectives ranging from theologians and artists to philosophers and philosophers "of life." The lectures are available for purchase through the ICS bookstore.

speaker **Jim Olthuis**, therapist and Senior Member in Philosophical Theology at ICS as we explore this topic. This family conference will also offer children's and youth programs for all ages.

Alberta Family Conference
August 1-4, 2003
Deer Valley Meadows, Alberta
with music by the "Copper Coins"

British Columbia Conference
Fall 2003

Art Talks!

The Ruth Memorial Series on the Arts & Culture



Erica Grimm-Vance, *Only Say the Word 1*, graphite, pastel, gesso, steel on birch, 44"x 60", 2002. Winner, *Imago 30th Anniversary Art Competition*

Focus on embodiment

This year's annual *Art Talks!* lectures will feature **Erica Grimm-Vance**, an accomplished artist from Trinity Western University in Vancouver. Erica will speak on April 25 at 7:30 pm on the topic *Beauty and Affliction: Reflections on Art and Embodiment* (St. George the Martyr Church, 197 John Street, Toronto). Embodiment has been the theme of Erica's

art for almost twenty years. More recently, materials such as wax, steel, gold, and lead have been paired with the body to heighten metaphorical meanings in her work, where both embodiment and materials are used to explore themes of beauty and affliction. This year's *Art Talks!* will also feature a panel discussion on Saturday April 26, (9:30 am – 12:30 pm) entitled *Body Images* in which

Erica and other artists will talk about the role of the body in their work (to be held at the ICS building).

Erica Grimm-Vance is a consummate artist who has had over twenty solo exhibitions and is in numerous private and public collections, including the Vatican Art Collection, Canada Council Art Bank and the Richmond Art Gallery. Last year, Erica was the Distinguished Nash Lecturer at the University of Regina, the First Prize recipient of the *Imago National Juried Art Competition* and was honored as the Distinguished Alumna from the University of Regina. She is currently working on sixteen larger-than-life female saints for Seabury Western Theological Seminary's Chapel in Evanston, Illinois.

This event is sponsored by the Institute for Christian Studies' *Art Talks! The Ruth Memorial Series on the Arts and Culture*, in partnership with *Imago*, an initiative for Christians in the arts in Canada. For more info go to: www.icscanada.edu



Nurse and theologian Florence Nightingale.

Word of God, or Cup of Coffee? ICS hosts symposium on Florence Nightingale's theology

By **Amy Packwood**, ICS Junior Member

"It is said that those who do not admit 'authority' do not know when it is God that speaks, and when it is the excitement of a cup of coffee."
Florence Nightingale

When visiting scholar **Dr. Christiana de Groot** read this passage as part of her sabbatical research, she knew she had found a title for her paper. At the first symposium of the new semester, on February 13, Dr. de Groot presented *Word of God, or Cup of Coffee?: Florence Nightingale's Understanding of Scripture* to a packed audience of senior and junior members as

(Continued on page 7)

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

ICS seeks a half-time Western Canada Advancement Officer who will be responsible to the VP of Advancement. Ideally the candidate will be located in either the Greater Edmonton, Greater Calgary or Greater Vancouver areas. This person will be able to articulate the mission of ICS with enthusiasm, have excellent interpersonal skills and be able to work with volunteers and a dedicated staff team. S/he must be willing to travel.

The major responsibility for this person will be to create a higher profile for ICS in Western Canada. The aims for the position include:

- increasing visibility for ICS in Western Canada through a variety of events;
- increasing financial support for the mission of ICS; and
- supporting student recruitment efforts in Western Canada.

This person will be supporting efforts of volunteers in each of these areas. This person will not normally be asked to solicit funds for ICS but rather to facilitate volunteers and senior staff in this task. Pay range of \$20,000 to \$25,000 per year for a half time position, plus benefits.

ICS will provide computer equipment, office support, as well as travel and expense allowances.

This person will be expected to travel to ICS offices in Toronto four to six times per year for planning and reporting, as well as traveling to all areas of Alberta and British Columbia.

ICS is committed to a long-term approach to increasing its presence in Western Canada. ICS is also committed to ensuring that this person is a meaningful part of a staff team.

Interested candidates are invited to send in a resume or a request for more information attention to:

John Meiboom,
VP Advancement
at
jmeiboom@icscanada.edu.

This position will remain open until a suitable candidate is found.

An interview with Doug Blomberg

On January 1, 2003, Dr. Doug Blomberg began his appointment as the Institute's new Senior Member in Philosophy of Education. Blomberg's research centers on the biblical perspective on wisdom, and his research and thinking on the meaning of wisdom in a school setting is leading-edge in Christian schools. Doug and his wife Heather have relocated to Toronto from their home in Australia. Recently, ICS student Brad Wortz sat down with him to talk about the move, the experience he will bring to this position and his vision for working at ICS.

Wortz: *You have just recently made a big move from Australia to Toronto. Tell us about your move and the inspiration behind it.*

Blomberg: Naturally, in many respects it has been a very difficult move, having to leave family and friends and the last few months in particular have been hard, with various farewell events. Then, all of a sudden we were transported halfway around the world to where there is *definitely* a great difference in temperature—about fifty degrees!—sixteen hours difference in time, a twenty-four hour trip. So yes, it has taken some adjusting and no doubt it will for some time yet. But we've been here before, quite a number of times. So in that respect we knew what we were getting ourselves into. We know the Institute and we know that this is where God has called us to be at this time. And Toronto feels a lot like Melbourne, allowing for blizzards rather than bushfires! It's by a bay, it's a similar age, the terrain is flat, they are both laid out on a British military grid. They are both very cosmopolitan cities.

I first came here in 1975 on research leave, while I was a Ph.D. student, so my association with the Institute goes back a long way. As I say, it hasn't been an easy decision and it's been a long time coming. But there seems to have been a certain inevitability about it, in terms of God preparing me for the role. I have for many years had a background sense of God calling me to work here. With the accreditation of a master's degree in Australia, along with a number of other factors, the work I was doing there came to a conclusion and this helped to overcome the reluctance I had previously had about making a long-term move. In fact, I certainly see the Lord giving me a big push, a "helping hand" to get me here.

Wortz: *1975 was your original connection with the Institute, but how did you first come in contact with the reformational Christian philosophical tradition?*

Blomberg: I became a Christian at a Billy Graham crusade back in 1968, my last year of high school. I don't come from a Christian family. I got involved with an Evangelical Anglican Church and I started reading C.S. Lewis and Schaeffer, I did my honours thesis on Schaeffer, I went to L'Abri and I started to get into the tradition that lay behind Schaeffer. Even though he doesn't actually say much about that himself, he had close connections with Rookmaaker (the art historian from the Free University), who was very influential. He mentions Kuyper once, I think, though he misspells his name! So, it was in the course of doing my work on Schaeffer that I got into thinking about a reformed



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The theory of education ought to serve the practice of educators, and ought to serve, not just teachers, but students. Indeed, it should serve students first, because teachers are there to serve students.

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Christian approach to education, and in fact Sydney Anglicanism is sometimes called a "reformed church with bishops," its theology is so Calvinist. One day I was at the university co-operative bookshop and I saw this display of books with a big sign that said, "Wedge Publishing Foundation. Books for thinking Christians", and I thought, "Hmm, 'thinking Christians,' that sounds interesting!" There I found things like Spier's *Introduction to Christian Philosophy*, Arnold De Graaf's *Educational Ministry of the Church*, and a few other things that came out of this place, or were at least associated with it. So, I bought some of these books and they really excited me. The education book talked mainly about the church and religious education in a narrow sense, but I found it exciting because although I read a lot of theology, alongside my normal study program, it was the first book that approached education from a specifically Christian perspective that I had come across. The Spier book also gave me a framework, because one of the things I had been struggling with as an undergraduate was that although I was part of the Evangelical Union and we had a prayer group, a Bible Study group and a theological lecture every week, I didn't know how all this related to what happened in the lecture theatre or tutorial room. It seemed that people who belonged to the Labour Party, or held to various socialist positions, the feminists, or Young Liberals, all had something to say. As a Christian, I didn't actually feel that I was engaged with the world as a Christian. In fact I felt removed from it. I certainly didn't feel like I was getting the resources I needed to engage as a full time student as a Christian.

Wortz: *This brings me to a question I wanted to ask pertaining to theory and practice. Your specialty is in education and I know you have had a lot of experience teaching in the classroom. What are some of the ways in which you go about incorporating the theory and philosophy of education into the classroom setting?*

Blomberg: This question about the relationship between theory and practice has been one of my main concerns ever since I started graduate studies in education. That is one area in which I found Dooyeweerd's work so stimulating. In some respects what he did was try to put theoretical thought back in its place, recognizing that it is not neutral but religiously motivated. Recognizing that 'theory' should not be the controlling or dominating influence in life, that what he calls "naïve" or everyday experience, is a place in which one meets God. God speaks to one there and not just through theoretical activity, not even just theology. So the first thing to

say in response to your question, even if it seems tangential, is that recognizing that education is always a religious undertaking is one way I go about integrating theory into the classroom. I've always been centrally concerned with a biblical perspective on curriculum, in terms of its content, certainly, but just as much in respect to its structure, which so often seems to take for granted that theoretical understanding is the framework through which the meaning of life is to be grasped. Which of course is so antithetical to the gospel.

I spent the last year, in fact, teaching in a high school again. A number of my colleagues put the question to me, "Has this experience changed your theory, Doug, after working in a Grade 10 classroom, where you have these 15 year old boys who don't want to be there, who in fact would rather be anywhere else?" Well, what it did do was ground me. It reinforced for me that if my theoretical work doesn't serve the classroom teacher then it is of very little value. The theory of education ought to serve the practice of educators, and ought to serve, not just teachers, but students. Indeed, it should serve students first, because teachers are there to serve students.

Wortz: *Had you taught at the high school level before this experience?*

Blomberg: When I had almost completed my Ph.D., I wanted to see how this 'theory' I was working on, which had to do with there being a variety of ways of knowing (which at the time was not a common idea, but now it is), applied in the classroom. I was asked to apply for a position at Mount Evelyn Christian School. I had grown up in Sydney, and Melbourne was about a thousand kilometres away, so that was my first big move in life. They were setting up a senior secondary school. None of the other parent-controlled Christian schools had done this before. I was asked to come down as a curriculum consultant and actually ended up being the coordinator and teaching years 11 and 12.

Those were some of the most enjoyable years of my life. I love to interact with students. I love teaching, in various forms, and I was blessed with a visionary and innovative group of colleagues. So, I did my theoretical work first, then I could have gone on in the academic world, but I wanted to get involved in a school. I am not recommending this "theory into practice" approach, by the way! In many respects it was crazy to do a doctorate in education without having been a teacher, but as soon as I say that, I have to affirm that there was a strong sense of God calling me into this, with various people being put in my way, rather than into the alternative I had in view, which was the ordained ministry.

But I don't think I adequately answered your previous question. In addition to the ways of knowing, which I have mentioned (which leads me to seek a curriculum that recognizes the wide range of gifts that students have) I would say that the notion of the integral curriculum, and of a curricular rhythm of play, problem-posing and purposeful response, have been my major theoretical contributions. But as soon as I identify them I hope it is clear that these are not theoretical concepts that need to be translated into the classroom, but very concrete ideas for curriculum planning, classroom organization and pedagogy. This doesn't mean that they are easy to implement, but they are not formulated at one remove from what teachers do. In fact they have been forged in dialogue with teachers.

Wortz: *What is your own vision for the Institute? What do you personally hope to accomplish, as the new full-time Senior Member in the philosophy of education?*

Blomberg: A major challenge is my role in serving teachers generally. How can I get out there and do that? How can I establish the contacts and networks that make me available for that? At the moment, most of my work is with teachers in Christian schools, and no doubt I will continue to give that first priority. But the question that then raises itself is, What about Christian teachers in government schools? That is a field where I would like to make some contribution if I could.

Alongside this, there is a research function that is a significant part of my role, and that involves demands that are somewhat, if not quite different, from those that face one as a teacher educator. As I have said, I want my work to serve teachers, but that is not necessarily in the forefront of the minds of those engaged in more abstract reflection in the field.

My immediate project, which is close to completion, is a book, which will probably be called *Shrewd as Serpents: Christian Schooling after Postmodernity*. I've been working on that for a few years — maybe a few years too many, some would say! Getting back into the classroom again was invigorating, "grounding" — and that is something I have tried to bring into my book. My broad theme is wisdom and schooling, a biblical view of wisdom and how that provides an alternative to the theory/practice paradigm that you asked about before. I think that the Scriptures do provide an alternative to that basically Greek categorization. Not that I deny the importance of theory — I am also a theorist myself. I think theory is an important part of life, but I am saying that I think theory has a particular, limited role. And I would like to explore the implications of a wisdom paradigm for graduate education as well, which is both overtly theoretical and preparatory for professional practice. I would like to take up the challenge (most of my publications have been in Christian journals, or through Christian publishers) of publishing in the "mainstream" press. This is difficult because in North America, as elsewhere, there is a strong separation between church and state in education, which means that anything with explicitly Christian themes gets relegated to theology or religious education. But we do need to speak into the mainstream, wherever possible. Related to this is the challenge of making contact with people in the broader education community in North America; Toronto in particular. One of my first steps is to attend the American Educational Research Association conference in Chicago in April, as a way of plugging in, pretty immediately, to the North American scene.

Wortz: *To conclude, could you say something briefly your involvement in the distance learning program here at ICS?*

Blomberg: One of my roles here is not only distance education for teachers, which is already running, but to work with my colleagues in other disciplines to prepare some of their courses for distance mode. I didn't move into distance education by choice, myself. But, in Australia, if we wanted to serve teachers across the continent, that is the way it had to be done. At first I resisted it because I prefer face-to-face teaching, but I learned something of how to do it, and I would like to help others do it as well. I think that every student who comes here from Korea, Nigeria, Sierra Leone,

Indonesia, Japan and so on, is just the tip of the iceberg, as it were. There are numerous other students who would like to come here, who would be excited and would benefit from what the Institute has to offer, but don't have the resources to accomplish it. So, another dimension of my vision for the Institute is further developing that global role, the global reach of the Institute. In that respect, distance education is not just a poor second best to face-to-face teaching. When you are in a situation where it is the only option, it is the best option, and it has its own intrinsic values. It has advantages over and against on-campus learning. For instance, flexibility: people can work full time and schedule their own study times; people can extend their studies beyond traditional term times; well-structured learning packages, etc. I am excited about what can happen in this area and how the Institute can come to serve the global Christian community even more than it already does. So that's another way in which the Philosophy of Education position will hopefully have an impact on how the Institute operates.