

Annual General Meeting
Canadian Theological Society/Société théologique canadienne
University of Western Ontario, 29 to 31 May 2005

Sunday, 29 May

9:00 am

Social Science Centre Room 2036

Welcome

Don Schweitzer, President, Canadian Theological Society

9:15 am–10:15 am

Social Science Centre Room 2036

“Seek the Peace of the City ...”(Jeremiah 29:7): Estrangement and Citizenship: Judaism Then and Now

Dow Marmur (Holy Blossom Temple)

The starting point of this paper is the Prophet Jeremiah’s letter to the captives in Babylon and its effect on Jewish diaspora existence for the last 2500 years. My aim is to offer some theological reflections, rooted in Jewish teaching and experience, on the complex relationship between identity and belonging. The ambiguities are compounded as we contemplate the tensions in more recent times between ghettoization, often enhancing commitment to the Kingdom of God, and emancipation with its opportunities for citizenship in the kingdom of flesh and blood, often at the price of apostasy or secularization. Developments in the last five to six decades of Jewish sovereignty in the land, from which Jeremiah’s contemporaries were exiled, while the diaspora continues to flourish, will offer yet another illustration of the paradoxes and ambiguities of citizenship.

10:15 am–11:15am

Social Science Centre Room 2036

Tensions Between Religion, the State, and the Subversive Family

Jay Newman (University of Guelph)

Discussion of recent cultural tensions between religious and civil institutions regarding the proper definition of marriage and other family-related subjects have often focused on the appropriate jurisdiction of religious and civil institutions in a pluralistic society. At times, there have been salutary considerations of the existential situation of the individual faced with competing religious and political demands. Only rarely, however, has concentrated attention been given to the fundamental tension in any society between the family as a community and the civil and religious communities to which the individual is normally seen as owing allegiance. Ferdinand Mount has proposed that the family is equally subversive in its relation to both “church” and “state,” which often take it upon themselves to masquerade as its protector. Though Mount’s views are speculative and at times questionable, they draw attention to the need for more sophisticated theologies of the family that explicitly and honestly address fundamental tensions between “church” and “family” in a way comparable to that in which theologians of culture have long addressed obvious conflicts between “church” and “state.” Attention will be given to the views of such writers as Pamela Abbot and Claire Wallace, Paul Bauman, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Nicolas Berdyaev.

11:15 am- 11:30 am break

11:30 am–12:30 pm

Social Science Centre Room 2036

Understanding Moral Conflict: Story, Narrative, and the Cultivation of Moral Imagination

Robert A. Martel (Queen's University)

In moral conflicts, opposing groups suffer deadlock because they fail to do two things: first, take into account the moral narrative (history of personal and community moral development) of their opponents, and second, use moral imagination (ability to consider alternative ethical positions), to better understand moral viewpoints and choices different from their own. Narrative is a way of understanding and adjudicating the moral judgments and choices we make in our lives. Narrative reveals that we are at one agent of the events in our lives, and the interpreters of the moral import of these events. When we narrate or give expression to the importance of a personal story, we situate our moral development within more or less a coherent path, revealing that moral education is an ongoing process. Through a community of shared moral vision, that shapes judgment and imagination, narrative or story acknowledges the complexity of human life. Making an effort to understand how the imagination influences our moral judgments provides a way for working through ethical conflict. Without considering alternate ethical and moral choices, we may never come to understand how a religious community can be made up of smaller groups that adopt opposing moral viewpoints.

12:30–1:30pm

Lunch

1:30 pm–2:30pm

Social Science Centre Room 2036

Rejecting Dual Citizenship: Radical Orthodoxy's Interpretation of *civitas dei* and *civitas terrena* in St Augustine

Hans Boersma (Trinity Western University)

This paper discusses Radical Orthodoxy's approach to dual citizenship: Augustine's distinction between *civitas dei* and *civitas terrena*. RO's analogical worldview, although bordering on the Augustinian, insufficiently allows for (1) a positive functioning of boundaries and discipline and (2) the flourishing of peace and justice in public spaces both within and outside the Church. Both John Milbank and Graham Ward's critique of borders and William Cavanaugh and Daniel Bell's celebration of borders derive from a lack of appreciation for Augustinian notions of (1) the church as one public among others, which refuses to identify church and *civitas dei*; (2) the *civitas dei* as eschatological entity, which admits of the need for borders prior to the eschaton; (3) the positive character of temporal ends, which enables positive cultural development also beyond the church; and (4) the need for border patrols, which accepts that the use of force may at times be unavoidable.

2:30-3:30 pm

Social Science Centre Room 2036

The Eucharist and the Body Politic

Margaret Lavin (Regis College)

The theological and the political are not antithetical. This assertion challenges the modern assumption that politics and theology are separate and is evidenced in the historical development of the image of the body of Christ. Bodily margins are 'dangerous,' and the margin of the social body is also a concern. It is across the boundaries of the social body that foreign invaders threaten, and boundaries mark the point of expulsion, of internal threats to the body politic. A desire to police the boundaries is a desire to create and maintain a certain *status quo*. Such, also, is the case

of the mystical body politic of Christ.

The mystical body politic of Christ “is at once inclusive and exclusive – intentional, explicit, covert or unintended, individual and groups’ exclusion” from the body of Christ has implications for church and society. The mystical body of Christ is not an orderly one, however; it does not have tightly policed boundaries. It is a gathered community, an image in motion, a body being constituted. It has no specific territory.

In following the theme of the Canadian Theological Society conference, “Paradoxes of Citizenship: Environments, Exclusions, Equity,” this paper 1) examines a brief history of the mystical body politic of Christ to determine from the development of liturgical rites who was excluded from this body and why; 2) reveals the paradoxes of belonging to the mystical body politic of Christ; and 3) asks the question “Does contemporary liturgical expression evidence an egalitarian image of the mystical body politic of Christ?”

3:30-3:45pm break

3:45-4:45pm

Social Science Centre Room 2036

Multiple Religious Belonging – extending the spectrum of spirituality

Tom Sherwood (Carleton University)

It has been called "fusion faith" (Emberley, 2002: 148-202), "multiple religious belonging" (Cornille, 2002), "double religious belonging" (Cornille, 2003), or simply "willingness to participate in more than one religion" (Bowen, 2005: 32). In "Life of Pi," the adolescent title character seems to be becoming Hindu, Christian and Muslim at the same time. His father says, "He seems to be attracting religions the way a dog attracts fleas" (Martel, 2002: 82). As a campus minister, I am used to students blending traditions into a personal spirituality; and as a sociologist, I am familiar with syncretism. But a new phenomenon is emerging in my pastoral ministry: young adults self-identifying as fully members of more than one world religion, for example: Christianity and Islam, or Buddhism and Judaism. Just as children have grown up bilingual and bicultural by speaking French to one parent and English to the other, young adults are growing up today "speaking" two different religions, and claiming to express themselves with integrity in both. This paper reports on some recent research into this phenomenon, including interviews with students. It raises some of the theological and pastoral questions.

4:45-5:45pm

Social Science Centre Room 2036

Canadian Theological Society Presidential Address:

Thinking Along with Jurgen Moltmann about God’s relationship to the world

Don Schweitzer (St. Andrew’s College)

6:30 pm CTS dinner

Annual Dinner: Michael’s Restaurant, Somerville House 3340, 661-4080.

(on Oxford Drive across from the Weldon Library)

Monday, 30 May

8:30–10:30 am

Social Science Centre Room 2036

Belonging to Christ, Belonging to the World

Panel Session on Harold Wells' book "*The Christic Center: Life-Giving and Liberating*"

Panelists: David Zub (Emmanuel College)

Lorraine MacKenzie Shepherd (Augustine United Church)

Michel Beaudin (University of Montreal)

Robert Kelly (Waterloo Lutheran Seminary)

Respondent: Harold Wells (Emmanuel College)

Harold Wells' latest book, *The Christic Center: Life-Giving and Liberating*, emphasizes the material and necessary place of Jesus Christ as central and foundational for all Christian faith and Christian action in and for the world. The emphasis leads to two important criteria questions for the practice of theology. First, is the theological thought/act firmly grounded in Jesus Christ? Second, is the theological thought/act life-giving and liberating?

The emphasis is in tension with a plethora of positions, both intra-Christian and secular, that seek to make compromises in the interest of satisfying or at least addressing the multitudinous issues of being a follower of Christ in the world today. The panel will engage with the issues, questions and conclusions raised by Professor Wells in his book from perspectives ranging from traditional and historical theological developments, to those of postmodern/postcolonial contextual theologies.

The first hour will consist of a short overview of the book and four ten to fifteen minute presentations by panel members. After a short break, the remaining time will be spent in conversation with Professor Wells.

10:30-10:45am break

10:45-11:45am

Social Sciences Centre Room 2036

Feminist Voices in Christology

Ellen Leonard (University of St. Michael's)

This paper explores the work of critique and reconstruction undertaken by a number of feminist theologians from Latin America, Africa and Asia as well as women with disability. The paper attends particularly to how these theologians understand Christology, an area that challenges Christian feminists and which in turn is challenged by the feminist critique. The result is a pluralism of Christology's as persons who have been silent speak out of their own context. The feminist theologians from the south as well as differently-abled persons speak out of their personal and communal experience of suffering caused by poverty and injustice, by disease and disability. They suggest theological categories that focus on life.

12:00-1:00 pm*

McKellar Room – University Centre

Joint Public Lecture co-sponsored with CSSR and CSBS: Religion and Violence

Religion, Terror, and Globalization

Mark Juergensmeyer (UC Santa Barbara)

1:30-3:00pm

Social Sciences Centre Room 2036

Canadian Theological Society Annual General Meeting

3:30-5:30 pm*

McKellar Room –University Centre

Panel Discussion

Response to “Religion, Terror and Globalization” by Mark Juergensmeyer

Panelists: Ali Dizboni: University of Sherbrook and Royal Military College

Marsha Hewitt: University of Toronto

Ara Norenzayan: University of British Columbia

*CIDA's support for these two events under the auspices of the 2005 CIDA-CFHSS Collaborative Program is gratefully acknowledged.

7:30-9:00pm

King's College Lecture Hall

Craigie Lecture / La Conférence Craigie

Presiding/Présidence: Adele Reinhartz (Wilfrid Laurier University)

Speaker: Paula Fredriksen (Boston University)

9:00-11:00pm

King's College Atrium

Joint CTS/CSSR/CSBS/CSPS Reception

Tuesday, 31 May

9:00 am–12:00 am

Social Sciences Centre Room 2032

Concurrent Session Co-hosted with CSCH

A Pilgrimage in Progress: A History of the United Church of Canada

Presentations of Work in Progress

Co-Chairs: John Young (Queen's Theological College), Don Schweitzer (St. Andrew's College)

9:00-10:00 am

Social Sciences Centre Room 2036

Work in Progress

“The Conditions of our Love”: Virginia Woolf, Theology, and Autobiography

Presenter: Alyda Faber (Atlantic School of Theology)

Respondent: Kathleen Roberts Skerrett

My presentation considers Virginia Woolf's autobiographical writing (her letters, memoirs, and diaries) as ascetic practice. In these works, the British modernist author explores “the conditions of our love” as an expanding awareness, an immense but fleeting sense of *sufficiency*, that she variously names ‘life’ or ‘soul’ or ‘reality’ or simply ‘it.’ My interest in Woolf's autobiographical writings stems from the importance of this form for the Christian tradition, as narrative expression of a self formed in the presence of God. Woolf, an atheist, orients her narrative-formation-of-consciousness in relation to the immensity of ‘life’ as a real object of attention that exerts demands upon her. I juxtapose her practice and technique of autobiographical writing to innovative scholarship in Christian theology that considers the possibility of a “new asceticism,” emphasizing the importance of Christian practice as a challenge to any exclusive focus on Christian belief. In particular, I consider Woolf's understanding of “the conditions of our love” and how her explorations of love might sharpen attention to the strange beauty of the central task of the Christian life: the love of other human beings.

10:00-11:00am

Social Sciences Centre Room 2036

The Social Consequences of Christian Monotheism: A Conversation Between Rodney Stark and Sallie McFague

Jack Waschenfelder (University of Alberta)

This paper brings into conversational alignment the social scientific findings of Rodney Stark and the ecotheology of Sallie McFague around the theme of the social consequences of Christian monotheism. Stark's two recent volumes aim to historically substantiate the social potency of belief in God as a single, all-powerful, morally concerned "being". He explains how and why the particularism inherent in the belief in God as a "being" generates the need to convert others, inter-religious conflict, loyalty to a single religious vision, as well as reformations, modern science, witch-hunts and the abolition of slavery. McFague's corpus of writings similarly deals with the social consequences of Christian monotheism. However, rather than being impressed by the social potency of belief in the sacred as a "being", she points to its destructive historical legacy and argues for a re-visioning of the sacred more as an "essence". Her concern here is with no less than planetary survival. Stark, on the other hand, argues that "liberal" Christian attempts to envision the sacred as an "essence" are sociologically naïve in that historically, and across the religions, when the sacred is understood as an essence its social consequences have been minimal. So is McFague "sociologically naïve" in her proposing new models of God which might move Christians to love nature? Or is Stark correct in his assertion that only when the sacred is envisioned as a supernatural "being" is there historically transformative power?

11:00-11:15am break

11:15am-12:15pm

Student Essay Competition Winer

"The Death of Jesus: Historical and Systematic Perspectives in Schillebeeckx"

Mark Yenson (University of St. Michael's College)

12:15pm-1:30pm lunch

1:30-2:30pm

Social Sciences Centre Room 2036

Feminist Perspectives on Public Witness and Solidarity: Lessons in Citizenship from the Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women

Gail Allan (United Church of Canada)

During the World Council of Churches' Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women, 1988-1998, women and men took up the question of solidarity in relation to social as well as ecclesial issues. Particularly in responding to issues of economic justice and violence against women, Decade participants encountered changing understandings of the norms and entitlements of citizenship. Through involvement in local and global struggles for justice, participants challenged theologies upholding structures of subordination and domination. Through such initiatives as the Feminine Face of Poverty and Kenya-Canada Exchange, they related practices of story-telling, collective analysis, accountability and responsibility to social movement participation and strong public witness by churches in Canada. At the same time, the paradoxes of citizenship became evident as participants faced the places of exclusion and injustice in relationships among women, particularly as questions of racial justice were confronted. Drawing on resources in

feminist theory and theological ethics, this paper will explore the paradoxes of citizenship at the boundaries of difference, where solidarity and public witness invite attention to diversity and complexity as ethical criteria for empowerment and transformation.

2:30-3:30pm

Social Sciences Centre Room 2036

The Ambiguous Role of Religion in Post-Conflict Diplomacy: The Case of South Africa

Megan Shore (King's University College, University of Western Ontario)

Historically, international conflict resolution theories have either failed to address religion or have seen it as an instigator of dissension. Recent outbreaks of religious violence have only heightened the awareness of the potential power of religion to fuel conflict. Recently, scholars such as Scott Appleby, Marc Gopin, and Douglas Johnston have questioned whether religion can contribute to a theory of conflict resolution and the practice of diplomacy. Transitional justice is a recent development in the field of international conflict resolution. As more and more countries are experiencing transitions from repressive and authoritarian regimes to democratic governments, transitional justice addresses how to deal with past human rights abuses. It focuses on balancing justice and reconciliation at the crucial point of transition. Following Appleby, Gopin, and Johnston, religion may play an integral part during this transitional phase. This paper will look to the case of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission in order to exam the specific question of the uncertain role that religion may play in negotiating transitional justice.

3:30-3:45pm break

3:45-4:45pm

Social Sciences Centre Room 2036

Revisiting the Just War Theory: A Yoderian Response to O'Donovan's Defense of the Just War Theory

Craig Carter (Tyndale Seminary)

This paper examines Oliver O'Donovan's arguments in favor of Christians participating in and attempting to shape the morality of war on the basis the Gospel, as found in his books: *Peace and Certainty: A Theological Essay on Deterrance* (1989), *The Desire of the Nations* (1996), and his latest book: *The Just War Revisited* (Cambridge, 2004). It also brings into conversation with O'Donovan an important contemporary Christian alternative to his traditional position by setting forth a response, which draws on the thought of Mennonite theologian John Howard Yoder. The goal is to seek out common ground between the pacifist and just war traditions and my thesis is that more such common ground exists than is commonly thought. I then seek to identify contemporary challenges that face both a theologically serious just war position and a theologically serious pacifist position and suggest that, in the end, both traditions ought to recognize that they have more in common with each other than either has in common with the powerful, pagan views of war, which currently dominate Western culture.

4:45pm

Social Sciences Centre Room 2036

Adjournment

Heather Eaton, Incoming President, Canadian Theological Society