

Canadian Theological Society - Programme with Abstracts
Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo
28-30 May 2012

The CTS sessions will take place at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary, on the southwest part of the WLU campus, at the corner of Albert and Bricker streets. www.wlu.ca/seminary

Monday, May 28, 8:50-9:00 am. Room: Seminary 101
Kathleen Skerrett, president, Canadian Theological Society
Welcome

Monday, May 28, 9:00-9:40 am. Room: Seminary 101
Brett Potter, University of St. Michael's College, Toronto School of Theology,
"Theology, Imagination, Vision: Northrop Frye and Karl Barth on the Word of God"

It has become clear, as recent works like William Dyrness' *Poetic Theology* attest, that a robust Christian theology of culture in the contemporary situation must take account of the oft-neglected categories of the imaginative and poetic. An underutilized resource in navigating this uncertain "expanded territory" is the metacriticism of Canadian literary theorist Northrop Frye.

Although Frye took pains to describe himself as a literary critic rather than a theologian, he was clearly comfortable moving in both realms, engaging Christian systematic theologians such as Tillich, Bultmann and Barth alongside less 'dogmatic' scholars of religion, myth and literature. Accordingly, to fully appreciate Frye and his radical, Blakean vision of human imagination and creativity, it is necessary to situate his thought in the context of twentieth-century theological discourse. In so doing, it becomes clear that Frye's implicit 'theology of culture' both builds on and radically reinterprets Karl Barth's "neo-orthodox" approach to the revelation of the Word in human culture(s), while constructively drawing on insights from Tillich and others. I will explore three initial points of contact between Frye and major themes of twentieth-century theology: the concept of "analogy" and how it relates to the knowability of God (Frye's *analogia visionis* and the *analogia fidei*); Barth's related doctrine of the "Word of God" and how it is re-envisioned in Frye's concepts of imagination, art and literature, particularly in the case of the Bible as "Great Code" of Western culture; and finally, the significance of mythology and "ultimate concern" (Tillich) in relation to the particular *kerygma* of Christian revelation, an area in which Frye and Barth (contra Bultmann) both stress the divine power of the *Logos* to transform human culture.

Monday, May 28, 9:00-9:40 am. Room: Seminary 102
Nick Olkovich, University of St. Michael's College, Toronto School of Theology,
"Jeffrey Stout and the Limits of Pragmatic Liberalism"

In 2004's *Democracy and Tradition*, Jeffrey Stout develops an alternative account of democratic practice designed to transcend the tired debate between liberals and Christian communitarians. On the one hand, second-generation liberals such as John Rawls conceive democratic discourse as a process of reason-exchange structured by a universally compelling form of 'public reason.' On the other hand, communitarians such as John Milbank, Alasdair Macintyre and Stanley Hauerwas correlate the emergence of modern ethical and political reasoning with an 'antitraditionalist' quest that celebrates abstract first principles and narrow self-interest at the expense of narrative and virtue. According to Stout, both approaches offer inaccurate portrayals of modern ethical and political discourse that feed Christian resentment of democratic society. Combining communitarian respect for tradition-based reasoning and virtue with a distinctively modern emphasis on critical self-possession, Stout redefines the notion of tradition in 'non-hierarchical' terms as an ongoing 'conversation,' a benignly 'secularized' and 'open-ended' process or practice of reason-exchange whose correlative virtues structure the way in which distinctively modern moral agents relate to their heritage and to others situated differently. Stout develops

this account in ways designed to respect the historicity of human knowing without capitulating to relativism, defining truth in a way that avoids both pejoratively ‘metaphysical’ forms of realism and post-modern forms of antirealism.

Although Stout is to be commended for his efforts to outline a viable middle-ground account of democratic discourse his pragmatic or non-metaphysical defense of democracy is, in my judgment, insufficiently critical. As I shall argue, the ideals of liberal democracy are best supported by a non-pejoratively metaphysical form of natural law that respects the historicity and uncertainty of human knowing. In this paper’s final section I will draw on the work of Bernard Lonergan to develop an account of democratic subjectivity designed to address precisely this need.

Monday, May 28, 9:40-10:20 am. Room: Seminary 101
Gordon Rixon, Regis College, Toronto School of Theology,
“Tensioning the Aesthetic Program of the St. John's Bible: Creating Acts of Meaning for an Uncertain World Poised between the Virtual and the Embodied”

The Saint John’s Bible is an extraordinary contemporary manuscript edition of the Christian Scriptures, the first complete bible to be scribed and illuminated by hand in over 500 years. The aesthetic program of the text and illuminations invite those encountering its pages to co-developmental transformation, a creative change process that engages the ecological, social, cultural, personal and religious dimensions of human persons and communities. The religious art presented on its massive vellum pages enlarges and illuminates the horizon within which the person weaves life experience and the resources of her tradition into transforming acts of meaning. In a world marked by virtual meaning and communication, the person is reconnected and re-engaged in her own physicality.

In my presentation, I will draw on my experience of presenting the aesthetic program of the Heritage Edition of the Prophets volume of the St. John’s Bible to over 40 groups as I examine the use of three illuminations (Decalogue, Suffering Servant and Vision of the New Temple) to explore the transformative effect of embodied narrative. I will identify aesthetic elements that suggest a contemporary application of the medieval monastic adaption of the principles of ciceronian rhetoric in the act of mental prayer. I will conclude by pondering how insight into the cognitive patterns of contemplation might be applied to elicit the spiritual dimension of virtual communication.

Monday, May 28, 9:40-10:20 am. Room: Seminary 102
Robert Kelly, Waterloo Lutheran Seminary,
“Hospitable Argument: The Use of ‘Secular’ Reason in Public Theology”

A number of statements made by candidates in the Republican primary elections in the United States, for example Rick Perry’s comments that his Israel policy is determined by God, have made sure that the question of theological rationales for public policy have remained in the public eye. The “standard account” of public reason as put forward by John Rawls has tended to exclude theologically based arguments in the public sphere. More recently philosophers of the public sphere such as Jürgen Habermas have suggested that we are in a post-secular age in which theologically based arguments have some role to play in public deliberation, though probably not in public policy-making. At the same time some theologians and religious ethicists such as Nicholas Wolterstorff and John Eberle have maintained the right of religious people to make religious arguments in public deliberation and policy-making.

The purpose of this study is to suggest that, from the Christian theological side, the assertion of rights is perhaps not the best approach to take. Instead I suggest that the virtue of hospitality provides a better paradigm for the participation of public theologians in both deliberation and policy-making. Public theologians who practice the virtue of hospitality will find ways in which they can express themselves which are hospitable to those who do not share their specific theological perspective, including those who hold a secular perspective and those whose religious perspective is different from the theologian. In this

way a language for public theology might be found which does not exclude the theological but which remains open to broad-based understanding and coalition building rather than confrontation and stalemate.

Monday, May 28, 10:35-11:15 am. Room: Seminary 101

Jean-Pierre Fortin, University of St. Michael's College, Toronto School of Theology,
"Postmodern Philosophy of Religion Meets Systematic Theology: John D. Caputo, Hans Urs von Balthasar and Dietrich Bonhoeffer on the Person and Teaching of Jesus Christ"

Human beings now live in a time where the eradication of entire ethnic communities or of all humankind is a real and immediate possibility (witness Auschwitz and Hiroshima). They inhabit a world which in and of itself does not appear to testify of God's design, presence and action. Abstract ideas and ideals, the pretention to universal validity, and human reason itself, have shown themselves, throughout the twentieth century, to be killers, mass murderers. Human rationality and its products – ideas – can no longer be trusted without hesitation. At this darkest of hours, where is God to be found? Perhaps, in such times, is it better not to believe in God – that is, not to believe in an explicitly manifest and powerful God – in order precisely to be able to act and behave in a manner more faithful to God. The proposed presentation would like to succinctly expose and criticize from a theological standpoint the approach of the philosopher of religion John D. Caputo who finds in the categories of obedience, suffering and weakness the privileged channels for the expression of God's action in this world and in human history and life. More precisely, the paper attempts to demonstrate that Caputo's deconstructionist reading of Christian doctrine, scriptures, and tradition, strongly concurs with the theologies of Hans Urs von Balthasar and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, whose respective teachings on kenosis and grace moreover complement Caputo's "weak" understanding of God. For these three thinkers, a viable doctrine of God for the twenty-first century can only be found in the suffering, vulnerable and crucified Christ; a God who does not assert himself through discriminatory and totalitarian use of might, but through vulnerability and love. God is found at work within radical weakness and pluralism, always exceeding univocal rational concepts or systems and the philosophy of religion joins with systematic theology in recovering the long lost spirit of Christian doctrine and tradition.

Monday, May 28, 10:35-11:15 am. Room: Seminary 102

Rebekah Howes, University of Winchester,
"Rowan Williams: The Case for Uncertainty in an Uncertain World"

My paper will explore aspects of the work of the present Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, specifically his employing 'uncertainty' as a key philosophical, theological and above all educational concept. I will show how his work with an Hegelian 'negative' yields a profound response to uncertainty in an uncertain world. This reading requires some familiarity with the work of the philosopher Gillian Rose, who Williams knew personally and who greatly influenced his reading of Hegel. Rose asked in what sense we now stand in relation to the Hegelian dialectic? Williams has taken this up as a contemporary political critique of modern western freedom in all of its various misrecognitions of itself and the world. Ultimately the question for Williams presses always towards what this means for our understanding of God. Complementing this approach is Nigel Tubbs' idea of 'Education in Hegel' (he also knew and worked with Rose), an approach which currently underpins the only modern Liberal Arts degree in English universities. I want to suggest also that in an era of very real vulnerability in social and political life, one characterised by mistrust, violence and fear, the work of Williams offers a 'ray of darkness' by which our own work and faith in education and truth might be sustained.

Monday, May 28, 11:20 am-12:20 pm. Room: Seminary 101

Jay Newman Memorial Lecture

William Sweet, Professor of Philosophy and Director of the Centre for Philosophy, Theology and Cultural Traditions, St. Francis Xavier University,
"Is the 'Intelligibility of Religious Language' Debate Dead?"

One standard argument in Anglo-American philosophy of religion of the last half century is that religious language is unintelligible or not cognitively meaningful. Many have regarded such an argument as problematic, but the current status of the debate is not clear. Arguably this is, in part, because relatively little consideration has been given to explaining how religious language is intelligible. I review some of the history of this philosophical debate, note some contributions from recent discussion in theology on this question, and propose how one might defend the intelligibility of religious language.

Monday, May 28, 1:30-2:50 pm. Room: Seminary 101

Joint Session with the Canadian Evangelical Theological Association

“The Armageddon Factor and the Changing Role of Christianity in Canadian Politics”

Frank Emanuel, Saint Paul University, moderating

Jeffrey McPherson, Roberts Wesleyan College

Lee Cormie, University of St. Michael's College, Toronto School of Theology

John McKay, MP for Scarborough-Guildwood; co-founder, Christian Legal Fellowship

Fourth panelist to be confirmed

In her bestselling book *The Armageddon Factor: The Rise of Christian Nationalism in Canada*, journalist Marci McDonald details the changing relationship between conservative Christianity and Canadian Politics. In documenting her concerns over conservative Christianity's growing influence in the area of public policy, McDonald reveals a larger trend of the changing relationship between religion and Canadian society. This historic first time collaboration between the Canadian Theological Society and the Canadian Evangelical Theological Association brings together a diverse panel of subject experts to explore the changing relationship between politics and religion in Canada. Beginning with the concerns raised in McDonald's unsettling text, a panel of Christian scholars, both evangelical and otherwise, will discuss the implications that the changing relationship between politics and religion has for Christian theology and Christian theological education in Canada.

Monday, May 28, 3:05-3:45 pm. Room: Seminary 101

Timothy Harvie, St. Mary's University College,

““Occupy Medieval Paris”: What Would Thomas Aquinas Say in Economically Uncertain Times?”

This paper analyses one potential theological response to the current economic uncertainty in North America. It accomplishes this through an historical analysis of the origins of the economic downturn in terms of its corporate ideologies. Rather than only individual greed, this paper will argue that it is a view of social disengagement resulting from an anthropology that is largely disembodied which drove the ideological underpinnings and continues to be the dominant mode of discourse pertaining to corporations. To counter this, theological resources will be drawn from Thomas Aquinas's anthropology which argues for the integral role of embodiment as that which provides for human extension in space and therefore ethical interaction and engagement as integrally social in nature. This mediating role for the body as the medium of social and ethical interaction entails that embodied participation, rather than intellectual abstraction is the central motif in ethics for the medieval theologian. Having established the active and participatory nature of bodily engagement in the preceding section, the argument proceeds to illustrate how Thomas elevates the appetites as being essential for ethics. Finally, this paper will illustrate Thomas's use of the foregoing account of the body as the medium of ethics through an analysis of his account of theft and justice. Much of the literature acknowledges Thomas's affirmation of the right of private ownership. Such arguments are derivative of an account of human autonomy which neglects the angelic doctor's emphasis on embodied and, therefore, social existence. Because of the foregoing account of the integral role of the body as a medium of ethics and human sociality, this paper will conclude by arguing that the controversial role of theft from the superabundance of the wealthy to succour the needs of the poor is more central to Thomas's account of justice than is his affirmation of the rights of private ownership.

Monday, May 28, 3:05-3:45 pm. Room: Seminary 102
Paula Monahan, Regis College, Toronto School of Theology,
“Psychological and Spiritual Approaches to Addiction”

“To be alive is to be addicted, and to be alive and addicted is to stand in need of grace.” – Gerald G. May, M.D., *Addiction and Grace* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1988), 11.

One of the most urgent and universal of problems in modern Western culture is that of addiction. My presentation will show a growing convergence in medical, psychological, social and theological approaches to the problem of addiction. Drawing upon, on the one hand, the writing of the Canadian physician and activist Gabor Maté, who works with substance addicts in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside, and, on the other, the writings of one of the great masters of the Christian spiritual tradition, St John of the Cross, I will illustrate startling parallels between the most recent neurobiological research into addictive behaviour and such classical theological and spiritual themes as that of sin and grace, moral slavery and redemption, idolatry and true worship.

In this work, I am developing initial insights of such modern spiritual writers as Gerald May M.D. and Ronald Rolheiser, who in turn highlighted the success of explicitly spiritual elements in the Twelve-Step programs for addiction recovery. In particular, I underscore the way in which the most recent physiological research into addiction – research which emphasizes permanent addictive patterns even at the neurochemical and neurobiological level – provides a solid empirical basis for the profound insights into human powerlessness and the need for contemplative receptivity in John’s *Dark Night of the Soul*.

This case study is part of a larger research project which attempts to bring scientific psychology and contemplative spirituality into dialogue in new and more sophisticated ways than previously attempted. I believe that this dialogue holds much promise for an integrative approach not only to addiction but to many urgent contemporary issues in our uncertain world.

Monday, May 28, 3:50-5:00 pm. Room: Seminary 101
CTS Annual General Meeting

Monday, May 28, 7:00-8:30 pm. Room: Seminary 101
Panel: “Stories from the Edge: Aboriginal Insights in an Uncertain World”
Allen G. Jorgenson, Waterloo Lutheran Seminary, moderating
Mark MacDonald, Bishop, Anglican Church of Canada
Daryold Corbiere Winkler, Saint Paul University
Ray Aldred, Ambrose University College

Abstract: The theme of uncertainty speaks to the despair many people face in periods of upheaval. The theological virtue of hope offers a resource for speaking to uncertainty. Hope can only be held, however, when enfolded within the narratives of both the tradition and the context in which it is spoken. First Nations narratives point to the manner in which hope shines from liminal loci. By speaking to the theme of uncertainty from the experiences of Canada’s First Nations, uncertainty can be reframed to the end that hope can be discerned where despair seems to prevail.

Description: The Congress theme of “Crossroads: Scholarship for an Uncertain World” invites scholars to reflect on the changes in our context and the implications proposed by these. “Uncertainty” serves as the watchword for the Congress and its societies. This theme invites us to ponder how uncertainty often fosters despair in the midst of tumultuous change and the need for a hope that speaks to it. Hope in the midst of uncertainty cannot be discerned without attending to narratives of uncertainty and hope speaking to the context in which we do theological work. Douglas John Hall has encouraged theologians to be attentive to their history in their contextual work and John Ralston Saul has posed that Canadians cannot make sense of their history without attention to the experience of the First Nations. As we turn to consider the experience

of the Indigenous peoples of Canada, we discover an astounding ability to survive and to thrive in the face of uncertainties that many Canadians can only imagine. We turn, then, to aboriginal resources in concert with themes from the Christian tradition in order to discern how God graces us with what is needed in order to speak a word of hope in the midst of uncertainty.

The panel will advance this project by engaging a conversation that includes both First Nation voices as well as participants of CTS. The three panelists bring varied and important resources to the task at hand. Bishop MacDonald is the National Indigenous Bishop of the Anglican Church of Canada, who has special interest in questions of missiology. Father Daryold Corbiere Winkler, CSB is a member of the M'Chigeeng First Nation (Anishinaabe) on Manitoulin Island, who is working on his doctorate and has published in the areas of forgiveness, reconciliation and healing. Ray Aldred is a Cree theologian who teaches systematic theology at the Ambrose University College and has special interest in narrative in relationship to the task of theology and the shape of faith. It is anticipated that the panel will invite theologians to ponder more seriously the context in which they engage their work and the resources offered by First Nations narratives as they discern a word of hope in times of uncertainty.

Tuesday, May 29, 8:45-9:25 am. Room: Seminary 101
Gregory Daggett, Acadia University/Acadia Divinity College,
“Toward a Theological Critique of the Technological Zeitgeist: Exploring Colin Gunton’s
Doctrine of the Holy Spirit and George P. Grant’s ‘Ontology of Technology’”

Problem: In the recent study *Christian Ethics in a Technological Age* (Eerdmans, 2010), Brian Brock demonstrates, using in vitro fertilization as a case study, how the values and possibilities embodied in modern forms of technology are often hidden and at odds with Christian virtues and forms of life. Brock underscores the problem of the hiddenness of technology’s subtle deceptions and the necessity of theological reflection on the role technology plays in human existence, an urgent task especially in an uncertain age in which many are increasingly dependent on high technology for their way of life.

Contribution of the Article: The article attempts to carry out the task of thinking theologically about technology by beginning to expose the way technology subtly insinuates itself into various facets of life, for example its inroads into the birth process, food production, education, and healthcare in such a way that these areas of life are distorted in the process. If Colin Gunton saw technology’s subtle insinuation in the culture around him, he did not deem it worthy of a sustained critique, which would have strengthened his theological project.

Abstract: A survey of Colin Gunton’s (1941-2003) doctrine of the Holy Spirit with special attention given to the role of the Holy Spirit as the ‘perfecting cause’ of creation, followed by a survey of George P. Grant’s (1918-1988) critique of technology as the ontology of the age and the implications of this for the Holy Spirit’s role as the ‘perfecting cause’. A critique of the ontology of technology is at best implicit in Gunton’s work, and was never directly addressed. The article suggests that Gunton could have strengthened his theological project by explicitly critiquing the ontology of technology (cf. Grant) and drawing attention to technology’s role in hindering or preventing the perfecting work of the Holy Spirit.

Tuesday, May 29, 8:45-9:25 am. Room: Seminary 102
Scott Sharman, University of St. Michael’s College, Toronto School of Theology,
“Ecumenism in Exile: The Russian Revolution and the Ecumenical Movement”

The Russian Revolution represented the beginning of a period of tremendous uncertainty for the Russian Orthodox Church. The Bolsheviks were keenly aware of the Church’s influence in Russian society, and they worked actively to subvert it. From 1917 on, many Russian Christians were sent to prison labour camps, subjected to torture, or simply killed. A less direct but equally destructive tactic was that of exile, eliminating any potential criticism of the regime by forcefully sending it away. In 1922 and 23, the so-called Philosopher’s ships would set sail. On board were several carrying several hundred Russian

intellectuals, many of them theologians or Christian philosophers. The vast majority would never see their homes again, spending the remainder of their lives among strange people and in foreign lands.

Without question the Russian Diaspora was a source of great suffering and sadness. However, in a manner befitting the great Scriptural tradition of exile, “Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good...” Scattered across Western Europe, the Russians were compelled to forge alliances and rely on support from Western Christians, with such shared life and shared resources inevitably leading to mutual interest and concern. The result was some rather remarkable advancement in theological dialogue and ecumenical friendship, theretofore quite unprecedented in nature.

Using the example of the exiled theologian and ecumenical pioneer Fr. Sergei Nikolaevich Bulgakov (1870-1948), this paper will seek to uncover the conditions which helped to create the unique openness to ecumenical activity within the diaspora Russian community. It will then reflect on these findings in light of the literature describing the present experience of ‘ecumenical stagnation,’ as well as the search for new ways forward for the ecumenical movement in the twenty first century. In line with the conference theme, it will suggest some ways in which new forms of political turmoil, geographical displacement, economic instability and general uncertainty may in fact provide some unexpected motivation for ecumenical activity in the years to come.

Tuesday, May 29, 9:25-10:05 am. Room: Seminary 101
Erin Green, Emmanuel College, Toronto School of Theology,
“Theology for a Digital Age: The Impact of Blogging on Theological Methodology”

Digital technologies impact the world in impressive and far-reaching ways: The Arab Spring, hundreds of social media platforms, and reports that half of all Canadians have Facebook profiles point to the widespread and increasing historical significance of these technologies. Theology is far from immune to these historic changes and this influence only stands to grow as Digital Natives (i.e., those born after the advent of digital technologies) are on the cusp of careers in the academy. While there has been much discourse about how religious communities can employ digital technologies in service of a particular goal, there is little conversation about how these technologies stand to affect theological methodology itself.

An important case study for assessing the impact of digital technologies on theological methodology is blogging. With over 40,000 blogs launching daily and Blogger ranking as the world’s seventh most visited website, blogs are an undeniably persistent and influential part of public discourse in the Digital Age. The appetite for blogging extends to centres for theological education, with many having very strong subcultures where both students and faculty avail themselves of this platform to promote scholarly activities, develop a following, record of their research, build an online community or network of scholars, engaging theological topics in colloquial terms, and so forth. However, there is little research on how these impressive and growing subcultures fit in with conventional ways of doing theology, if at all.

This paper looks at this largely unexplored intersection between digital technology and theology in terms of the interdisciplinary approach of noted Princeton theologian J. Wentzel van Huyssteen. The role of blogging in theological methodology in the Digital Age will be assessed against van Huyssteen’s criteria for interdisciplinarity including the role of experts, an emphasis on contextuality, and the shared quest for optimal intelligibility.

Tuesday, May 29, 9:25-10:05 am. Room: Seminary 102
Myroslaw Tataryn, St. Jerome’s University, University of Waterloo,
“Eastern Christian Eco-theology: Finding a Root in Sophiology”

Patriarch Bartholomew has been termed the “Green Patriarch” for his outspoken work in bringing attention to the ecological challenges of our day. He and other Orthodox theologians have positioned their critique as a moral question and thus within the realm of Christian ethics. However, this paper will seek to demonstrate that a stronger ecological vision can be developed out of the Sophiological worldview of the

twentieth century Russian theologian, Sergei Bulgakov (1871-1944). Bulgakov's Sophiology, which posits an "earthly" Sophia as well as a divine Sophia can be utilized to argue that humanity has an obligation to recognize and value the world as it has been created and facilitate its development as "divine icon". That is to say embodying the divine Trinitarian essence in its diversity and unity. An Orthodox ecological theology can thus be seen as a derivative of Trinitarian theology, in its Sophiological presentation.

This investigation strengthens the arguments of those, like Patriarch Bartholomew, who wish to proclaim Orthodoxy's defence of the planet. In addition it expands the work of Bulgakov, which has of late received increasing attention, into the sphere of contemporary eco-theology.

Tuesday, May 29, 10:20-11:00 am. Room: Seminary 101
Cristina Vanin, St. Jerome's University, University of Waterloo,
"Spiritual Exercises for an Ecological Age"

The longterm flourishing and, indeed, survival of the Earth is, perhaps, the most significant uncertainty in our world. Despite substantial data on the reality and impact of things such as climate change, species loss, habitat degradation, and food sovereignty, we lack the political and social will to deal adequately with the global ecological crisis. This crisis indicates the need for human persons to transform their thinking, attitudes, and behavior with regard to the natural world if we want life on the planet to survive.

This paper will present my research at Woodstock Theological Center, Georgetown University, where I am presently an International Visiting Fellow. The project draws on over 20 years of engagement with the thought of cultural historian and geologist, Thomas Berry, and Canadian philosopher and theologian, Bernard Lonergan. It is also informed by a decade of involvement with a Jesuit social justice initiative, the Ecology Project, based at Ignatius Jesuit Centre, Guelph.

Ignatius Jesuit Centre's various programs foster the human capacity for critical, self-reflective awareness of our responsibility for the future of the whole community of life that is the Earth. These programs include 8-day ecology retreats that are rooted in the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola.

The Spiritual Exercises are a rich, extensively practiced, and meaningful spiritual discipline that can contribute to our personal and social conversion to the Earth, but only if they function out of a contemporary, scientifically-informed worldview rather than their original medieval worldview. The thought of Thomas Berry is critical to such a development of the Exercises. With this development, the Spiritual Exercises can lead to the transformation of our understanding of our human nature, the nature of our universe and the nature of the divine, and can strengthen our commitment to live in an integral relationship with the Earth.

Tuesday, May 29, 10:20-11:00 am. Room: Seminary 102
Andrew Witt, Wycliffe College, Toronto School of Theology,
"Reading the Psalter as a Theological Response in an Uncertain (Ancient) World"

Over the past thirty years a significant amount of scholarly activity has been focused on applying a more holistic (canonical) approach to the reading of the Hebrew Psalter. Rather than analysing psalms individually, this approach has sought to understand psalms within the larger literary context of the book in its final form, paying close attention to the larger themes and message of the book in light of its structure and arrangement. In this paper, I will address an area of the Psalter that has received little attention in this discussion: the beginning of the book, Psalms 3-8. It is these psalms which first develop the themes and concepts present in the introduction to the book (Psalms 1-2), and it is these psalms which give the reader significant clues concerning the direction the rest of the Psalter will take concerning them. What is striking about the clues they offer is the presence of trust in YHWH, despite the uncertain world surrounding the psalmist. I argue that a level of uncertainty existed within the Second Temple context concerning the state of the Davidic promises, as well as what required of Israelites for the favor of YHWH to return to Israel. Psalms 3-8 initiate the discussion by asking the reader to place him/herself in the shoes of David during the

rebellion of his son Absalom. What did this rebellion *mean* in light of the Davidic covenant? What does David's response (found in Psalms 3-7) *mean* for a post-exilic reader? What was the content of David's hope (Psalm 8)? I hope that by answering these and similar questions some groundwork might be laid in developing a sense of how the arrangement and structure of the Psalter constructs meaning.

Tuesday, May 29, 11:00-11:40 am. Room: Seminary 101
Catherine Wright, Regis College, Toronto School of Theology,
"The Four Pillars of an Ecological Theological Anthropology for Christian Ethics at the Crossroads"

Ecotheologian James A. Nash in "Towards the Ecological Reformation of Christianity," indicates that our current ecological exploitation and degradation is not an issue that is isolated from poverty, deprivation, suffering, marginalization, economic oppression, and other issues at the core of Christian ethics. Truly, it is a living testimony of all of these interconnected moral realities. Despite the urgency of our present historical moment, Pope John Paul II and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew still give cause for hope: "It is not too late. God's world has incredible healing powers. Within a single generation we could steer the earth towards our children's future. Let that generation start now, with God's help and blessing." (10 June 2002) Our current kairos moment of cosmocentric conversion demands theological scholarship recognize the living Earth matrix out of which theology emerges and explore the relationships and responsibilities articulated by an ecological theological anthropology within Christian ethics.

This presentation will offer four foundational pillars upon which a vibrant Christian ecological theological anthropology is built: eschatological hope; the intrinsic worth of creation manifest in diversity; the synthesis of numinous and cosmic; the kenotic kinetic animating the sacred narrative of cosmogenesis. This presentation will reach back into the classic theological anthropologies of St. Irenaeus, the Desert Mothers, Maximus the Confessor, St. Hildegard of Bingen, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Francis, St. Clare, and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin to illuminate the rootedness of contemporary ecological theology in and through these four structural bastions. The formidable voices from the past join with the equally proficient ones of today to vocalize the need for an innovative, earth centered Christian theological anthropology to guide the reorientation and renewal of Christian ethics and address the suffering inextricably intertwined with the uncertainty of this created world.

Tuesday, May 29, 11:00-11:40 am. Room: Seminary 102
Alison Hari-Singh, Wycliffe College, Toronto School of Theology,
"Sadhu Sundar Singh as Archetypal Indian Christian: Toward an Indo Theology of Scripture for the Canadian Churches"

This paper takes as its point of departure the problematic crossroads of how the Bible has typically been read and valued in Canada's mainline churches and how it is read and valued by Christians of other cultures and places. The reality of immigration and the growth of multiculturalism that is increasingly defining the social landscape of Canada has rendered this problematic ever more significant. If the churches desire to welcome immigrants and successive generations into their congregations, and if the churches, by consequence, seek to navigate responsibly the range of ethnically diverse approaches to the Bible now found in their midst, then achieving an understanding of the basic theological assumptions of these approaches is critical.

This paper is focused on the phenomenon of Christian immigrants from northern India and their basic assumptions about theology and the Bible. Based on my own personal experiences, family relationships and acquaintances, the paper argues that Sadhu Sundar Singh, an early 20th-century Indian Christian mystic, is an archetype of how many Indian Christians in Canada conceive of their faith and approach the Bible. After providing a general overview of Singh's life and key features of his thought, the paper highlights five implications of his theology of Scripture that challenge mainline churches to revision how they typically approach the Bible hermeneutically and theologically. The paper concludes with a brief

discussion of how a response to this challenge might open a space for an Indo theology to be considered part and parcel of Canada's wider theological discourse.

Tuesday, May 29, 11:45 am-12:25 pm. Room: Seminary 101

CTS Presidential Address

Kathleen Skerrett, Dean of Arts and Sciences, Professor of Religious Studies, University of Richmond

Tuesday, May 29, 12:25-1:40 pm. Room: Seminary 102

Student Luncheon (pre-registration required)

Tuesday, May 29, 1:40-3:00 pm. Room: Seminary 101

Panel: "Some Current Work on Comparative Theology: Christian-Buddhist, Christian-Hindu, Christian-Muslim"

Michael Stoeber, Regis College, Toronto School of Theology, moderating

Peter Slater, Trinity College, Toronto School of Theology

Reid Locklin, University of St. Michael's College

Kurt Anders Richardson, McMaster University

Each panelist will report on current or recently published research on the contemporary shift in comparative theology and the comparative reading of religious texts from abstractive, universalizing, essentialistic comparisons of e.g. "Hindu" and "Christian" conceptions of triune divine being to concrete, dialogical, existential encounters e.g. regarding Burmese Theravada Buddhist hopes to enter Nibbana and North American Tillichian conceptions of that which concerns us unconditionally.

Contemporary emphasis is on situating each speaker/reader, in this case Christian Protestant and Catholic, and asking how in-depth study of comparable foci, e.g. the child Jesus and youthful Krishna, enriches understanding of the researcher's "home" tradition and experience of interreligious dialogue. Peter Slater will address Buddhist, Reid Locklin Hindu, and Kurt Anders Richardson Islamic sources.

What is uncertain is how post-modern, post-colonial perspectives should lead us to revise the categories and conceptions in which we were inculturated by our mainline graduate schools.

Each panelist will be asked to highlight one specific finding and all present will be invited to share comments on the directions identified, such as how e.g. a Tillichian approach shifts the focus from abstract God-talk to politico-theological ramifications of twentieth century experience of the demonic in history.

Tuesday, May 29, 3:15-3:55 pm. Room: Seminary 101

Rachel Tulloch, Wycliffe College, Toronto School of Theology,

"Occupying' St. George's Hill and Bay Street: Theology of the Commons"

The recent Occupy movements have brought the term "commons" into public discourse again, highlighting a persistent but contentious concept with a rich history. The label "Occupy" is ironic as occupation is the encroachment of some on the territory properly belonging to others. However, one of the stated intentions of the occupiers is to question claims of property and ownership in an age of hypercapitalism. The conviction that the basic constituents of life (earth, plants, air, and water) should not be turned into commodities controlled by the privileged is rooted in many ancient cultures and religions. The Christian theological tradition, in speaking of the world as creation and gift, is also capable of providing a strong foundation for the commons.

An interesting precursor to the current Occupy movement is the 17th century “True Leveller” movement whose inspiration was the writing of Gerard Winstanley, advocating that England’s common lands should be accessible to the poor to grow food. These activists, who were among England’s poor and marginalized, “occupied” St. George’s Hill in Surrey, not only to protest economic injustice but to enact an alternative by tilling the land and planting crops to grow and share communally. They became known as the Diggers. The purpose of this presentation is not to endorse or critique the tactics of the current Occupy movement, but to explore the concept of the commons theologically with particular regard for economic and food justice. Looking at scriptural, theological and economic arguments found in thinkers from Augustine and Chrysostom to Winstanley and Wendell Berry, this presentation will discuss the resources they provide for imagining a human future in a time of such economic and ecological uncertainty.

Tuesday, May 29, 3:15-3:55 pm. Room: Seminary 102
Matthew Eaton, University of St. Michael’s College, Toronto School of Theology,
“Generous Peace and Boundless Love: Expanding Thomas Berry’s Cosmology of Peace”

The ecological ethics of Thomas Berry, based on insights from modern, scientific cosmology, can be described as a “cosmology of peace.” As Berry points out, however, we cannot understand cosmic peace as simply the absence of violence since this would betray the nature of the cosmos itself, which emerges only through natural acts of violence and the suffering that inevitably follows from this. Berry’s notion of peace embraces a way of being that allows the cosmos to flourish and function according to its own nature, with as little human interference as possible. It welcomes creative forms of natural violence, while eschewing unnatural violence that leads to a break down in the established cosmic order. Yet, simply accepting natural violence seems to be at odds with much of the Christian tradition and its belief in a deity of boundless love who shows concern for the suffering of all creatures and desires that all life flourish. In this essay, I seek to embrace the perspective of Berry while moving beyond his vision to a more robust understanding of a cosmology of peace that more adequately embraces the boundless love of the divine. I suggest that while Berry’s view of cosmic peace is a crucial foundation for modern ethics, the Christian faith encourages a more inclusive, generous vision of peace that embraces nonviolence in situations where natural violence may still be acceptable in certain circumstances. My concern in this paper is to address how we might eschew some forms of natural violence and embrace a greater degree of peace towards the Earth and her creatures while also accepting that strides towards nonviolence will ultimately need to be tempered by the nature of the cosmos itself. I do this through an analysis of modern cosmogenesis in dialog with the medieval notion of *haecceitas*, and contemporary ecological understandings of eschatological redemption.

Tuesday, May 29, 3:55-4:35 pm. Room: Seminary 101
Martha Elias Downey, Concordia University,
“The Task of Theology after Modernism: Reclaiming the Madness”

Walter Lowe begins an article on postmodern theology with these words: “There is a certain madness in Christianity.” When one goes back to the roots of Christianity, this does seem to be the case. A certain madness is evident in Jesus’ anarchist tendencies and his disciples’ odd behaviour which prompted observers to conclude that they were drunk. Throughout much of church history there has been an attempt to deny this irrational aspect of Christianity as theology has become increasingly systematized and standardized. The age of reason was perhaps the most efficient at this task. But what happens when reason is no longer king? Postmoderns have, to a great extent, rejected modernism’s optimistic faith in humanity’s progress. In the face of certainty’s demise, what is the task of theology?

I believe theology must reclaim some of the madness foundational to Christianity’s origins. This paper will focus on two aspects of madness evident in the teachings of Jesus: excess (which stands in opposition to economic viability and the notion of sustainability) and sacred anarchy (escape from the closed systems of society). Primarily, I will be drawing on the work of contemporary theologian, John C. Caputo, who draws heavily on Derrida’s philosophy of deconstruction. I will show that where reason has been found inadequate to speak about God, the paradigm of madness is perhaps better able to communicate the nature of the kingdom of God.

The problem this paper seeks to address is the changing role of theology in a postmodern setting. My contribution is to offer a theology which incorporates the aspect of madness found at the roots of Christianity and in doing so, engage in a meaningful way with postmodern sensibilities.

Tuesday, May 29, 3:55-4:35 pm. Room: Seminary 102

Susanne Guenther Loewen, Emmanuel College, Toronto School of Theology,

“Liberation and Ethical ‘Witness’? The Pacifist Ecclesiologies of Dorothee Sölle and Stanley Hauerwas from a Mennonite Perspective”

Since the decline of Christendom, the church’s role in society and politics has become uncertain, prompting a shift in Christian ecclesiology. Dorothee Sölle and Stanley Hauerwas both understand the church as a pacifist/peacemaking community, and share emphases on communal ethical accountability, the centrality of political Christology, and the facing of tragedy or suffering. Yet, Sölle and Hauerwas hold seemingly divergent positions on the relationship between the church and the world.

Sölle denounces the rigid, institutional church for watering down the political demands of discipleship. Citing the Catholic base ecclesial communities (with a nod to historic peace churches), Sölle advocates solidarity with the poor as the new form of the church “from below,” a radical and risky stance, requiring the church to sacrifice its privileged position in Western contexts and to take a stand for global liberation.

Hauerwas, influenced by Mennonite theologian John H. Yoder, challenges the assumption that global peace is the *telos* of the church, while also promoting radical discipleship. For him, peacemaking is a tragic undertaking, sometimes involving the recognition of unresolvable interpersonal and moral conflicts. Hauerwas prefers to speak of the “witness” of the (largely intra-ecclesial) alternative politics of the church over against both nationalism and political activism, eliciting some to accuse him (and Yoder) of sectarianism.

Using insights from contemporary Mennonite theologians such as Harry J. Huebner, Lydia Neufeld Harder, and Gerald Schlabach, I will examine the overlap and incongruences between Sölle’s and Hauerwas’s ecclesiologies, resisting a simplistic contrast between local and global peacemaking efforts with a view toward the assertion that the church can – indeed, must – embrace both tasks.

Tuesday, May 29, 6:30 pm.

CTS Dinner

The Lion Brewery Restaurant, Huether Hotel, 59 King St. N., Waterloo

(Must sign up by noon on Monday)

Wednesday, May 30, 9:00-9:40 am. Room: Seminary 101

Michael Buttrey, Regis College, Toronto School of Theology,

“Thinking Enhancement and Disability Together: Children, Contingency, and Gift”

Pediatric enhancement is a new field of medical interventions designed not to treat disease and sickness, but deficits in children’s height, appearance, and ability. Current examples of pediatric enhancements include cosmetic surgery, sex and growth hormones, and Ritalin, but technologies are proliferating rapidly amid uncertainty about the limits and ethics of their use. Often, enhancement is considered in terms of ethical questions about autonomy, justice, and risk without interrogating our ideals for human perfection and their effects on society, and on people with disabilities in particular.

In my paper, I bring Carl Elliott’s social analysis of the enhancement of children into conversation with Stanley Hauerwas and Hans Reinders’ reflections on disability and L’Arche, in order to examine shared questions about Western social pressures and the potential of ecclesial communities to embody resistive practices. I argue that the advocacy and friendship modelled by disability groups and L’Arche communities

exposes and challenges the social construction of ableist norms in a way that contributes to the common good, while parents' use of enhancement benefits their children at the cost of reinforcing stifling stereotypes on broader society. Finally, I suggest churches can learn from the practices of disability advocates and L'Arche how to ground human dignity and friendship not on contingent social norms, but on the nature of human existence as a gift from God.

Wednesday, May 30, 9:40-10:20 am. Room: Seminary 101

Stan Chu Ilo, University of St. Michael's College, Toronto School of Theology,
"Border Crossing in Theological Education and the Challenges of Diversity and 'Otherness' in an Uncertain World"

The primary thesis of this paper is that the challenges of our uncertain world demands a theological education which integrates new ways of border-crossings, and new conceptions of 'otherness', through an appreciation of our shared identities in a common planet. Crossing borders from one cultural or theological context to another contextually embedded setting is difficult and often extracts a heavy price; shifting from one level of meaning to another, or stepping out of one's comfort zone is always a challenge. How can we conceive a theological approach for dialogue and some theological pedagogical approaches which can help theologians to 'cross borders' in order to discover convergences cross-culturally in the theological academy? How can theologians act collaboratively in providing some proposals for meeting the pressing challenges of our times with regard to poverty, minority issues, development, war and peace? This is even more amplified in our times challenged by what Amartyr Sen calls the 'myth of choiceless identity' reflected in increasing instances of economic protectionism, nationalism, and religious fundamentalism.

My paper will (i) highlight the complexities of the challenges of religious identity and cultural diversity in our complex world; and (ii) engage as a 'test case' the challenges facing new students from the Global South in the theological schools of Canada as they struggle with their religious and cultural identities in conversation or conflict with their new Canadian cultural and religious climate. I intend to share in this paper some thoughts from my ongoing research in the areas of diversity and multicultural theological education and the challenges of the 'hidden curriculum.' The paper will conclude with some proposals for creating a "commons of Christian exchange" for appreciating the dignity of diversity and the grace of community in a multicultural Canada.

Wednesday, May 30, 10:35-11:15 am. Room: Seminary 101

Doris Kieser, St. Joseph's College, University of Alberta,
"Gendered Purity: Retrieving Prudence and Moral Agency"

In contemporary Christian discussions of pre-marital sexuality, the term *purity* is often invoked to describe sexually abstinent persons. While purity is indeed a goal of the Christian moral life, its current application to sexual abstinence seems particularly focused on female chastity. A specific example of this phenomenon is the *Purity Ball*, ubiquitous in evangelical churches across the United States, during which fathers pledge to protect their daughters' sexual purity until marriage. Purification of the heart regarding moral goodness has always been requisite in the Judeo-Christian religious tradition. However, its current use belies the developmental realities of sexual purity and the role of prudence in its attainment. In this paper, I propose to retrieve and highlight the intellectual virtue of prudence as a means shifting the understanding of purity from a *state* of sexual sinlessness to a *process of development* of moral agency. In so doing, I hope to enhance the Christian theological contribution to contemporary social discussions of adolescent female sexual flourishing.

Wednesday, May 30, 11:15-11:55 am. Room: Seminary 101

Graham Brown, St. Paul's University College, University of Waterloo,
"Moral Uncertainty and Christian Ethics"

This paper clarifies the relation of moral uncertainty to Christian moral thinking through a discussion of important confusions in John Elford's recent theological argument to the effect that, from a correct biblical perspective, contemporary moral uncertainty can be a positive contributor to moral progress on some important modern issues.

Elford observes that much human suffering is caused by moral thinking that is guided by the idea that moral beliefs may be justified metaphysically or religiously. In fact, he argues, this idea is an illusion that has led to stalled progressive decision-making that could reduce suffering. In Elford's view a proper interpretation of the New Testament supports boldly taking "creative" and "innovative" steps to relieve human suffering even if some steps are considered biblically immoral by some. He argues that a full realization of the absence of philosophical and biblically-based religious moral certainty can free our thinking for morally progressive action.

This essay does not take sides either on Elford's biblical exegesis or his often helpful recommendations for reducing human suffering. Rather, I show from his concept of moral uncertainty and his idea of morally progressive approaches to certain modern issues that,

1. He is as much guided by a concept of 'moral certainty' as those he criticizes. It is simply that he has different moral certainties, and
2. His often helpful recommendations for reducing human suffering do not depend on rejecting moral certainty but on practically managing public policy on an issue over which there is great moral disagreement.

In summary, identifying the confusions in Elford's argument can help clarify the proper relationship between moral uncertainty and Christian ethics by making the following points:

1. Moral uncertainty is logical, not metaphysical or religious;
2. Logical moral uncertainty is no reason for us to abandon convictions about the right way to live; in fact, we cannot avoid such convictions without rejecting morality altogether;
3. Overcoming moral disagreement to reduce human suffering is an issue of creative public policy and not a matter of first embracing moral uncertainty;
4. Opposing views about New Testament moral teaching are equally compatible with trying to create public policy that reduces human suffering.