

## INTRODUCTION

When differing streams of thought converge, the interactions are often synergetic, but also turbulent. This issue of *Illuminate* features work by Canadian graduate students that addresses the theme “Confluence: Where Worldviews Converge.”

Matt Sheedy’s essay “Religion in the Public Sphere: The Limits of Habermas’s Proposal and the Discourse of ‘World Religions’” wades into the unsettled realm of public discourse where secular and religious worldviews often churn up misunderstanding and miscommunication. Sheedy argues that Habermas’s conception of “world religions” is shaped by Euro-hegemonic history and he articulates the necessity of reconsidering religion as a normative category.

In “The Prophetic Vision of Beauty: The Ethical Intersection of Literature and Theological Aesthetics,” Katharine Bubel uncovers affinities between Dostoyevsky’s aphorism “beauty will save the world,” Solzhenitsyn’s entreaty for artists and writers to pursue beauty’s “secret inner light,” and the assertions made in Christian theological aesthetics. In both literature and theology, Bubel locates the “decentering effect of beauty” and considers the ethical implications.

And in “Articulating Religious Change: Bini the Prophet, the Seer,” Jason Redden listens to the voices of Witsuwit’en and Gitksan narrators who speak of the work of Bini, one of the influential Indigenous prophets of the Northwest Plateau in the early nineteenth century. Redden proposes that these accounts complicate the scholarly work on the Indigenous prophet tradition that tends to frame the tradition as a reaction to the sickness and hardships that resulted from colonial invasion. Drawing on the perspectives of Indigenous narrators, Redden sees the prophet tradition as not simply reactive,

## *Introduction*

but as a creative form of local agency whereby change was anticipated and directed.

These writers each explore a dynamic zone where various worldviews, stories, and histories intermingle, and they reveal how contrasting perspectives can enrich and inform one another. We hope you enjoy this issue. The editorial board would like to thank Leslie Kenny for her editorial guidance in this project. Many thanks also to Paul Bramadat, director of the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society, for fostering an environment that supports graduate scholarship and for the weekly stimulating coffee-time discussions. And thanks to the many people at the Centre who too work to create this place of confluence.

Melanie Siebert,  
for the *Illumine* 2009 Editorial Board