

HERMAN DOOYEWEERD IN NORTH AMERICA*

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Dooyeweerd and the Institute for Christian Studies

When surveying the Reformed tradition in Christian thought, we quite naturally turn to theologians and theology. And, indeed, all the other thinkers treated in this volume are known for their theology. But, as in the Roman Catholic tradition, there is in Reformed thought a strong and vital tradition of Christian philosophy. It is here that we meet Herman Dooyeweerd (1894-1977) in North America.¹

In this essay, I shall first examine Dooyeweerd's thought as introduced in North America, and then see what happened to his thought in the next generation in North America, especially in a group of philosophers and philosophically minded scholars influenced by Dooyeweerd and associated in one way or another with what is now known as the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto. Unlike some of the other essays in this volume, our survey will take us right up to the present day.

Dooyeweerd was a legal scholar and philosopher at the Free University of Amsterdam from 1926 until his retirement in 1965. His most significant work was *A*

*Published in D. F. Wells (ed.), *Reformed Theology in America: A History of Its Modern Development* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985) and in *Dutch Reformed Theology in America* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989).

¹ See "Christian Philosophy," *Encyclopedia Britannica* (15th edition, 1974), IV: 555-62; and *Philosophy in the 20th Century: Catholic and Christian*, ed. George F. McLean, 2 vols. (New York: Frederick Unger, 1967). We should note from the outset that there is another strong tradition of Reformed philosophy in North America that emphasizes philosophy of religion and rational discourse about claims concerning God; and that has associated with the tradition of Anglo-American thought known as analytic philosophy. In spite of differences, there are nonetheless strong affinities between philosophers in that Reformed line of thought and Dooyeweerd, chiefly by way of Dooyeweerd's predecessor Abraham Kuyper. See Hendrik Hart and Johan van der Hoeven, eds., *Rationality in the Calvinian Tradition* (Washington: University Press of America, 1983); and Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff, eds., *Faith and Rationality: Reason and Belief in God* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983).

New Critique of Theoretical Thought (4 vols.), published in its definitive form in English in North America between 1953 and 1958.²

Immediately after the publication of this work, he traveled twice to North America, once in the fall of 1958 and again in the spring of 1959. The 1959 visit included a lecture tour of several universities and colleges, beginning with Harvard, as well as some public lectures for general audiences. The result was the book based on his lectures, *In the Twilight of Western Thought* (1960), written in English. *Twilight* is probably Dooyeweerd's best introduction to his own thought.³ The 1958 visit included a meeting with the board of the Institute's ancestor organization, then only recently established in Ontario, known as the Association for Reformed Scientific Studies (ARSS). The result there was Dooyeweerd's suggestion to the ARSS that they write a new creed, an educational creed, that would affirm Christian principles directly germane to scholarship and higher education.⁴

Dooyeweerd's thought had been known in North America before the mid-1950s. Notably, he had published a brief earlier work in English, *Transcendental Problems of Philosophic Thought* (1948),⁵ and Cornelius Van Til of Westminster Theological Seminary had spoken of Dooyeweerd's work to his students in the 1930s. Eventually two North American philosophers, David Freeman and William S. Young, working with Dooyeweerd and H. DeJongste, an English teacher from The Netherlands, collaborated to produce the new English version we know as the *New Critique of*

² Herman Dooyeweerd, *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*, 4 vols. (Amsterdam, Paris, Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1953-1958; reprinted: St. Catharines: Paideia Press, 1984; and New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1997). Hereafter *New Critique*.

³ Dooyeweerd, *In The Twilight of Western Thought* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1960; reprinted: Nutley, NJ: Craig Press, 1980; and New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1999). Hereafter *Twilight*.

⁴ The text of the educational creed is published in the *Academic Bulletin* of the Institute of Christian Studies.

⁵ Dooyeweerd, *Transcendental Problems of Philosophic Thought* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1948).

Theoretical Thought.⁶ This, together with his two visits, established Dooyeweerd's presence in North America from the 1950s onward.

His thought became a noticeable element in circles associated with the Christian Reformed Church (CRC). At Calvin College, the CRC's official college, Professor H. Evan Runner became the able advocate of Dooyeweerd's thought.⁷ Runner had gone to Holland at Van Til's suggestion and studied with Dooyeweerd and his colleague (and brother-in-law), the philosopher D. H. T. Vollenhoven.⁸ Runner's channels at Calvin were his lectures to large classes in the Philosophy Department and his charismatic leadership of a student club, the Groen van Prinsterer Society. Runner founded the club in 1953 and attracted mainly students whose families had recently immigrated to Canada from The Netherlands. Dooyeweerd's thought also had strong supporters in two new independent colleges in the CRC orbit, Dordt College in Iowa, established in 1955, and Trinity Christian College in Illinois, founded in 1959.⁹ Periodicals associated with the CRC took notice of Dooyeweerd, including the *Calvin Forum* and the *Torch and Trumpet*. The Reformed Fellowship, a CRC laymen's group that published *Torch and Trumpet*, sponsored Dooyeweerd's 1959 lecture tour.

The chief focus of interest in Dooyeweerd's thought, however, was the new Association for Reformed Scientific Studies (ARSS). It had been founded in 1956 by a small group of Dutch immigrants in the CRC, both lay and clergy, for the purpose of establishing in Canada an institution of higher learning on the model of the Free University of Amsterdam. The educational creed that Dooyeweerd had suggested in 1958 appeared in 1961. It was written by Vollenhoven, Dooyeweerd's brother-in-law, together with Runner. The ARSS sponsored student conferences starting in

⁶ Freeman and Young collaborated on Volume 1, while Freeman and DeJongste collaborated on Volumes 2 and 3. Dooyeweerd went over the entire English version himself and revised and added sections.

⁷ On Runner, see John Kraay and Anthony Tol, eds. *Hearing and Doing: Philosophical Essays dedicated to H. Evan Runner* (Toronto: Wedge Publishing Company, 1979); and Henry Vander Goot, ed. *Life is Religion: Essays in Honour of H. Evan Runner* (St. Catharines: Paideia Press, 1981).

⁸ On Vollenhoven, see *The Idea of a Christian Philosophy: Essays in honour of D. H. T. Vollenhoven* (Toronto: Wedge Publishing Company, 1981).

⁹ Two more Reformed colleges in CRC circles were founded in Canada, both with Dooyeweerd's thought as a factor, Redeemer College, Hamilton, Ontario (1982), and the King's College, Edmonton, Alberta (1979).

1959 and published the lectures, first in a series known as *Christian Perspectives*, and in later years in books. In 1967, the ARSS changed its name to the Association for the Advancement of Christian Scholarship (AACS) and founded the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto (ICS). The Institute, modeled on the interdisciplinary Philosophical Institute of the Free University, offered seminars, gradually constructed a curriculum, gathered a small faculty of eight or nine members, named another seven nonresident fellows, and eventually awarded master's degrees in philosophy. In 1983, ICS received Royal Assent to a Charter from the Parliament of Ontario, and the AACS formally ceased to exist, leaving the ICS to carry on.¹⁰

Since 1956, scholars associated with the ICS and its antecedents have written a sizable body of books and articles for both scholarly and non-scholarly audiences. No one thinker has emerged as predominant. Instead, their writings might be called the workings of a community of scholars. These works comprise much of the scholarship of the next generation after Dooyeweerd in North America.¹¹

This next generation has passed through three phases.¹² The first phase, during the 1950s and 1960s, consisted chiefly of translating Dutch scholarship into English, bringing Dutch scholars to North America, sending North American students to Amsterdam, and promoting Dooyeweerd's thought with the enthusiasm and aggressiveness that disciples have for their master. The second phase, from the late 1960s to the late 1970s, included converting the Institute into a serious academic community, taking the first important steps of independence from Dooyeweerd's thought, yet continuing in the tradition of Dooyeweerd, and opening up differences between conservative and progressive emphases among the broad group of scholars who related to Dooyeweerd's thought. The third phase, since the late 1970s, has featured the production of new scholarship that in general continued the tradition of Christian thought identified with Dooyeweerd, while being fully involved in

¹⁰ The history of the ARSS, AACS, and ICS has yet to be written. A special issue of the ICS Newsletter, *Perspective*, published in 1981 on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the ARSS, gives many interesting historical vignettes.

¹¹ A partial list to 1975 is published in L. Kalsbeek, *Contours of a Christian Philosophy: An Introduction to Herman Dooyeweerd's Thought* (Toronto: Wedge Publishing Company, 1975; reprinted: New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 2002).

¹² What follows is based on countless documents and personal observations over the years since 1960.

contemporary scholarship within the academic world at large. Often significant differences continued to appear among those who related to Dooyeweerd's tradition. Through this process of transmutation, the scholars in this broad group sought to sift the enduring from the ephemeral.

Dooyeweerd's Thought

Dooyeweerd presented the primary elements of his thought in *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*.¹³ That work itself was a revised edition based on a translation of his three-volume *De Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee (The Philosophy of the Law-Idea)* published in Holland in 1935-36. Altogether, Dooyeweerd published more than 200 books and articles in the fields of law, political theory, and philosophy. His thought touched a wide range of areas - ontology, epistemology, social philosophy, philosophy of history, aesthetics, philosophy of science, legal theory, political philosophy, the history of law, theology, and the history of philosophy. He was a comprehensive thinker with an amazing versatility, and his ideas were capable of inspiring thought in almost any field of learning. As a system builder, he may be compared with philosophers Jacques Maritain and Bernard Lonergan, theologian Paul Tillich, historian Arnold Toynbee, and social theorists Talcott Parsons and Pitrikin Sorokin. He sought to continue the Christian tradition of the great Dutch thinker and prime minister of the preceding generation, Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920).

Dooyeweerd claimed that he wrote, not theology, but philosophy informed by Christian insights. As such, he wrote not about God but about the general structure of the world and human existence. The characteristic elements of his thought may be grouped under the following themes, which we shall consider one by one: 1.

¹³ This treatment of Dooyeweerd's thought is based chiefly on the *New Critique*, his *magnum opus*. His published works through 1977, the year of his death, are listed in the back of a book that is also an excellent scholarly introduction to his thought: Hendrik Van Eikema Hommes, *Inleiding tot de Wijsbegeerte van Herman Dooyeweerd* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982). The book by Kalsbeek, mentioned above is also good and very readable. Other books to consult are Dooyeweerd's *Twilight*, and his *Roots of Western Culture: Pagan, Secular, and Christian Options* (Toronto: Wedge Publishing Company, 1979; reprinted: New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 2003).

religion; 2. creation, fall, and redemption; 3. modal theory; 4. individuality theory; and 5. the opening process of history.

1. *Religion*.¹⁴ Dooyeweerd understood religion to be the supreme motive of human existence. He contended that we are related either to God in the totality of our being or to an idol, an alternative to God, whether transcendent or this-worldly. Accordingly, religion is not a distinct department of life or something that we can do without if we so choose. Understood in this way, every human being is religious, and nothing that we do in life is separable from religion. All of life is from God, dependent upon God, and responsive to God.

According to Dooyeweerd, religion is both integrative and central to life. Our religion is rooted in our hearts as the manifestation of our unity, what the Scriptures call our soul or spirit. He rejected all notions of a dualism between soul and body, and instead interpreted soul as the unifying totality of our being as related to God or a substitute.

Religion is the basic dynamic, the “ground-motive,” of our lives. God calls us and we respond, but not always in ways faithful to the will of God. Dooyeweerd, following St. Augustine, believed that there are two great types of this “ground-motive” – the Spirit of God and the Spirit of the Evil One. He suggested that, within the high thought associated with Europe, these have been translated into four specific ground-motives – the Greek-Roman pagan motive of form and matter; the Christian motive of creation, fall, and redemption; the originally medieval motive of grace and nature that seeks a synthesis between pagan and Christian religion; and the secular humanist motive of freedom and nature. Thinkers empowered according to this modern secular motive, such as Immanuel Kant, are certain that “religion” is not basic for theoretical thought and that reason is autonomous. The core thesis of Dooyeweerd’s “new critique” of theoretical thought is that belief in the autonomy of reason is a pretension that cannot hide the religious character of all thought.

¹⁴ Dooyeweerd treats religion, and creation, fall, redemption, in *New Critique*, Vol. 1.

2. *Creation, Fall, and Redemption.* This is the religious ground-motive that is consonant with the Scriptures. Dooyeweerd explained its meaning in this way: *creation* denotes that all of reality is God's, a disclosure of his will, and good; *fall* indicates our radical resistance to the love of God and love of our neighbor, because of which our existence as God's creatures is filled with suffering and evil; *redemption* turns us to Jesus Christ by whom we may be radically restored to God and our neighbors, and the whole creation may become the re-creation of God as it ought to be.

Dooyeweerd regarded his entire philosophy as an attempt to manifest the dynamic of this Christian religious motive in theoretical terms. He conceived of theory as an explication of the law-structure of creation. He represented the conflict among the fruits of the two Spirits – of God and of the Evil One – as the “antithesis,” due to the fall, that divided thought from thought and persons from persons, even as it cut through the lives of Christians. He stressed that the structures of creation were norms by which God called us to do what is healthy and to work out by means of human action the redemption that Jesus Christ accomplished.

3. *Modal Theory.*¹⁵ The first of two ways in which Dooyeweerd conceptualized reality was in his modal theory. In this, he explicitly sought to expand upon the idea of “sphere sovereignty” put forward by Kuyper. Whereas in religion we tend toward the integration and unity of our lives, in the actual expression of our lives we manifest diversity. As Dooyeweerd depicted it, reality is temporal and cosmic time, like a prism, refracts the unity of the one light into many diverse modes of existence. The modes are aspects of reality, the many different ways in which an entity exists or an act occurs. The modal aspects are, on one side, structures, or laws of creation; on the other, they are the various ways in which we exist historically, no one of which is reducible to any other.

Dooyeweerd provisionally identified fifteen modal aspects of reality, including the numerical, biotic, psychical, lingual, jural, and pistic (faith). Each aspect revealed a law or norm that characterized the aspect. For example, the biotic law is organic

¹⁵ He discusses modal theory in *New Critique*, Vol. 2.

growth, the lingual norm is symbolic signification, and the jural norm is justice. Dooyeweerd worked out a very elaborate system by which he explained how each aspect referred by analogy to every other aspect, networking the aspects of reality in a complex but magnificent integration. He showed how each scholarly discipline pertained especially to a unique aspect, such as biology to the biotic, linguistics to the lingual, and theology to the pistic. Philosophy had the task of overall integration, such as by theorizing about the modes and their interrelations as a whole, while each science treated its own aspect within the context of philosophical interrelations.

4. *Individuality Theory*.¹⁶ While his modal theory looked at *aspects* of reality – e.g., biotic, jural, pistic – his individuality theory analyzed *whole* phenomena of reality – e.g., trees, states, and churches. Whereas by means of modality analysis he identified kinds of aspects of entities, by means of individuality analysis he identified kinds of entities.

The important issue is to apprehend the unique and irreducible character of each modal aspect or each kind of entity. For example, in modal theory, faith (pistic) manifests a unique character according to the norm of faith (transcendental certainty) and may not be reduced to the social or psychic aspects of faith. In individuality theory, churches are communities properly characterized by faith, and may not rightly be treated as merely social or economic in character, although those aspects are also present. Dooyeweerd was thus both a pluralist and an antireductionist; he accepted the diversity of created reality as basic.

His individuality theory enabled him to explain how there could be different kinds of entities, yet how each kind could exhibit every aspect of reality. For example, states such as France and Canada are characteristically jural communities, united around the jural norm of justice. At the same time, states exhibit spatial, economic, social, and all the other modal aspects. They do so in ways that belong to a jurally qualified institution. Thus, states do not exist to make a profit or to create friendships, but to maintain justice. In this light, Dooyeweerd regards it as proper for states in the name of justice to redistribute wealth among the citizenry from the richer to the poorer

¹⁶ Individuality theory is the subject of *New Critique*, Vol. 3

members. Likewise, an industry such as General Motors Corporation rightly exists when it acts according to the characteristic norm of stewardly saving care for the human and natural resources of creation. While GM needs to match income with expenditure, even here the aim should not be to maximize profit, but to maximize stewardship, in relation to all the other aspects of reality, including the aesthetic quality of the workplace and the equity of the decision-making process.

According to his theory, people express their religion directly by means of their response to the norm appropriate to each different kind of entity.

5. *History*.¹⁷ Dooyeweerd's philosophy of history provided the invisible backbone of his whole system of thought. The elements of his philosophy of history were scattered, however. He regarded his theory of time as the basis of his system. It was an unusual notion of time. He called it "cosmic time," and identified it as the pluriform diversity of the modal aspects. He contrasted it with the unity and coherence of reality as centered in the human heart, which he treated as supratemporal (beyond time). As a result, there were different sorts of time, such as, for example, linguistic time, astronomic time, or jural time.

What he called the historical aspect was merely one appearance of time as past, present, and future. The historical aspect he supposed was one mode among the fifteen he identified. It had to do with power, control, or mastery, and he sometimes called it the cultural mode. He believed that historical study specialized in analysis of the historical mode of any thing.

This historical mode served as the foundation or starting point for a very complicated process, called "the opening process," that swept through the modes in the actual course of any thing's history. By means of the opening process, static or closed cultures were made to develop by means of differentiation, individualization, and new integration. In this manner, Dooyeweerd believed the world could unfold in fulfillment of the cultural mandate of Genesis 1. History would become a process of development initiated by faith. Dooyeweerd's vision of history was sweeping, and

¹⁷ Most of his philosophy of history is discussed in *New Critique*, Vol. 2, but much is scattered throughout the whole work.

he linked it directly to St. Augustine's vision of the two cities in struggle for the course of history.

Many other elements of Dooyeweerd's thought, particularly in epistemology and philosophical anthropology, could be mentioned, but these five are both central and characteristic enough to indicate the thrust of his work.

The Generation after Dooyeweerd

When Dooyeweerd's work appeared in North America in the 1950s, a number of scholars took notice of it in books and articles. William S. Young, one of the translators of the *New Critique*, was the first, and he referred to it in his book *Towards a Reformed Philosophy* (1952). The second translator, David H. Freeman, completed a doctoral dissertation at the University of Pennsylvania, devoted partly on Dooyeweerd (1958), and he published *Recent Studies in Philosophy and Theology* (1962), in which he compared Dooyeweerd with Etienne Gilson, Jacques Maritain, and Paul Tillich. Ronald Nash wrote *Dooyeweerd and the Amsterdam Philosophy* (1962), and Arthur Holmes included Dooyeweerd in *Christian Philosophy in the Twentieth Century* (1969). Rousas John Rushdoony discussed Dooyeweerd in several essays, including his Introduction to Dooyeweerd's *In the Twilight of Western Thought* (1960).¹⁸

These and many other writings contributed to an awareness of Dooyeweerd's thought. Evan Runner and the Association for Reformed Scientific Studies (ARSS) in Ontario, however, sought to go the next step and act on Dooyeweerd's thought. Runner and his Groen van Prinsterer Society at Calvin College inspired Hendrik Hart, Bernard Zylstra, James Olthuis, and Arnold De Graaff to go to the Free University of Amsterdam for their doctoral studies. Dooyeweerd supervised Zylstra's dissertation on Harold Laski's political theory. Hart went into general philosophy, writing on John Dewey's epistemology. Olthuis wrote on ethics and

¹⁸ Young, *Towards a Reformed Philosophy* (Franeker. T. Wever, 1952); Freeman, *Recent Studies in Philosophy and, Theology*, (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1962); Nash, *Dooyeweerd and the Amsterdam Philosophy* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1962); Holmes, *Christian Philosophy in the Twentieth Century* (Nutley, NJ: Craig, 1969); Rushdoony, "Introduction," *Twilight*, vii-xvi.

theology, and De Graaff wrote on psychology and education, Calvin Seerveld, only indirectly influenced by Runner at Calvin, went to Amsterdam earlier on his own to work under Vollenhoven, completing a dissertation on Benedetto Croce's aesthetics.¹⁹ These five became the first members of the faculty of the Institute for Christian Studies. A sixth member, who came from the University of Pennsylvania and outside the signature culture, joined in 1973 in the area of philosophy of history and historiography.

The other avenue of Runner's influence was the series of annual student conferences begun by the ARSS in 1959 in Ontario. Runner's lectures at the first two were published separately by the ARSS in 1960 and 1961 and eventually put together as a book, *The Relation of the Bible to Learning* (1967).²⁰ Runner's themes were all Dooyeweerd's – religion, the ground-motives and the religious antithesis, sphere sovereignty and the modal theory, and the law of God in creation.

But some recognizably new emphases appeared in Runner's version of some of these themes. Chief of these was his stress on the Word of God, by which he meant the Bible. Dooyeweerd's emphasis, it may be said, was always on Creation-Order as a reality in the context of which the Scriptures were needed as a guide. Runner reversed the emphasis, in keeping with his North American Evangelical and Reformed experience, and made the Bible the centerpiece. Parallel with this, Runner stressed the religious character of everything under the new banner of "life is religion," and, in contrast with Dooyeweerd, put less emphasis on the theoretical analysis of reality. Thirdly, Runner accented the "religious antithesis," the utter opposition in thought and scholarship between the way of God and all other spirits. Dooyeweerd, by contrast, while working with the notion of religious antithesis in the sense of St. Augustine, had stressed creating his own system of thought in debate with other kinds of thought. Fourthly, Runner transformed the notion of working

¹⁹ Hart, *Communal Certainty and Authorized Truth* (Amsterdam: Swets and Zeitlinger; 1966); Zylstra, *From Pluralism to Collectivism* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1968; New York: Humanities Press, 1970); Olthuis, *Facts, Values, and Ethics* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1968; New York: Humanities Press, 1969); De Graaff, *The Educational Ministry of the Church* (Nutley, NJ: Craig, 1968); Seerveld, *Benedetto Croce's Earlier Aesthetic Theories and Literary Criticism* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1958).

²⁰ Runner, *The Relation of the Bible to Learning* (Toronto: ARSS, 1967).

with Dooyeweerd's thought into a mission that Dutch Calvinistic youth in North America should especially undertake. With this, he reversed the trend in Dooyeweerd from his accentuated Calvinism in the 1920s and 1930s to his ecumenical Christian thought based on the common scriptural message in the 1950s. Dooyeweerd desired to change the name of his thought from Calvinistic philosophy to the more general term Christian philosophy. By means of these four new emphases, Runner helped to create a small movement possessing an élan and a compelling purpose.

The founding of the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto implemented Dooyeweerd's thought in a most tangible way. His thought was not made official, so to speak, but it did serve as the unwritten basis for interdisciplinary scholarly discourse within the Institute. It offered a model with two applications – first, for the intrinsic integration of Christian insight with scholarly thought, and second, for the identification and interrelation of all fields of scholarly study. The character and curriculum of the Institute reflected both applications at once.²¹

The Institute regarded itself from the start as a *philosophical* rather than a theological school. Following Dooyeweerd, it regarded each field of academic study as resting upon a philosophical basis, in which fundamental decisions were made about human nature, the purpose of life, and the character of reality. And such matters are the very ones that Christian insights directly illuminated. The Institute adopted Dooyeweerd's theory that philosophy by definition was an integrative endeavor, with respect to which Christian insights concerning the wholeness and integrity of reality were directly relevant.

By the early 1970s, the Institute created two core courses – biblical foundations and philosophical foundations. In so doing, it stressed that the Scriptures were not the special document of theology students and biblical scholars, but the integrative and directive religious source for the insights basic to any field of study. Thus philosophy, pursued according to biblical insights, served to ground and orient each

²¹ The Institute's statements of purpose and its curriculum have been presented in its *Academic Bulletin*, issued every year or two since 1967.

academic field. For the rest, they added courses in the philosophy of as many fields as they could, given the limits of financial resources and personnel.

In the late 1970s, the Institute faculty numbered nine scholars who taught in the areas of philosophy, history of philosophy, theology, philosophical theology, philosophy of history, political theory, economic and social philosophy, psychological theory, and philosophical aesthetics. The course of study was rounded out by a second-year interdisciplinary seminar that involved most fields, and by research on master's theses.

The Institute was founded with two clear mandates: to pursue the religious reformation of various scholarly fields, and to pursue academic research.²² Both aims – reformation and research – were by definition inclined toward innovation. But both also required a stable institutional format and a stable relation with the supporting constituency. These needs for innovation and stabilization could – and did – often conflict. I have already referred to three phases in the Institute's history – the aggressive, the settling down, and the academically productive phases. These can now be paraphrased as the transition from being a movement to being a scholarly institution. Both founding mandates, actively pursued, were conducive to such a transition.

Included in the transition was a new relation to Dooyeweerd's thought. Whereas at the beginning the Institute depended on Dooyeweerd, by the late 1970s the faculty members had each moved to fresh terrain, but always with Dooyeweerd's thought in the background. It is possible to review the five thematic elements of Dooyeweerd's thought surveyed earlier and observe what became of them in the teaching and writings of the Institute's faculty. The most important work for this comparison is a volume of essays entitled *The Legacy of Herman Dooyeweerd: Reflection on Critical Philosophy in the Christian Tradition* (1985).²³ The essays were written by

²² These mandates are presented in the Preamble and the Educational Creed of the ARSS (now ICS), which are printed in the *ICS Academic Bulletin*.

²³ C. T. McIntire, ed., *The Legacy of Herman Dooyeweerd: Reflections on Critical Philosophy in the Christian Tradition* (Washington: University Press of America, 1985). The authors are: Hendrik Hart, Paul Marshall, C. T. McIntire, James H. Olthius, Calvin Seerveld, and Al Wolters.

six authors who were faculty members of the Institute. Of the many other writings by Institute scholars, especially notable are Hendrik Hart's *Understanding Our World: An Integral Ontology* (1984) and Calvin Seerveld's *Rainbows for the Fallen World: Aesthetic Life and Artistic Task* (1980).²⁴

Two general observations may be made at the outset.²⁵ First, Dooyeweerd's system as a whole has not been taken over by the next generation. This may mean no more than observing that only Dooyeweerd could maintain Dooyeweerd's system, and that any subsequent thinkers who tried to do so would become scholastic disciples, and not a group of scholars with their own contributions to make. Second, what did continue were some general orientations and some general themes and insights of a philosophically relevant kind concerning what was important and how to proceed in philosophy. These observations will become concrete as we review the five themes.

1. Religion. Institute members would agree that Dooyeweerd made his point about the religious basis of theoretical thought, indeed of all human activity. All humans are religious and as such, their lives are oriented toward God or some substitute. Thus, the relation between religion and scholarship is intrinsic and integral.

They would grant, further, that religion is a motivating power, but it appears that no Institute scholar continues to work with the idea of four religious ground-motives in philosophy. None would carry on Dooyeweerd's extensive analysis of the polar tensions within the ground-motives by which he interpreted the history of culture and philosophy. None would regard the heart as distinguishable from the whole of our person and our functioning; some have suggested that Dooyeweerd created a new dualistic view of our human make-up, in spite of his best intentions.

2. Creation, Fall, and Redemption. All the Institute scholars would regard this trio as an insightful summary of the central theme of the Scriptures concerning the world.

²⁴ Hart, *Understanding Our World* (Washington: University Press of America, 1984); Seerveld, *Rainbows for the Fallen World* (Toronto: Tuppence Press, 1980). A full listing of publications by members of the Institute's faculty and associates may be obtained from the Institute, 229 College Street, Toronto, Ontario, M5T 1R4.

²⁵ What follows is based on my reading of most of the publications by Institute scholars as well as firsthand knowledge of their teaching.

But they would differ about whether it should be treated as a “ground-motive” as did Dooyeweerd in the 1950s, or merely as a theme, or triad of themes, as Dooyeweerd did in the 1920s and 1930s. They all would regard an understanding of reality as creation, structured and good, as basic to Christian philosophizing. Likewise, they would understand the work of Jesus Christ as re-creation and, in principle, culturally pervasive in overcoming the effects of evil and suffering.

3. *Modal Theory*. All would agree that some sort of modal analysis is useful and valid to account for the constitutional diversity of reality. Indeed, modal analysis would be taken as the chief means of identifying and interrelating the various distinct academic disciplines. But Institute scholars differ on what the modes may be, what their characterizing norms may be, and to what degree modal analysis is useful.

Some regard modal theory as useful first of all merely as an indicator of ontologically irreducible diversity. Others actively pursue modal analysis. For example, Olthuis stays fairly close to Dooyeweerd’s version of the aspect of faith as transcendental certainty, calling it simply certitude. He agrees that theology is a special theoretical discipline focused on the mode of faith (certitude). Seerveld thinks Dooyeweerd is right about an aesthetic mode and aesthetics as a special science, but he rejects Dooyeweerd’s understanding of aesthetics as having to do with harmony and beauty. He works instead with notions of allusiveness and imagination. Probably all would reject Dooyeweerd’s proposal that there is a historical mode, and would work instead toward a more embracive understanding of history. Hart makes the move of conceiving of the modes, not as aspects, an idea that has static and spatial connotations, but as functions, calling up active and operational suggestions. All would agree that philosophy is best treated as an integrative as well as an analytic discipline, charged with conceptualizing the bases and interrelations of all the scholarly fields.

4. *Individuality Theory*. Probably all would think that theorizing about the structure of individual entities is important. Hart calls such phenomena “functors” and discusses functions (modal) as what functors do. But he does not pursue the theme of functors as fully as he does modal functions. Seerveld distinguishes art works as

individual entities that are aesthetic in character from the aesthetic aspect of other non-aesthetic entities (such as someone's home).

On the whole, scholarly attention to individuality theory is slight compared with attention to modal theory. All would, however, stress the importance of a pluralist social theory that honored the distinctive yet interrelated character of each kind of social institution and relationship – churches, governments, colleges, neighborhoods, cities, labor unions, families, and so on.

5. *History*. I have already mentioned that all would reject the notion that history could be accounted for by means of Dooyeweerd's historical mode. All would also reject Dooyeweerd's theory of the heart as supratemporal, above and beyond time and history. They would disagree about whether time should be regarded as synonymous with ordered diversity (as in Dooyeweerd), or more pervasively identified as process and past-present-future relations. And they would disagree about the value of Dooyeweerd's theory of the opening process. The judgment from the historian's angle has been that Dooyeweerd's theory wrongly elevates development above all other processes of history. What is needed is more theorizing about the great variety of temporal-historical processes; and this in a wide multi-cultural way. Dooyeweerd's relating of history to the cultural mandate of Genesis 1 would seem insightful as a way of identifying human responsibilities in history making, but more subtlety and actual historical analysis would be needed in order to create a more flexible philosophy of history influenced by Christian insights.²⁶

Conclusion

No doubt, Herman Dooyeweerd has been the most creative philosopher in the Reformed tradition in the twentieth century. However, the barriers to recognizing his creativity and transposing his philosophy to North America have not been small. His categories, special language, and method were shaped in a Dutch and European religious and philosophical milieu very different from that of his North American counterparts. The prevailing North American traditions of Reformed theology and

²⁶ C. T. McIntire, "Dooyeweerd's Philosophy of History," in McIntire, ed., *The Legacy of Herman Dooyeweerd* (1985), 81-117.

analytic philosophy were unsympathetic to his thought. The Dutch Canadian community, which has been the chief transmitter of Dooyeweerd's thought, was separated from the mainstream of academic discourse like any immigrant group. The early aspirations to build a movement with a unique and exclusive salvific message needlessly impeded normal discourse about Dooyeweerd's thought.

Nonetheless, the presence of Dooyeweerd's thought in North America has been very beneficial. Once the effort is made to become acquainted with Dooyeweerd's work, the character of his creativity is evident.

The generation after Dooyeweerd has successfully made the transition to viable, innovative scholarship in full discourse with the North American academic community as a whole. Institute scholars have meaningfully relativized Dooyeweerd while seeking to distill the more enduring legacy he has to offer.

What may continue, and continue to be of value to others, is not Dooyeweerd's system or his specific formulations, but a type of approach to scholarship. The approach may perhaps be summarized in this way: the impulse to explore reality empirically and theoretically, and to do so in such a way that the irreducible diversity, yet the coherent integrity of reality, is respected, that the insights of the Christian religion are made intrinsic to scholarship in full discourse with the academic world, and that the results achieved serve God and all people.