Dialogue

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Christmas

I.
Infant
Carved from the heavens
Like a star.
Fallen into our world,
Fallen into the deep, dead well
To drink its poison
And rise with the poisoners
Into God's eye of fire.
When our paper passions
Burn away
We shall all be clothed
With the sun.

II.
God
Folded in flesh
Asleep upon the astonished straw
Come to live our barefaced lie
Until the lie is dead
And we
Finally
Alive

III.
The evergreens wait
Like children
Whispering and pointing
At the sky.
Candles peek from windows
Prophesying the end
of darkness.
Weaving in the night
Like weary fingers
Groping toward
A wider Bethlehem.

David Benson
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Students Searching for Self-Respect:
An Interview with Anne Hein

Recently Robert Kamphuis and Hilda DeVries of Dialogue talked to Anne Hein, coordinator of Knollcrest East, about her perceptions and insights into students and student life here at Calvin.

Q. Anne, there are a lot of needs here at Calvin. How do you perceive these? Are there any general patterns that you see in most students?
A. First of all, I think all of us need to recognize that we are maturing and growing as individuals all the time. But especially during college years. People are in the process of defining who they are.

Q. What does that mean—"defining who we are?"
A. Maybe aware would be a better word than define. It's a process of growth. Maybe this process of growing would be easier to explain if I referred to a book called Education and Identity by a man named Arthur Chickering. He talks about seven basic areas of growth. From what I see in my work with students, including students here at Calvin, Chickering's ideas are pretty much on target. I see almost all students going through what he describes. Almost every student I've talked to about Chickering has been excited. They've seen themselves in it; and it has given them more insight into their personal journey.

Q. That sounds like a good approach. Maybe we can all see ourselves in this, so tell us about the seven areas.
A. O.K. One of the areas of growth is becoming competent. People need to feel successful in what they do—in their relationships, and in the activities they choose to be involved in. It also includes what Chickering calls "intellectual competence." Intellectual growth involves more than studying just for courses. Just as importantly, it involves discussions in the coffee shop, or in your apartment at night.

Another one of Chickering's areas is that of managing emotions. This involves becoming aware of feelings—where they come from and what they mean. In this area, people come to understand the impact of emotions on their behavior. They begin to understand their emotional limits—how much they can give, how much they can take. And they act responsibly and maturely with that knowledge.

For example, a person learns to develop self-control and deals constructively in handling her temper. Or, a person becomes more aware of his sexuality and how he is going to act out that sexuality.

All of this ties in closely with what Chickering calls the need to establish identity. Establishing identity involves learning to understand yourself as a person—we learn to understand our physical needs and personal characteristics.

Q. What do you mean by physical needs and personal characteristics?
A. Well, the whole area of physical needs is partially related to a person's sexuality, as I just mentioned. Part of a person's identity rests in their being male or female, and how they understand their sexuality. Physical needs include the obvious requirements of diet, sleep, and exercise. They also involve accepting physical limitations and abilities in the area of sports or athletics.

Also under the heading of personal characteristics are things such as talents, disposition, self-control, and so on. A person's general make-up, too: is he basically serious or introspective, cheerful or intense, complacent, or a combination of all of these? Does he need a lot of privacy or does he prefer to spend most of his time with people? What are the characteristics that make that person unique and special?

These, then, are the two main aspects of establishing identity, but there's so much more. This is hard to define because it's so all-inclusive; it involves our past experiences—in the home, in school, in relationships. So

Anne Hein is Coordinator for Knollcrest East; she is also currently working on a book on student development.
it's more than, say, temperament. It also involves rhythm—learning how much you can take before you break.

Q. So you mean something like this: I know in my own life I can push myself very hard intellectually on a project for about a week, and then I have to back off for a couple of weeks. That's something I had to learn.

A. That's exactly what I mean. Not only do people do this intellectually, but they push themselves emotionally or physically in the same way. When I see that happening I see people withdrawing into themselves, becoming depressed, and in extreme cases even suicidal.

Q. So far we've talked about the individual and his needs, but what about the individual in relationships, as part of a community? What sort of growth takes place in this area?

A. Chickering also deals with this, in two ways. First, people become autonomous. This means they become less dependent on others for continued reassurance and affection, and constant approval. A big part of this is resolving the parental relationship. Studies done show that this is the greatest problem for college students. What that means is feeling free to do what you think is best, or making decisions of your own, without having to check them out with your parents, and to have your parents be able to accept this.

Students also learn to cope with problems in a mature way. They come to realize that people really do need each other. This leads to Chickering’s next area, which he calls the freeing of interpersonal relationships. At this stage in life people are becoming more tolerant and accepting of each other. And in turn relationships come to be characterized by greater trust, independence, and individuality.

Q. You mentioned earlier that there were seven growth areas. So far we've covered five. What are the other two?

A. One of the areas I haven't mentioned is developing integrity. In this area we question and think through the traditional values we've grown up with, and as we clarify our own values, we work to live and act in a way that's consistent with them. That's the sixth area; the seventh has to do with clarifying purposes. In other words, people are planning and setting priorities for the future. They are thinking about jobs and making decisions about life-style.

Q. O.K. Do you think you could summarize this for us?

A. Sure, but let me do that in somewhat different terms. William Coons gets at the same things as Chickering, but with a different list of growth areas that might help us to understand. He says there are five areas: resolution of the parental relationship, development of sexual identity, clarification of a personal value system, fostering of the capacity for intimacy, and selection of career choice. Does this help?

Q. Yes, I think it might. So, then, there are ways that college students grow. Are there other problems that you encounter often here at Calvin?

A. Oh, yes. One big problem is tension over priorities and use of time. Some people seem to live as though they're here only for studies and grades. But they have to think through what's really important to them. In the first place, are they serving God, or are they really serving themselves? Are they after that A for its own sake, or is it so they can serve God better sometime way off in the future? Some people seem to put off their spiritual growth for four years—interpersonal growth and emotional development, too. And that's not good, because it means lives become imbalanced.

Q. What should people do about that?

A. It depends on your situation: some people need more efficient study habits and more discipline in their use of time to become more balanced. The Academic Support Program can help a lot with that. Others have to be more willing to invest time in relationships—in loving and serving others here at Calvin.

Q. Speaking of reaching and serving; what about loneliness at Calvin?

A. Probably the biggest thing is a lack of positive self-concept. And that's not to say that only the lonely suffer problems of low self-esteem. I know of some people at Calvin that everyone thinks are super-successful who struggle with feelings of self-doubt all the time. They don't like themselves.

Q. How do you account for that?

A. Well, much of our self-knowledge and self-esteem comes from feedback we receive from others. Many people with low self-esteem are so fearful that others won't like them or accept them that they never really open themselves up to others. I always encourage students to take the risk of sharing themselves with someone—someone with whom they feel relatively safe.

Q. But if they're afraid to open up to begin with, what concrete advice do you have? I mean, it's easy to say "I should be open," but doing that is a lot harder.

A. Sure it is; that's absolutely right. One concrete suggestion is to begin by talking about opinions or beliefs. They're somewhat less personal, and you can gradually work up from there to sharing feelings. As people are known and accepted, more positive self-concepts are bound to develop.

You see, to affirm our self-worth and our gifts is not selfishness or self-indulgence. We can give ourselves the same respect that we give to others. And once we affirm ourselves, we can forget ourselves and focus on loving God and others.

One way students can help themselves in this area is to deliberately reach out in some way to serve—there's SVS, for instance, or something like the Knollcrest East Outreach Projects. Another way is to make use of the Broene Center—there are people there who want to help, and who really know how. I wish more people would try it—Broene has an excellent and competent staff.

Q. All of what you're saying seems to point toward some notion of community.

A. Exactly. It's a fact that each Christian has been given a gift or gifts whose use is absolutely necessary for the body of believers. I Corinthians 12 makes this point beautifully.
For the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body" that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body" that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? But as it is, God arranged the organs in the body, each of them, as He chose. ... The parts of the body which seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those parts of the body which we think less honorable we invest with greater honor. ... (1 Cor. 12:14-18, 21-32, RSV)

Q. So what does this boil down to for you?
A. That each Christian has a special place in the work of our Lord. It’s here at Calvin that people need to begin to discover their gifts and put them to use. And this happens best—no, really it can only happen—when there is community, since we can only share our ideas, our gifts, our decisions, and our choices with people.

Q. Anne, we’re about out of time. Do you have any last comments on this or your work at Calvin?
A. Perhaps my work could be best summarized by the concept of love. Love has many faces—acceptance, forgiveness, commitment, empathy, sacrifice, thoughtfulness, time, and energy. It’s people in relationships—each of us in relationships with ourselves, with God, and with the people around us. As we make the choices that improve the quality of our loving, we grow more fully into whom God created us to be.

Division Street South

If I were slightly more human
I would not be able to drive down their street
without bleeding;
past alcoholics rolling on the sidewalk
like old bicycle tires,
past women arranged on corners
like decorated tombs,
selling the smiles of their flesh
(though you could never truly touch them),
past broken bottles glittering like
slivered jewels in gutters,
and the grim, gray buildings
staring vacantly through the stinking air.
How does one welcome Christ the helpless drunk,
shivering and unshaven in a broken doorway;
Christ the prostitute, wrapped in bloodless passion;
Christ the sullen child, shuffling by with eyes
like snuffed candles?
I, myself, do not know.
My heart is only a size 2.
I cannot do it, so I drive by like a tourist.
But I cannot altogether forget about it, either.

David Benson
Composition No. 10, Pier and Ocean, 1915. Oil on canvas, 33-1/2" x 41-5/8", Kroller-Muller State Museum, Otterlo.

PORTFOLIO

Piet Mondrian, a Dutch painter, began his painting career as an Expressionist, following closely in the path of his fellow countryman, Vincent van Gogh. Being quite an intellectual, Mondrian began to look for an expression of true reality; through his struggles, his painting took very logical developments. Each painting became progressively more simplified than the ones before. Soon he began to discard all representational elements and used only the simplest shapes—straight lines, squares, and rectangles—and only the most basic colors—black, white, red, yellow, and blue. His compositions became such that no single part of the painting carried any more emphasis than any other part—the colored areas were no more important than the larger white areas. In the final stages of his development even the black lines were diffused with color, but the white spaces were still part of the expression of true reality as Piet Mondrian perceived it.
Victory Boogie-Woogie, 1943-44. Oil and paper on canvas, 70-1/4" diagonal, Collection Mr. and Mrs. Burton Tremaine, Meriden, Connecticut.

Composition in a Lozenge, 1925. Oil on canvas, 42-7/8" diagonal, Private collection, The Netherlands.
The discussion of science and ethics is a new phenomenon for the twentieth-century scientific community. The twentieth-century tradition in science is that it is normatively and evaluatively neutral. Recent emphasis on the need for a value-oriented science is a challenge to the value-free science tradition. This reassessment of the notion of scientific neutrality seems to have resulted from the common experience that science and technology have a powerful influence on man's ideas and behavior as well as on social structures and environmental quality.

The view that science is neutral maintains that science is free from normative value judgements; i.e., that science has nothing to say about what should or should not be done and that it cannot say what is good or bad, right or wrong. This view of science is based on the presupposition that the world is law-governed and that these natural laws are morally neutral. The goal of science according to this view is to understand the world by objective and rational means. Science is to be controlled only by those values intrinsic to the methodology involved in acquiring objective knowledge; it must remain uninfluenced by societal and moral values. But those who claim scientific neutrality seldom go so far as to claim that the application of science is neutral. Distinctions are made between the objective acquisition of knowledge (science) and the application of this knowledge within the context of cultural and societal values (technology). This boundary between science and technology is obscure, not only because the methodologies are similar, but also because the origins of modern science fostered the linkage. In this article no rigorous attempt is made to separate science and technology in considering their relationship to ethics.

During the last decade there have been numerous discussion and papers on ethics and science which reflect a change in the view that science is neutral. The question of values in science has been raised at all levels of scientific activity, including examination of the goals of science, the design and methods of investigation, acceptance and rejection of hypotheses, research priorities, and application of results. So the question then is not whether science is neutral but which values should influence science.

The disagreements center on different value priorities or different bases for values. Two values which dominate the discussion are objective knowledge and human welfare in socio-historical context. The

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Gordon VanHarn teaches in the biology department. This article is a much-condensed version of a speech delivered at the Free University of Amsterdam in 1981.
disagreements on ethics in science seem to arise when one is given priority over the other; i.e., objective knowledge has primacy over human welfare, or human welfare has primacy over objective knowledge.

Proponents of the pursuit of knowledge as the primary value of science acknowledge that science is not value-free, but that, in doing science, other values are subservient to the goal of objective knowledge. With objective knowledge as the primary value in science, other values are derived from it as norms for the conduct of science. Freedom of inquiry, rationality, objectivity, truthfulness, and cooperation are necessary for the pursuit of knowledge and are integral values in doing science.

An alternative view of the relationship of science and values is that science not only is and should be influenced by social and ethical values, but also that science in turn influences social and ethical values. Science then is not neutral in the sense that social and moral values influence even its inner workings, and reciprocally science influences these values.

There is certainly considerable agreement that the application of scientific results is influenced by moral and social values. Those who consider knowledge as the primary value in science generally separate the application of scientific knowledge from the process of acquiring this knowledge. This is the distinction between theory and practice, science and technology. Thus there is agreement that values other than those in the scientific method are used in the application of the results of science. The well-known debates on the application of the results of nuclear physics, genetics, agricultural sciences, ecological theory, and medical sciences have been based primarily on different moral and social values rather than on the scientific knowledge itself.

Furthermore, it is widely held today that moral and social values influence scientific methodology. In the case of human subjects of experimentation, the value of the subject's well-being supercedes the scientist's pursuit of knowledge and places restrictions on the experimental methodology. The recombinant DNA debate, for instance, in part centered on the risks of the research to the community. In general, though, it has become accepted practice within the scientific community to consider social and moral values in the design and prosecution of experiments. The relationship of social values to methodology in the acceptance of scientific hypotheses is much more controversial. Although a prevailing scientific paradigm will influence the acceptability of a theory, as for instance when a view of man as a machine leads us to accept Skinnerian behaviorism, still the acceptance of the theory is usually made on how well it explains the observations.

James Gaa, asserts that ethical judgments not only do, but should, play a role in rational scientific activity. According to Gaa, a scientist should consider all the "effectively foreseeable and sufficiently important consequences" of a hypothesis. If acceptance of a hypothesis has undesirable ethical consequences, then the theory must be supported by a greater body of evidences. Social responsibility demands this approach.

Finally, there is another level at which social and moral values influence science: the establishment of research priorities. Setting priorities involves ethical concerns as well as concerns for knowledge itself. If the pursuit of knowledge is taken to be the ultimate value, then decisions regarding research priorities should be made on the basis of the amount of knowledge potentially to be gained from the project. But there is more to science than merely an objective quest for knowledge. Since social and moral values also influence science, then these must be considered in setting priorities as well. Although the priority ranking is subject to corruption by political and egotistical considerations, projects given a high priority are generally those that contribute to human well-being. Health is considered necessary for well-being, so cancer and cardiovascular research are commonly recognized as high-priority research areas. On the negative side, studies on the genetic basis of intelligence have been questioned because it is thought that the results may undermine egalitarian society and thus promote racism, a recognized evil.

The conflict in the scientific community over the relation of science and ethics is a conflict between value priorities. On the one hand, objective knowledge is the primary value, and, on the other, human welfare is most important. In recent years there have been attempts to reconcile the differences and clarify the relationship between science and ethics. Many of these attempts to resolve the conflict involve appeal to some principle or moral value outside of science. But appealing to a common morality or norm outside of science suffers from the fact that there is a pluralism of world views. The question still remains—what value or principle can serve to resolve the conflicts which exist between the value of objective knowledge and value of...
human welfare?
That human beings have dignity is widely recognized. This nearly universal recognition is expressed in international documents such as the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* by the United Nations. The preamble to that document begins as follows: “Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world.” The belief that all persons have dignity is common to persons with different philosophies: humanists, materialists, and idealists all speak of human dignity. The interesting point in this is that human dignity is widely affirmed in a world of philosophical and methodological pluralism. This united expression does not mean that there is universal agreement on its meaning nor is it likely that there will be full agreement on the obligations which respect for human dignity entails. But at least human dignity is a common experience and an affirmation to which an appeal is possible.

What is the meaning of human dignity for the Christian? What in the Christian gospel indicates that man has unique worth and confers on man this unusual value? This worth is seen in redemption. God gave his Son for the salvation of sinners. Christ took on the form of man, itself a great honor to man, and also gave his life for the salvation of man. In the end redeemed man is given the promise of a position at the right hand of God.

It is also in creation that man is unique. Man alone is made in the image of God. Being an image-bearer of God implies something about the nature of man and also about man’s task. Man is a unity with biotic, rational, mental, and moral abilities which are united in such a way that human beings are unique in all of creation. Man was also created a social being; i.e., man as man needs others to fulfill his created personhood.

**Man was created a social being: man as man needs others to fulfill his created personhood.**

others to fulfill his created personhood. This interdependence cannot be denied; the Scriptures give the command that this human interaction should be governed by love. It is important to recognize that human dignity does not reside simply in the human abilities and qualities which make man unique. Uniqueness alone does not give dignity, but rather, dignity is in the way these abilities are used. Rationality can be used for ignoble as well as noble purposes. Similarly, human interdependence can be obedience or disobedience to God. So the dignity of man comes in the task to which man uses his created abilities and in doing this in obedience to God.

Human dignity then results from being called to be a representative of God. Being created in the image of God means being a representative of God. The first mandate to man was to “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion…” (Genesis 1:28). This is commonly referred to as the cultural mandate, a mandate to be a steward of creation and culture. Man is also commanded to love his neighbors as himself and to love God above all else. The general commands are supplemented with more specific directions throughout Scripture to keep the garden, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, comfort the troubled, heal the sick, and to teach, preach, and bring justice. In all of man’s relations man is representing God. Man in all his positions in creation is representing God. As a father, mother, child, employee, employer, scientist, preacher, or whatever, we are called to represent God.

Active representation of God means man must act responsibly, in accord with God’s will. Man has a task and he has the option of doing it obediently, thereby representing God, or disobediently, thereby misrepresenting God. Active representation means acting obediently and responsibly. Dominion over creation which results in ecological representation is done when the commands of God are followed. Then God is glorified and man is dignified. Serving God means man is answerable to God and also accountable to his fellow man. So man has dignity, a dignity that comes from his creation in the image of God.

It is important to recognize that human dignity is not just a value that can be ranked with all values which society holds, like freedom, knowledge, and well-being, but rather is basic or foundational to them all, because it is part of the created order. It is nonnegotiable. In that sense it places obligations on us in all of our activities including science and ethics.

It is in representing God that man has dignity. The dignity does not lie in any one function of man, such as rationality, but in the unity of functions for God’s service. Science is first of all a human activity. The notion of an autonomous science is one which separates it from human activity and thereby promotes the idea that it can be done without exercising moral responsibility other
than to the scientific activity itself. Human dignity demands that we be both rational and responsible in doing science. If a person functions only at the biological level, following only physiological drives, denying use of rational functions, he is said to be dehumanized. Similarly, to expect man to function rationally but not morally is equally dehumanizing. In summary, human dignity means that scientific activity is not autonomous, a value unto itself, but rather must be done in accord with all of man's responsibilities to God.

Human dignity exists because man is a representative of God, and science and technology as human activities must function toward that end. Human dignity then requires that the scientist ask what the aim or goal of the research is and suggest certain priorities. It means that the scientist must not only know what good will be done, but also whether there is evil which will result.

Achieving this goal of service to God and man through scientific activity is not always easy. Considerable amount of research is needed on very basic problems where the goal is knowledge about the system and the implication of the results is clear. The history of science has ably demonstrated that there is a long gap between the research on some basic problem and the benevolent application. The identification of insulin and its use in treating diabetes required a few decades. So the requirement that research be done in service to God does not proscribe research which is designed to obtain more information about the mysteries of nature, but that research must be done, first of all, as a project that attempts to discover created order in nature and, secondly, must be done in some broad program of benevolent service to man.

**Man created in the image of God is God's representative on earth.**

The concept of human dignity can be used for making decisions about priorities. There is usually no clear demarcation between proper use and misuse of science, or high priority or low priority of goals. This leads to the "slippery slope" phenomenon, where legitimate practice leads to an illegitimate practice. Using human dignity as a norm, however, will be one way to exercise responsibility. Human dignity demands first of all that the scientist is responsible to God and man, and, secondly, that the proper goal of scientific activity is one which is directed toward the fulfillment of God's purposes in this world, i.e., a redemptive or messianic goal.

Human dignity is also a norm for how experiments are conducted. The aspects of human dignity which are applicable here are that persons are responsible and are also interdependent. There are many experiments which do not affect human beings but also many that do affect them directly or indirectly. In general, those methods which are enslaving are proscribed. Infliction of pain which enslaves the person to pain would be contrary to human dignity. Similarly, experiments in which man is a subject, but not an informed and participating subject, is enslavement to the researcher. In addition, methodologies which would compromise the well-being of the researcher should also be proscribed. Human dignity is not the only limitation on research, but respect for human dignity is surely one consideration in selecting methodologies.

Does belief in human dignity also influence acceptance and rejection of scientific theories? Human dignity is a religious belief. For Christians this is belief that man created in the image of God is God's representative on earth. As representative man is not only given responsibility but also has the freedom to obey or disobey God's commands and therefore is free to ignore his responsibility. This is a religious belief which in Nicholas Wolterstorff's terms constitutes a part of the authentic commitment. As such, it functions as a control belief in evaluating theories. The belief in human dignity should not be denied in acceptance of a scientific theory.

Does this mean that our faith commitments limit which scientific theories are acceptable? Yes, it does. In practice, these limitations are very few. When specialized theories are considered, the investigator of muscle function of molecular structure will probably not experience these limitations. Also, when control beliefs and scientific theories conflict, the investigator may reexamine both the theory and control belief, for both are subject to change. The belief in human dignity should function in the weighing of theories.

To divorce science from human dignity is to deny the very worth of each person, the worth which is so widely affirmed. Human dignity is a belief which functions as a norm at all levels of scientific activity.
Dear Duane and Henry:

This letter is about your new Dordt farm.

My sole credential for it is my father.
I lost my farmer's voice twenty years ago.
Eighty acres of Siouxland out of West Branch Valley,
my birthright, was then sold at public auction—
my third-generation homestead exchanged for cash.
My credential for writing, as I said, is my father,
as proud a farmer as ever farmed in Siouxland
in blue bib-overalls and black-striped tie,
as proud a farmer as ever farmed op gereformeerde grondslag.

Dad's first commandment was "Watch out for Ames"
and last commandment, too, and Ames included
all book-taught veterinarians, no matter where—
but not Kees Mouw, who never went to school.
Kees carried his bottles in a Rockford sock
and always took a swig of the medicine himself
from the coke bottle in which he'd mixed it,
saying, "I reckon the old girl can stand this,"
before he poured it down the ailing cow.
Mouw was not Ames at all, but Ames included
all politicians after the farm vote, from the left
and right; all bureaucrats, whether from the United States
Department of Agriculture or the County Agent's Office;
all salesmen of mineral supplements for hogs
except, of course, Henry Hulstien, who sold Peet's Perfection Minerals.
Now weed commissioners, even if they were our friends, were Ames.
The Farm Bureau was Ames and all milking-machine salesmen.

*The Hoard's Dairyman* from Wisconsin was even more Ames
than *The Capper's Farmer* from Kansas. In 1940
the Department of Agriculture clear out in Washington
sent Dad a book of more than a thousand pages
called *Soils and Men*. It seems the county agent
had reported higher up that Dad raised flax.
The county agent thought he had persuaded Dad,
but Dad raised flax because his Dad raised flax
for linseed oil and linen back in Friesland.
The book's concern was erosion. It urged contour farming,
Dad burned the book because it was from Ames
though its Washington postmark was in my stamp collection.
Ames was to Dad the whore of Babylon,  
the Bible his text for farming as for life.  
For him it read: "Beware, beware of Ames!"

Into the daily swill of skim milk and corn meal  
Dad stirred an extra number-two canful  
of Peets Perfection Mineral Supplement  
on Saturday nights for the pig's Sunday breakfast.  
It had always foamed over the barrel by Sunday morning  
and had turned so crusty on top you had to cut it with a spade.  
It was like slopping the pigs on Sunday with coffee cake.  
Roy, Bob, Frank, and Snoodles, our four horses,  
each got an extra gallon of oats on Sunday morning;  
every cow an extra half-gallon of shelled-corn meal;  
the chickens an extra gallon of shelled corn on the ground.  
What would Ames have said of it if Ames had heard?  
Ames has statistics probably that prove  
force-feeding hogs and cows one day in seven  
does not step up hog growth or cow lactation.  
Not even during threshing did our overweight horses  
need extra oats, although they gladly feasted.  
Only the chickens scorned the proffered banquet.  
All summer long the chicken yard sprouted corn  
left over from those Sunday morning feedings.  
Can Ames ever comprehend Dad's explanations:

"We look to God as animals look to us.  
We're their idea of God, their image of God.  
God's love to animals flows through us to them.  
How will they know God's love unless we show them?  
How can they tell the Lord's Day for another?  
How can we comfort animals except by food?  
They groan for eternal sabbath with all creation."

Our problem, of course, was how to comfort Dad,  
groaning more than his animals for eternal sabbath.  
Dad knew from Zechariah that even horse-bells  
would read Holiness to the Lord at the final sabbath,  
and if horsebells, then certainly corn planters  
(except that Dad's excellent chick was never perfect),  
and if corn planters, then cultivators, too  
(except that the patch of Russian thistles  
could never be handled by even the best cultivator  
and needed doctoring with salt and kerosene),  
and if the corn machinery, then threshing machines  
(except the settling up was never quite fair:  
some wives had not had the ring over for dinner:  
some neighbors borrowed horses to go out threshing:  
some hayracks held only half as many bundles as others).  
Nothing was ever good enough, even at Dad's best.  
Yet sometime every implement—every binder, hayrake,  
corn knife, pinchers, whetstone, axe, and sledge  
would read Holiness to the Lord.  
The Dordt farm brings that day a little closer
when *Holiness to the Lord* is on every hog ring,
when every tractor, combine, and grain elevator
reads *Holiness to the Lord*;
when every milker, cooler, and sperm refrigerator
when every roost, and nest, and incubator
reads *Holiness to the Lord*.

The letter is a welcome, Duane and Henry,
into the great tradition of Siouxland farming
self-consciously pursued *op gereformeerde grondslag*,
self-consciously pursued in Christian hope.
Do not despair if God’s day should be slow in coming.
Then you’re not the first generation to be disappointed.
Your waiting then makes a pattern, a tradition,
which you can pass intact to children’s children
when today’s Dordt farm comes to look as laughable
as my father’s style of farming looks to me.
Then the pattern still stands and is not laughable.
I do not recommend Dad’s barnyard sabbath;
overfeeding is overfeeding, even for God’s sake.
Then, Duane and Henry, find some better methods—
but just as physical and free from greed—
to tell your animals God loves them through you.
Dad only ever burned one book I know of
and it was one too many: *Soils and Men*
might just have argued him into contour farming,
and cultivating less, and saving topsoil.
I hurt to say, as Dad would hurt to hear it:
in burning *Soils and Men*, Dad was not Reformed;
letting topsoil blow and wash, Dad was not Reformed;
and in his fear of Ames, Dad was not Reformed.
In his fear of aping Ames, Dad was Reformed.
We need Ames, not to ape, but to evaluate
and then to follow what we judge consistent:
consistent with God’s will and self-consistent.
Ames brews insecticides that kill the birds
that are our chief defense against the insects;
concocts new fertilizers that nourish plants
but poison lakes and streams and shallow wells;
develops and destroys—and then deplores.
Ames needs a conscience and consistency.
Henry and Duane, do not be afraid of Ames—
a fearful conscience is, in fact, no conscience—
or waver when Ames finds Dordt’s farming purpose
as quaint as Dad’s, because it is the same:
to keep eternal Sabbath on God’s Homestead
with *Holiness to the Lord* on every milkpail.
Do not take my word for it—I sold out.
But take my father’s word. I hear him say it:
“You are not Ames. Dordt is not Ames. Watch out for Ames!”

*op gereformeerde grondslag*,
In mid-November I spent a weekend at a cottage on a stretch of Lake Michigan shoreline known as Cobmoosa Shores. When not grading papers or reading I wandered about that familiar territory with camera in hand. I was particularly interested in capturing the beauty of light playing on a variety of surfaces—wood, brick, sand, windows. Shadows, textures, and reflections enhanced by the low angle of the winter sun provided the subject matter for most of these photographs.
“Silent night, holy night”—the words of this carol speak of a heavenly peace that will one day be universal, but the ways in which news of that peace is spread throughout the world are many. The melody for “Silent Night” is sung in several different countries, but the words do not always convey the same meaning. In some instances differing meanings are dictated by the structure of the language being used; Japanese, for example, uses several syllables for a single word. This reduces the number of words which can fit in a line, thus reducing how full a picture can be painted by a whole song. But some of the varying translations reflect deeper differences between cultures and eras. The original German version of “Silent Night,” written by Franz Gruber, speaks of a “dear gracious child with curly hair,” but in English we sing of a “holy infant, so tender and mild.” Gruber was trying to bring home the reality of Christ’s incarnation, by using an image familiar to the German people. The version we sing, however, focuses more on the intangible, divine nature of Christ. To take a closer look at some differences in theological stance or perspective across cultures, we asked several people at Calvin to translate versions of “Silent Night” from other languages into English, paying attention to the exact meaning contained in the various versions. Each culture has its own unique way to say it, but they are all talking about the one child who came to us to make salvation possible.

**English:**

Silent night, holy night!
All is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin mother and child!
   Holy infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Silent night, holy night!
   Shepherds quake at the sight!
Glories stream from heaven afar,
   Heavenly hosts sing: “Alleluia!
   Christ the Savior is born!
   Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth!
Christ the Savior is born!
Silent night, holy night!
   Son of God, love’s pure light
Radiant beams from Thy holy face
   With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth!
   Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth!
Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht!
Alles schlaft, einsam wacht
Nur das traute hochheilige Paar
holder Knabe im lokkigen Haar,
Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh,
schlaf in himmlischer Ruh.
Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht!
Hirten erst kund gemacht!
Durch der Engel Halleluja
tont es laut von fern und nah:
Christ der Retter ist da,
Christ der Retter ist da.
Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht!
Gottes Sohn, o wie lacht
Lieb' aus deinem göttlichen Mund,
da uns schlägt die rettende Stund',
Christ in deiner Geburt,
Christ in deiner Geburt.

Japanese:

Ki-yo-shi ko-no-yo-ru
ho-shi-wa hi-ka-ri
Su-ku-i-no mi-ko-wa
mi-ha-ha-no mu-ne-ni
Ne-mu-ri-ta-mo-o
i-to-ya-su-ku

This holy night
the star is shining
Holy child, the savior is
in his mother's arms
Sleeping peacefully.

Tr. by Ula Schibazaki

Quiet night, holy night,
Everything is sleeping. All alone
The beloved hallowed pair keeps watch, awake,
Dear gracious child with curly hair
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.
Silent night, holy night!
To shepherds the news was first made known.
By means of the angels' Alleluia.
It rings aloud from far and near:
Christ, the Savior, is here!
Christ, the Savior, is here!
Silent night, holy night!
God's son, O how laughs
Love out of your divine mouth,
because for us the saving hour tolls,
Christ, in you birth,
Christ, in your birth.

Tr. by Prof. James Lamse
Hindi:

Achi he raat, chup he raat
Sub kuch chup he, Sub kuch roshan he
Yehaan pe hen ye avrat aur veka bachaa
Achaa bachaa, itna mulayam aur chup
So, swara me,
So, swara me.

Holy is night, silent is night
Everything is calm, everything is bright.
Here is the young woman and her child,
Holy child, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heaven.
Sleep in heaven.

Tr. by Gita Setya

Spanish:

Noche de paz, noche de amor!
Todo duerme en derredor,
Entre los astros que esparcen su luz,
belly anunciando al ninito Jesus,
Brilla la estrella de paz,
brilla la estrella de paz.
Noche de paz, noche de amor!
Oye humilde el fiel pastor,
Coros celestes que anuncian salud,
gracias y glorias en gran plenitud,
Por nuestro buen Redentor,
por nuestro buen Redentor.

Night of peace, night of love,
All sleep round about.
Among the stars that scatter their light,
beautifully announcing the baby Jesus,
Shines the star of peace,
shines the star of peace.
Night of peace, night of love,
The faithful shepherd humbly listens to
Celestial choruses that announce health,
thanks, and glory in great plenitude,
For our good Redeemer,
For our good Redeemer.

Tr. by Doug Polinder
Sainte nuit! A minuit
le hameau dort sans bruit;
Dans l’etabe repose un enfant
que sa mere contemple en priant;
Elle a vu le Sauveur
dans l’enfant de son coeur.
A minuit, dans la nuit
Un espoir conduit
Pauvres patres craintifs et pieux
qui dormiez sous la voute des cieux,
Lorsque l’hymne divin
a retenti soudain.
Sainte nuit! Douce nuit!
O splendeur qui reluit!
Da tendresse ta bouche sourit,
O Jesus, ta naissance nous dit:
“Le Fils vous est donne
un Sauveur vous est ne!”

Holy night, at midnight
the hamlet sleeps without a sound.
In the stable reposes a child
whose mother watches while she prays.
She has seen the Savior
in the child of her heart.
At midnight, in the night,
a home leads poor herdsmen,
Timid and pious, who were sleeping
under the heavenly vault,
When suddenly the divine
anthem sounded.
Holy night, sweet night,
O splendor, your mouth
Smiles with tenderness,
O Jesus, your birth tells us:
“The Son is given to you,
a Savior is born unto you.”

Tr. by Deb Postema
August 12

i
Lying on a horsehair sofa
smelling of salt water
I have a library
book overdue and lost
Thinking trees
and midnight swims.

ii
Out on the street the reeds talk to the flute
and a walrus moustache
courts an out-of-date hairdo
They are on their way to the open air symphony
perhaps
Another Livia and Caesar Augustus.

iii
In the park
A little boy laughs
As a lady getting a kleenex out of her purse sneezes.

iv
Oh, to be in Atlantic City!
I would walk my Basset Hound,
Braid my hair,
And write letters to Sir Thomas More.

Sarah Young
Shivering Baby, Pondering Mother:
A Christmas Meditation

When Caesar lived and Herod ruled, Caesareans were unheard of. Amniocentesis, ultra-sounds, episiotomies, and "blocks" were procedures yet undiscovered, and delivery rooms, bonding rooms, recovery rooms, and nursery rooms yet unbuilt. Yet God did not wait: Jesus Christ "crept into the demented inn of this world" almost unawares. Though angels sang, shepherds hastened, and his mother adored and pondered, Jesus shivered. For barns serve poorly as nurseries: temperatures there are tough to regulate. He had no benefit of a heat lamp in an antiseptic and well-lighted nursery. Just a few "swaddling cloths" were all his mother had to cut the worst of the chill.

Her becoming a parent was so little "planned"—how many twentieth-century worldly wise would have advised an abortion? Would not even the strictest Right-to-Lifer's clean canons of ethical judgment tilt and his heart melt at Mary's plight. For she was so young, so poor, and so unmarried when she first heard of the impending birth.

But Mary was a girl of ardent faith. God had his plans, and she believed in them.

Who of us can nowadays ever imagine all that passed through her mind while she was near the manger. Nine months of carrying a baby that only she and a precious few knew were not illegitimate, the arduous trip to Bethlehem, the keen pains of labor, the report of the shepherds—these and a welter of other discordant and conflicting thoughts and emotions flitted through her mind in the wee hours after delivery.

Every mother the world over accumulates a treasure house of memories about her child's birth and development. She never forgets the firsts—first smile, first tooth, first step, first broken bone, first school day, graduation day, marriage, etc. Certain events burst to the surface to bring her joy—and sometimes pain.

But Mary remembered and pondered more deeply. To be sure, her motherly memories about her first-born son were no fewer than any other woman's. She, however, was a woman of deep and strong faith in God. No doubt about it, her trust made her a highly distinguished young woman. The Lord indeed was with her (Luke 1:28). For amid the crude and strange circumstances in which she brought her first-born son to birth, Mary pondered—and believed. With supernatural vision to peer through her semiconscious haze and pain, she beheld by faith a shivering, squalling infant who was regal in victorious splendor. She counted tiny fingers and toes, and caressed infant flesh as any mother would. But Mary did more. With no angel nearby to assure and remind her that it was indeed so, she nevertheless believed that not only would shepherds bow low in adoring wonder, but that someday the knees of every man, woman, and child the world over would bend to pay homage to the child born a King.

The aversion and protest of a stray anti-Romanist Protestant notwithstanding, Mary can serve as our example. She was not, after all, just a "plain average girl," but a "highly favored woman" (Luke 1:28). God was giving her astounding faith. With trust, obedience, and love, she gave all her energies to being the Lord's servant. "May it be to me as you have said," she replied unquestioningly to the angel (Luke 1:38). In devout openness to God, she pondered long and often. For she wanted none of what God was doing to escape her attention.

Every year God our Father calls us back to Bethlehem to see "this thing which has happened" (Luke 2:15), but not as curious tourists with Kodak Instamatics. We are called to behold with wonder and to ponder the awesome event. To see, as the late John Keble put it,
"The Most High God, the Co-equal and Co-eternal Son of the Father, newly born, and a little Infant, taking up no larger space in the world which He made and preserves, than His tender limbs might lie on in the rude and narrow manger."

But the holy luster and mystery of one of the world's mightiest moments can soon become dull. For we've been there before. Last Advent, and many before, we've sung carols of His coming. Last Christmas, and many before, we've dutifully recorded Christ's birth. But too often and too commonly perhaps, with the wonder drained off?

Why did God light up the sky with angels and from tiny Bethlehem's hills send forth songs that echo in our ears each Christmas? So that we modern curiosity-seeking mortals might turn our heads for a few moments and go away to tend to other things until something else catches our wonder? Not at all. Like Mary, we are to keep these things in our hearts and meditate upon them slowly, often, and well. As carefully as she, we must practice "this duty of devout recollection" (Keble).

Mary "kept all these things in her heart" even though she did not fully understand (Luke 2:50). Mary's faith, as Jean Le Clerq reminds us, remained "normal faith." She, like we, could see obscurely at best. But by pondering often the great truths which had begun to happen in a tiny Judean town when she delivered her first-born Son, Mary's confidence in God remained strong and unshaken. So strong, as Le Clerq reminds us, "that when almost everyone's faith weakened, between Good Friday and Easter, hers remained absolute and unshaken."

However often we may have missed the momentous event of Christ's birth by the hurry, noises, and crowds of Christmas before now, Mary can model for us that pondering, meditative faith in her Son which will allow us to meet Him this year.

"O may we keep and ponder in our minds God's wondrous love in saving lost mankind."
寂静的夜啊，神圣的夜，
一切都在沉睡，
所有的，唯独只有敬爱的耶稣父母还清醒着，
心爱的，温和的卷发孩郎，
正沉睡在太平的天堂。
There shall come forth a shoot from the stem of Jesse; and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

Isaiah 11:1