second Play

dark shapes
unseen
seen
tasty
touchables

stick
unreal
real
...

light waves
unheard
heard

sensy
sensibles

unstick
stuck
unreal
real

Lambert Van Poolen
A journal of Calvin College art and commentary published monthly by the Calvin College Communications Board. Address correspondence to Dialogue, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 49506. Copyright © 1982 by the Calvin College Communications Board.

### Contents

#### FEATURES
- **Alcoholic Professor: A Self-Interview** ........................................ 5
- **After the Flood: A Short Story** .................................................. 9
  - Marvin Norman
- **Coming Home** ............................................................................ 16
  - James Van Hemert
- **Is There Christianity on Monday? Kingdom-Building in Business** ............... 21
- **Regarding Planned Misunderstanding** ......................................... 29
  - George Gercama

#### POETRY
- **second Play** .............................................................................. 2
  - Lambert Van Pooien
- **Walk to the Windrows** ............................................................... 18
  - Johri Timmerman
- **Since Ishmael Did Not Say** ...................................................... 28
  - Richard Bernath

#### ART
- **Storm #3** .................................................................................. 4
  - Jeff Poppen
- **Untitled** .................................................................................... 7
  - Dwight Baker
- **Untitled** .................................................................................... 15
  - Esther Van Eek
- **Cradle** ...................................................................................... 20
  - David Sobotka
- **Untitled** .................................................................................... 27
  - Dwight Baker
- **Untitled** .................................................................................... 29
  - George Gercama
- **Portfolio: Willem de Kooning** .................................................. 5

#### PARTING SHOT
- **Winter’s Last Shot** ................................................................. 31
  - James Postema
Are you an alcoholic?
Yes, a recovering alcoholic. I had my last drink September of 1975.
And you are a Calvin professor?
Right.
Why not identify yourself by name?
I've struggled with that issue, and, for the present, at least, I have chosen not to come out of the closet. I have told quite a few of my colleagues about my struggles, and there are probably more people who know about my condition than I am aware of. But I am not ready to entitle myself publicly as an alcoholic. And I'm not sure ever will be ready.
What are you afraid of?
Well, yes, it is partly a matter of fear. To come out into the open and announce, publicly and indiscriminately, "so-and-so, am an alcoholic," would be a little scary—though I dare say that I would probably receive many expressions of support and appreciation. But, also, there are certain persons in my life—family members in particular—whom I have chosen not to tell; at this point, with all of the water that has gone under the bridge, I would have too much explaining to do. But there is more than fear and embarrassment at work. I don't particularly want to take this on as a "cause." I don't want to take on the public role of "alcoholic professor."
You describe yourself as an alcoholic. Aren't you in fact an ex-alcoholic?
Following the Alcoholics Anonymous way of thinking, prefer the label "alcoholic." My alcoholism is, if you wish, in remission. But active alcoholic behavior is always a threat in my life. I am always one step, one drink, away from an alcoholic way of life. For me, to drink is to create a dependency on alcohol. The only way to break that dependency is not to drink.
What was dependency on alcohol like for you?
My life, even at my worst drinking times, was not an endless drunken haze. I could control my drinking, in a sense. For example, I typically drank only after 10:00 at night, and I did so night after night, for years. For a while I observed a daily cocktail hour—the hour or so before dinner. That got to be a pretty bad scene, and I cut it out. I went back to restricting myself to late-night drinking. The fact that I could control my drinking, in that sense, allowed me to convince myself for a long time that I had no "problem" with booze. But that was deception. It's not the quantity of drinking that makes one an alcoholic, it's the quality.
Q: Could you please expand on that a bit?
A: Sure. My problem was not that I drank all of the time—I did not. My problem was that when I did drink, I was powerless over the patterns of my drinking. For example, a few years before I finally quit drinking, some friends confronted me and suggested that I might have a real problem. So I quit drinking for two weeks, just to prove to them and to myself that I could live without it. But that didn't prove anything. The fact is, during those two weeks I looked forward to the time when I could get back to drinking, and when I did start again I continued to drink in destructive ways.
Q: What were those destructive ways?
A: Well, for one thing, I never drank simply to be sociable. I kidded myself into thinking that I was a "social drinker." But the fact is I always wanted to get drunk. Not that I always did get drunk. There were times when I could control my drinking for an evening. But I always wanted to get drunk, once I got started. And as time wore on, I could never predict my own behavior. I could never be sure when I would or would not be able to keep it under control. Another feature of my drinking life was deception. I began to lie about how much I had imbibed. I would go to a party and have a few drinks, and then my wife would accuse me of having more. My wife would accuse me of having more drinks, and I began to play social situations where I could be more experienced.
Q: A black lie?
A: No, a blackout is when you remain very conscious—you may be extremely aggressive in your social behavior—but you can’t remember any of it afterwards. You go to a party and the next morning you infer from what others say that you got home under your own power. But you can’t remember coming home. That for me was a frightening experience. Toward the end, I had a lot of those experiences.

Q: What was “the end” like? How did you quit?
A: My crisis came over a weekend back in 1975. On Friday night I drank a lot, and I woke up with the vague memory of having fought with my wife about my drinking. The argument continued on that Saturday morning, and I acted very self-righteous, I adopted the posture of the persecuted. But after the argument was over I was filled with a pervasive sadness, and all day I was on the verge of tears. That night we stayed home, and I drank a lot. I would often sneak drinks, and that’s what I did that night. I would go into our kitchen to fix a drink. I would guzzle quite a bit from the bottle, and then pour a drink to take back out into the living room. That night, as I was getting drunk, I kept thinking to myself: “I’m sick. I’m an alcoholic.” All of my defenses crumbled, and all of my deception seemed to be exposed. That was the first time I admitted to myself that I was an alcoholic.

Q: When did you admit it out loud, to another person?
A: The next night, a Sunday. In church that morning, I couldn’t sing the hymns without crying. I just felt incredibly sad. That night I had three drinks, and after I poured my third one, I walked into the living room, where my wife was watching the late news. I stood there and said out loud, “I’m an alcoholic.” She got up, turned the TV off, and asked: “What are you going to do about it?” I said that I didn’t know what to do, and started to bawl. She held me and started to pray out loud for me. Then we both cried a lot. The next morning I called AA, and the next night I went to my first AA meeting. I have never had another drink.

Q: That sounds like a “conversion” story.
A: It is. It was my conversion. Not to Christianity as such. I have always been a Christian, for as long as I can remember. But this experience was a powerful kind of judgment on my life to God. When I went off to my first AA meeting, I was absolutely petrified. I did not know what to expect, I didn’t know whether I could ever make it to the meeting. I kept repeating to myself: “I am powerless over alcohol.” I went to an AA meeting every day for three months. I still go once in a while, just to keep reminding myself where I’ve been with this thing.

Q: Is it still a struggle for you?
A: Not really. If anyone would have told me back on that night in September of 1975 that I would be a happy non-drinker, I would have scoffed. But I can go weeks without even thinking about drinking, and when I do think about it, I am usually full of gratitude for having put all of that behind me.

Q: Do you find yourself in awkward social situations because you don’t drink?
A: I did at first. I was very self-conscious about it. It was as if I had come to define my life in terms of drinking, and I imagined that I would be a social failure without it. I kept worrying that I would disappoint people by refusing drinks. But I don’t even think about that any more. I realize that I am doing most people a favor by not drinking, whether they realize it or not. I wasn’t a very lovable drunk. A basic rule of thumb here is this: if another person has no problem with drinking, he isn’t going to be offended by my not drinking; if he does have a problem, he isn’t going to care much whether or not I drink.

Q: Has this experience of yours changed your understanding of the Christian faith in any way?
A: Of course. At first it was a very practical thing: my drinking had become a matter that I couldn’t pray about. This was an area of my life that I was refusing to yield to the Lord’s control. When I finally did yield, it was liberating. I also began to notice things in the Bible, things that took on a new tone or meaning. Psalm 103, which I had memorized as a kid in Christian school: “He heals all my diseases, he redeems my life from destruction, . . . he satisfies my mouth with good things, so that my youth is renewed like the eagle’s.” And, best of all, the wonderful promise in Revelation 21:6, which is a marvelous verse for the alcoholic: “To the thirsty I will give water without price from the fountain of the water of life.”

Alcoholism affects a person on at least three different levels: it is a physical addiction, an emotional disorder, and a spiritual misdirection. Spiritually, it is idolatry. One allows alcohol to occupy a central ordering place in one’s life. That is a dangerous business for a Christian. Even now, I am not an advocate of teetotalling across the board. Most Christians who drink can do so in a healthy manner, as an enjoyment of the riches of God’s creation. But alcohol also has demonic potential. It is, as they say in AA, “cunning, powerful, and baffling.” Christians who drink should constantly check out their patterns, to see if they are running the risk of idolatry. And if they are—well, I can testify to the fact that God is abundant in his mercy.
Willem de Kooning, a Dutch-American twentieth-century painter, is known primarily for his Abstract Expressionistic style. He sought to reduce objects and figures to their most basic components—the essential core.

*Woman I*, done in this style, is a dynamic, spontaneous painting. Using quick, slashing brush strokes and contrasting hot and cool colors, de Kooning creates tension—the woman appears to be churning and evolving in space. She is not a resolved, classical ideal. Rather, she is a changing, fluctuating life force, at times brazen and bold and at times shy—almost smug—as her smile suggests. She represents not one particular woman but all women. Although the painting is somewhat ambiguous, in de Kooning’s mind, such is woman.
After the Flood

there will be time, there will be time

to prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet;

there will be time to murder and create,

and time for all the works and days of hands

that lift and drop a question on your plate;

and time for you and time for me

and time yet for a hundred indecisions,

and time for a hundred visions and revisions

before the taking of a toast and tea.

Watchin' the women come and go, speaking of

Mlaiangelo... Alfred's eyes bulged while his face

on a lecherous expression. Up to that point he had

led the poem flawlessly, with dramatic sincerity and

ure to impress her. Emilia was puzzled by the

very of the last lines; she blushed instinctively, as if

ing the carnality behind his smile. "Of course you

ize that I took some liberties with a couple of lines,

ia," he said, winking playfully and scratching his

like a school child.

Well, I guess," she said nervously, managing to smile

his admission.

he ability to be elusive and improvisational is the

of a truly creative mind, someone once said," Alfred

arked while cleaning his nails with a painting knife.

edom is a necessity if art is to grow; do you agree,

ar sweet Emilia?"

Mmm, I don't know," she said, smiling in her non-

ly way. "That sort of freedom just sounds like dis-

on to me."

Distortion?!" Alfred replied in mock outrage. He

in running his hands through his hair with quick

ggerated motions. "Distortion? On the contrary, my

fulfillment, not distortion. My interpretation adds

and relevance to that poem so that it has a deeper

ing in our own time—context. People should

understand what I mean at an intuitive level im-

mediately; that is, if they're not possessed of the

bourgeois spirit."

Emilia registered an expression of hurt on her long,

pretty face at his sarcastic rebuke. She hadn't learned

the art of not taking him seriously.

"Well, well, well," he said, his British accent be-

coming very pronounced. "Looks like our friend from

Philly has found something humorous in our conversa-

tion, Emilia. Tell me, Mr. Jones, what's so funny? Why

are you chuckling so?"

Norman Jones sat leaning his chair diagonally from

the table; his feet were planted firmly on drawings and

painting studies on its top. His hands were locked firmly

behind his recently trimmed afro. The smile had not

vanced from his mouth even though his eyebrows

gave

the impression of puzzlement at Alfred's question. Alfred

walked into his studio uninvited.

"What's up, man?"

"Your smile, your chuckling, I could have sworn I

heard you laughing about something," Alfred said, a
sardonic grin returning to his mouth.

Norman hunched his shoulders in innocence. "I don't

know what you're talking about."

"What?"

"Nothing, man, nothing," he said defiantly, then

remembering what it was he began smiling again. Emilia

joined them in the studio, apparently forgetting the hurt

she had felt a minute ago. "Alfred, have you met

Norman? Have you been formally introduced, I mean?"

"Yes, we met yesterday afternoon; we're suitemates,

in fact. I told him a little about how things are done here

at the California Institute of Contemporary Aesthetics."

"Oh, that's good," she said. "I thought you'd be the

perfect person for him to talk to. He is interested in

philosophy and art theory and all of that stuff and how

they interrelate and affect the modern world," she said

with a child-like voice, rocking her head in sync with her

hands as if pointing to imaginary objects in space or

watching a tennis match.

"Sweet girl that thou art to be so interested in Mr.
's well-being,' Alfred said with a deadpan session.

continued unperturbed. "Since he is starting of now instead of first semester like we did, I
t that it would be great if we could help orient him to
CAL-ICA community."

as, quite right,' Alfred said in an uncharacter-
" We should tell him about the pre-
ducant of this studio," he said patting one of the
of Norman's studio with the flat of his hand.

all me about this person," Norman said while
ling drawings into a single pile. "There was a
and amount of absolutely useless stuff in this
e when I started cleaning it out yesterday. There
ices, rusted metal, ropes, dirty painting cloths,
stuffing from what appeared to once have been a
king bag, and gnarled wet plastic."

es, Ira was quite the collector of mad
phenalia, Alfred said. "She also had a box of
or toys and Kiddie blocks that her parents removed
uple of days before you arrived. She was quite mad,
now."

that? You mean literally?" Norman motioned in a
ne with a finger.

onkers!" Alfred said unsympathetically. Emilia was
to defend her absent friend. "She had a nervous
down, that's all; she wasn't a mad killer or any-
like that. She had a few problems that needed
ning out."

ren't you again overestimating the mental stability
our friends, Emilia?" Alfred asked in a paternalistic
while lighting a cigarette.

he was as crackers as the night is black; why else
she construct a huge wooden crib and sleep in it
ours at a time?"

Norman looked at Alfred incredulously.

o, Mr. Jones, I'm not lying. Emilia can certainly
in for the veracity of my statement. She used to
in her crib and play with those toys I told you about
er. All she did was sleep, never painting, never
, just making disgusting goo-goo sounds in her

he did do work; she did beautiful and sensitive
ges," Emilia said defensively, her soft voice be-
louder each time she contradicted him. Alfred
ched his head as if trying to remember what
ful collages Emilia was referring to.

you mean those little brown and green things she
October? Those are the sensitive collages you
alking about? Those were absolutely horrid. I think
we flipped like your pointy-eared friend, Emilia."
nilia's nostrils began to flare and close quickly.
d smiled, preparing himself for a verbal assault that
r came.

Well, anyway," Emilia said, trying to appear un-
itored, "the school nurse and the Dean of Women
ed that it would be best if she didn't return to CAL-
until she received extensive counseling. This was
idered too inappropriate an environment to work
her problems in. She wasn't producing enough work
ily her use of the studio and she never attended

her other classes or any of the painting critiques."

"Poor child," Alfred said, deadpanning it again. "Oh,
the horror of insanity at eighteen," he continued.

Emilia smirked at his attempt at humor. "You're so
tacky," she said. "Cynical and tacky.

"Eh, don't you know that dark humor alleviates suf-
ing, my child. It is cathartic, a real cleansing element you
know."

"You seem to have a really peculiar view of things,"
Norman said, trying to tune the reception of his radio
with its midget antenna.

"Kinda funky you think, eh, Mr. Jones?" Alfred replied,
scratching his chin.

"He's so cynical, so tacky and cynical," Emilia said,
as she turned and left the studio.

Norman began frequenting the television lounges of
the dormitories when he had the opportunity. He soon
observed that the majority of CAL-ICA people, despite
their pretentions to arty-isolationism, were avid news
watchers and were surprisingly well-informed about
events in the world. They often had heated discussions
as the events unfolded on the elaborated twenty-four-
inch screen.

"The Shah's days are numbered, those Iranian folks
want his head; look at those crowds, man, that govern-
ment is going to fall any day now and I don't care what
Carter says," a student remarked while gesticulating
wildly at the television set.

"Look at this crap, Vietnam is invading Cambodia,
and China is invading Vietnam. Ain't this some b.s.? It'll
be like dumb-ass America to get involved in a conflict
between a bunch of commies... ." There was a chorus
of amens in the dark lounge. "I say we nuke 'em, just
nuke 'em all, Israel and South Africa too. Then we ought
to nuke Washington and Moscow." There were a few
puzzled eyebrows raised at that suggestion.

Norman sat next to the student who believed atomic
annihilation would be the solution to much of the world's
problems. He smiled as Norman sat next to him,
interpreting it as an act of introduction. "Hey blood," he
said looking at Norman through bleary, blood-shot eyes.
"My name is Steve, the people 'round here call me 'wild
Steve with the motorcycle.' I don't recall ever seeing you
'round here before," Norman extended his hand and
introduced himself.

"So you're from Philly, huh? What brings you to the
wilds of Disneyland?"

"I'm searching for meaning and the bohemian idea,"
Norman said in his most cryptic tone of voice. There
was a hushed silence as the students assembled
around them, becoming conscious of their conversa-
tion. Walter Cronkite gave the closing stocks from Wall Street. There were a few snickers and whispered conversations. Steve blinked a couple of times, then he began to laugh.

"Man, I can't believe it," he said while guzzling beer between guffaws. "You've been here for a few weeks and you're already spouting the artsy-fartsy nonsensical language that is so characteristic of this place. It usually takes a few months before freshmen are using cliches like a CAL-ICA upper-classman."

Norman was startled and put on the defensive by Steve's drunken assessment of his intellectual integrity. "I'm serious, I am searching for meaning or answers or whatever you want to call it. I want to find out if the world of detachment and intense painting is for me. That's why I've come 3,000 miles west where I don't know anyone and have no attachments." Norman began to struggle for words. "I want to use this time to search for a way of dealing with some heavy questions that have been plaguing me."

Steve seemed to be immobilized, as if stunned by the hard edges of the cliches his young classmate was mouthing.

"How old are you, kid?" he asked, his large balding head and sandy hair dripping beads of sweat in the non-air-conditioned room.

"Eighteen," Norman answered defensively.

"It figures, man," he said dryly.

"This isn't the mecca you were expecting now is it?" Steve asked, facing the television. Norman noticed the patronizing tone that entered his voice.

"I wasn't expecting Shangri-la, just a place to ask some questions without fear of ridicule." Steve shook his head and smiled at his beer can. He started to chuckle.

"Are you confused and cynical about life and the simple task of existence?" Steve asked, deepening his tone of voice as if emulating a wise father. Norman stared at the television in silence and partly out of the confusion and shame of not understanding the question. "Well," he said throwing up his hands, "you're not going to find any answers here unless you're willing to accept lies and false leads." Steve scratched the bottom of his small pointed beard. Norman was struck by how much he resembled a portrait of Paul Gauguin which to exit. Steve anticipated his dilemma and made easier for him. "May the force be with you," he said belched.

Norman stood and stretched his body in the dark. The patio door was cracked open slightly to allow a generous flow of cool night air into the room. Michel was on the opposite side of the room breathing lightly as he slept and muttering the lines of a play he was planning to audition for. Norman tossed and turned number of positions, seeking sleep that was becoming more elusive by the minute. He lifted himself from bed and navigated through the darkness to the bathroom. He quickly flicked on the bathroom light and believed his reflection in the mirror to be more honest; it showed the fear and bewilderment of his condition even through the fuzzy palm prints on its surface.

"I know the truth... I know it's true, but why is it so why does it demand so much?" he asked, squinting his eyes, clenching his teeth as if he were in pain. The fluorescent lights danced out of sync with the beat of his pulse as he rubbed his eyes in an attempt to figure out what was going on. He soon noticed traces of saliva and tooth paste on the bathroom sink. He instinctively looked away and rubbed his face as he considered his reflection again. He saw the light dancing off of a dark complexion of his skin and tried to radiate coolness.

"Why do I exist? I never asked to deal with the questions. I really don't want to deal with them; it seems to be forced into this situation..."

He continued to talk about all the circumstances and his reflection again. He saw the sight of a green, empty, glassy-eyed, man staring at him from the mirror. The humming of the fluorescent tubes was his reply.

"It's so quiet tonight, he thought. "It's as if I were the only person left in the world." He heard the front door slamming in the other room. A quick look at his watch..."
ulated that it was 2:47 a.m. "Daniel has gone home this weekend," he said to himself, "that can only be.

"Norman decided instantly that he was in no position to handle him and was heading for the door when

and burst in singing a bawdy Scottish ballad. He was telling a story about a poor deluded girl and a bagpipe.

"Keep it down some, Micheal is trying to sleep," Norman said, stepping back in the bathroom and quietly shutting the door.

Alfred shushed back and immediately ended his song mid-sentence. He was drunk and appeared to be in an extremely happy mood. Norman decided against going immediately to find out why Alfred was celebrating.

"Howdy, neighbor," Alfred said while staring at himself in the mirror, "what keeps you up at this indecent hour? Not bad dreams I hope."

"Well, I was just about to wash my face," Norman said, turning on the faucet and grabbing his wash cloth.

"Oh, very well," Alfred said, squeezing a pimple on his cheek. "Cleanliness is next to godliness as they say," he remarked with a huge grin on his face.

"I agree," Norman said while smirking at his neighbor, "that's why I'm washing my face."

"Good, good," he replied.

"What did you think of Modern Art class today, Alfred?"

"I found it boring, didn't you?"

"No, in fact, I found it rather interesting...."

"What, all that talk about Order and philosophical journeys of the early 20th-century artists, you found it interesting?"

Norman stared at Alfred, trying to anticipate what he was driving at.

"I found it to be a horrible waste of time, Mr. Jones; I'm surprised that you didn't also."

"Well, it's obvious that you and I will probably disagree on just about everything, Alfred," Norman said after getting a nice lather on his washcloth, "but I'm curious, why did you think it was such a horrible lecture?"

"Well, for one thing," Alfred said, inspecting the bottom of his left eyelid in the mirror, "the lecturer failed to communicate adequately the hopelessness of the human condition. He failed to impress upon the consciousnesses of the little arty bourgeois masses the utter
folly of seeking a unified experience of the world through their métier." Norman started to wash his face in the running water.

"I hate it whenever anyone talks about Order or ultimate meaning for his life, it's so loony and absurd; then again, the world is absurd anyway so why should I give a damn?"

"That's what I was just thinking myself, Alfred, why should you give a damn?" Norman replied.

"Well, someone has to point out the hypocrisy of the age."

"Is there any order at all, Alfred?"

"I don't see any evidence of it my friend; teleology appears to be a very sick joke propagated by witch doctors who want to keep the ignorant steeped in ignorance."

"Come on man, there has to be something holding this world together. How can you say there isn't so categorically?" Norman asked while cleaning behind his ears.

"Why does it have to be a principle of Order? Perhaps it's simply chance configurations, patterns imply nothing about"—Alfred waved his arms slowly in a circle—"beyondedness, or something out there that has intelligence or personality. There is no evidence of design, as far as I'm concerned. There is only energy, time, space, and chance. Throw in a little matter and chaos, throw in a couple of Taco Bells and you have the Universe."

Alfred lit a cigarette and smiled a very Faustian smile. "It's all gonna blow up anyway, so why bother to even ask why?"

Norman hunched his shoulders and started to whistle. He tried to appear detached from the whole conversation. Alfred continued. "When I was your age I used to ask silly metaphysical questions too. I looked for unity and ultimate principles, but all I found was obscene gesture after obscene gesture and the sights and sounds of my own pretentiousness." Alfred blew a cloud of smoke at his reflection. "On top of that I found more evil and chaos than can be accounted for in any philosophical or religious schema. I came to be in complete agreement with Baudelaire when he said, 'If there is a God, he must be the devil.'"

Norman became edgy at the thought of discussing his evolving world-and-life view at length with someone as caustic as Alfred. A casual statement on his part could ruin a week's contemplation. He tried changing the conversation. "By the way, Alfred, Cathy was looking for you earlier this evening, did she ever catch up to you?"

"Indeed, indeed, we did get together, and what a time we had, my friend," he said, stuffing his hands in his pockets.

"Of course, she still insists on making ridiculous punk rock noises whenever I try to have a serious conversation with her. I soon realized the futility of treating her like an equal and so I was forced to initiate a little Saturday night exploitation earlier than usual. She's a girl with a less than analytical mind, lying eyes, and light green hair, but she has a body like Vampirella."

Alfred began combing his hair while winking at him in the mirror. "But I think she's learning to fake the qualities I appreciate in a woman, at least when we're together she does," Alfred struck a suave pose in front of his reflection. "You'll find the women here at CAL-ICA are dregs of the earth culturally, but in other ways they can be very fine." Alfred didn't expect a reply and continued with his narrative of the night's events. "I read somewhere that you're a freak and smiled to himself; he searched his shirt pockets for another cigarette. "Hmmmmmph, I might even love with her if I didn't hallucinate the whole thing."

Norman rolled his eyes and continued washing his face. "Is your grip on reality really that tenable Alfred?"

Alfred smiled wryly, shaking his head in amazement. "I'm unique, only when I choose to be uncertain, Mr. Jones, should know by now that all the happiness in this world is totally illusionary, it's so fake... it's such a condition thing with absolutely no permanence whatsoever, a mirage created by great heat that disappears upon inspection; it leaves only sand particles and gnats."

"Huh??"

"You heard me."

"Is non-happiness more ultimate than happiness?"

"Of course it is. The human condition is a terrifying experience; we live a couple of years in dread, fear, the elements and the great beast Man. We work all our lives for mammon we can't take with us and we're bound to a cold winter morning next to strangers, sometimes strangers we were married to."

"You're incredible, Alfred. I'm surprised you left the vandalizing teenagers who desecrate tombs of the near-sighted grave-digger who accidently dropped the casket in the river."

"Cold reality provides its own exaggerations friend; I find your optimism rather puzzling."

"Aha! You used that word?" Norman said. "What word?"

"Reality!"

"Obviously I meant it in a totally different sense."

"Bro-ther!"

"This is getting boring, Mr. Jones. I suggest we talk about this until you learn some other things. I'm not a high school philosophy teacher. This stuff doesn't interest me anymore. It's getting to the point where we're always discussing and hassling over the same issues continually. This is what happens when you're hanging out with Moonie-Calvinists."

Norman looked up from the wash basin. His face was dripping water. He stared at the mirror and Alfred's reflection. He couldn't take his eyes off Alfred's winking smile. Norman could see Alfred's grey eyes pierce his back as though they could see all of the quest bottled up inside of him.
Are you attending Bible studies yet, Mr. Jones?" Norman reached for his towel and began drying his face. He felt slightly embarrassed.

"You really ought to. You'd get a free meal and a weekend at some isolated farm in Northern California," said, leaning on his sink while removing his dirtied shoes.

Norman wasn't sure of how to respond to him. He didn't want to confirm that he was conversing with the Christians.

Uh, gotta get some sleep, Alfred. I'll, uh...see you tomorrow maybe..."

"Yes, brother, sleep well and...oh, don't forget to say your prayers. O.K.?" He looked up and sarcastically pointed to the ceiling. "He wouldn't like it if you forgot."

Norman Jones smiled weakly and closed the door behind him. He was once again plunged into the darkness of the bedroom. He could hear Micheal's soft breathing. He was relieved that he hadn't been awakened by the conversation in the bathroom. Light from the moon poured in through the patio window, making it easier for him to navigate to his bed. He felt shame quickly rushing over him when he reached his bed. He knew he deserved no awards for integrity. He was too intimidated by campus consensus to identify too closely with the Christians. He tried rationalizing his predicament. "I have so many questions," he said to himself. "What about dinosaurs and evolution and..."

He stared at the ceiling in the darkness. Micheal was beginning to snore. Moisture began to fill the corner of his eyes.

"I know I'm going to have nightmares about this." He tried desperately to fall asleep, but he couldn't erase Alfred's sarcastic smile from his consciousness. He was tempted to take Alfred's advice about praying very seriously.
Coming Home

James Van Hemert

After traveling nearly 15,000 miles with Summer Cycle Tours by bus and bicycle, I think you can understand why I was not thrilled about a bus ride back to Grand Rapids from Yellowstone National Park. I was even less thrilled about the prospect of hitchhiking from Grand Rapids to Florida to visit my family for a few days before the start of school. I stayed one night in Grand Rapids and the next day at noon pointed my thumb across the highway. Rides came fast and easy all the way through Michigan and Northern Ohio. I was even picked up by a priest once. At five I stopped at a truck stop in Wapakoneta, Ohio, to get something to eat. Hoping that some truckers would take me as a rider, I proceeded to ask them, but without success. "Insurance won't allow it" "NO!" "Goin' nawth." "I'd lose my jawb." I kept asking all evening and must have asked more than a hundred. Then it got dark. And then it started to pour. And then I got depressed, lost all hope and resorted to sitting and staring. I was definitely not in a state of euphoria about God's providential care. I spent $23 on a motel room for the night, and the next morning I returned to the grand slab for a second attempt. Nobody would pick me up. And then I got depressed, lost all hope and resorted to sitting and staring. I was definitely not in a state of euphoria about God's providential care. I spent $23 on a motel room for the night, and the next morning I returned to the grand slab for a second attempt. Nobody would pick me up. I stood there, and stood there, and stood there some more. Oncoming cars can be monotonous and depressing, so I finally resigned myself to catching a bus for the rest of the trip—all 900 miles of it. The nearest bus station was in Dayton, fifty miles away. I eventually did get a few rides, but it took me four hours to get there. Approaching the counter, I asked the expressionless attendant how much it would be to St. Petersburg, Florida. Fumbling through the pages of a large book. Eventual voice said, "$116." I had only $80. What to do? I thou for a moment and then asked how far $80 would get r "Tifton, Georgia." I had no choice; it was better if Dayton, Ohio. I figured I would hitch the last 300 mil An hour later I was aboard the bus and after five minu wished I wasn't. If you think standing at the edge c concrete ribbon is bad, then go Greyhound and experience something worse. Screaming kids, bit old ladies, pot smokers, space cases, and a drunk v refused to shut up. Definitely not the most desira company. I attempted conversation but it took all energy, and I soon let my mind wander as the t wandered over the backroads of Kentucky and Tennessee. We stopped at almost every little to Once the bus had mechanical troubles and I panic It was nothing.

Morning light arrived and the bus made a break stop in Tifton, Georgia. My bus ride was over. I wall down the white, sun-drenched on-ramp of I —thoughts racing through my head. "How long w stand here?" "I have only twenty-six cents left; don't get picked up I'll starve to death." Tears well from the bright sunlight. Sneezing, I stuck my thumb and began counting the passing cars. In th minutes I had a ride and found myself speeding on the smooth highway at 70 mph. After 200 miles I dropped off and within minutes had another rid began to reconsider God's providence.

Twenty miles north of "home" I was dropped off at busy intersection on U.S. 19. I am convinced that the most dangerous highway in the entire U.S. It circus of horror. Six lanes of divided highway, averi

James Van Hemert is a sociology major who has hitchhiked extensively across North America.
ied between 50 and 60 mph, endless shopping
strips, parking lots, stoplights, and a U-turn strip ev-
ery hundred yards. This results in vehicles’ criss-cross-
ing everywhere at dangerous speeds. You have to see it to
elevi it. They have bumper stickers that read: “Pray
me, I drive U.S. 19.” I was praying and I was only
looking. I crossed the intersection. The light turned
red and a hundred cars accelerated. “Who is going to
here?” I stuck out my thumb anyway. I spotted a
up van in the far lane that to my amazement and
motion lurched forward, crossed all the lanes, and came
close for me. The van did not hit me; it stopped and I
ped in.
“Hi,” I ventured, “How far are you going?”
He glanced at me with wide, comic eyes. “Going to
hospital in Clearwater; my wife had a baby.""Good," I thought, “then I’m almost home.” A car
ased in front of us, missing us by inches. I tried to
ain calm—thinking I had survived so far.
Crazy as hell. Can you believe it?” he said.
A group of scantily-clad women crossed the highway.
eyes followed them, neglecting the traffic. “Look at
se chics! Wowl Want a beer?” he asked as he pulled
a drive-in pop and beer store.
No,” I said, “I’m not in the mood.” I got a MelloYello
ead. We drove back onto Suicide Strip. He then
ed if I cared for a joint.
No, I don’t need that stuff.”
Yeah!” he exclaimed, as if I had just told him that
asia was bombing New York City. “Wow! That’s neat!
sh I could be like that. This stuff is no good for me.”
nodded in agreement.
How do you do it?”

I could see that this guy wanted and needed help. “It
starts with your attitude,” I said.
“Yeah, that’s right. Ya know, I got rehabilitated once;
went to church and everything.”
“What happened?”
“I got bad friends—I gotta get out of this fricken city.
But I can’t because I’m on parole for dealing drugs up in
Michigan. When I’m off parole I’m leavin’ here.”
“You should. Ever read the Bible?”
“Yeah. You know which book scares me? Revelation!
We’re really in for it. Man, I’m in really big trouble. This
world is so screwed up. I gotta clean up my act.”
“We all do. I’m a sinner, too; but Christ died to save
us from the curse of death, a result of sin.”
“I wanna do right, but I need help.”
I talked to him for a while longer, then I gave him my
father’s phone number at the church that he pastors in
Pinellas Park.
“Wow! That’s great! I really appreciate this,” he said.
“I gotta get things straight.” There was some hope in his
eye.
He turned right to go to the hospital, and stopped at
the corner. I opened the door, but before getting out we
shook hands. “God bless you,” I said.
He smiled. “God bless you.”
I stood at the side of the highway and watched him
disappear into the traffic. I’ll probably never see him
again. Was God in His providence using me in a small
way to spread the Gospel? Or was he using him? Within
minutes I had another ride and shortly after that I walked
into the house. Mom and Dad were delighted to see me
home. It was 3 p.m.—I had beaten the bus by two hours;
it was scheduled to arrive in St. Pete at five.
This is where he likely stood.
Yes here. Now turn a bit to the west.
See how the farmhouse sweeps so.
The westering sun will lay a hand
across its roof and put it to rest
for the evening. So he used to say.

The grass is high now. That's good
for the lupine and goldenrod aren't cut.
See how they fall in the waterfall light
that sweeps the hill. There in the valley
there was an eagle's nest. There,
by the crooked tree that looks like a cross.
Yes, he said too that it should have been
at the crest of the hill.
I know what you're thinking.

(He said the only true allegories
were a bird in flight,
    a sunrise in spring,
    and a woman in birth.
I would have asked him about rivers,
and the children, and the sun going down
so red you have to squint against it
and your eyelashes hold drops of blood.
But he sounded certain of what he said.)

The clover is as thick as green string
left by elves. It will be good haying.

The eagle nested for three years.
Came to the same place.
Mice run in the valley, no doubt.
And rabbits. You can see them run;
like springs poling the ground ahead of the rake.
Come closer, in the valley there is something you would see. Remember the river that laces the highway like a bluegreen ribbon south of town? Still clean there. You can see clouds in its throat. It runs fast, with trout in the sinkholes. But that's another story. Here is what I would have you see.

Yes, the crevice, the pouted lips with the thin stream purling forth. No, the whole river doesn't start here, just this one stream, so small one would forget it, unless one were thirsty at precisely this spot. See how it slides on the smooth stone, like dew on the back of a deer at dawn, how it winds by the crooked tree that rests now in shadow. And you may drink of it. Go ahead.

I hear the tractor. Rather I feel it in the earth. You will hear it soon coming up the east hill. We will walk to the windrows, and if you watch carefully we will startle a bright snake or two ahead of us, a redwing blackbird will rise shrilling into the light, the goldenrod will burst like firecrackers, and toward evening you will see the sun touch the crown of the farmhouse with a golden hand, a red ring shining.
Cradle

David Sobotka
Is There Christianity on Monday?

Kingdom-Building in Business

Ira Slagter is a former vice-president of Time-Life, and is currently Executive Director of the Back-to-God Hour. Mr. Jerry Jonker was president of Holiday Inn subsidiary and is now President of RACOM Associates.* Both are men with experience in practical business affairs; Dialogue recently interviewed them concerning issues related to Christians in business.

Mr. Jonker: I’m Jerry Jonker. I live in Holland, Michigan. I am a native of Grand Rapids, actually the west coast. I’m P.K. twice over, my grandfather and father are both teachers, so we’ve been very much involved in the work of the church. I went to Calvin and came home one day to tell my father that I was not going to become a teacher. I did so with a lot of hesitation and fears as to what his reaction would be. I was pleasantly surprised when he said, “That’s fine son, I’m rather glad. I think that the church needs today, more than preachers, are committed businessmen who do the work of the Lord.” He made me promise at that time that I would never work for a church board, and consequently I haven’t. I was glad to get out into business and do the best I could, trying to do as much as possible for the church in various ways. Very early in life, I had the privilege of being elected by Synod to serve as a member of the Back to God Hour Board. I was always impressed as a board member of the Back to God Hour; they spent their money wisely, and the dollar went far. In fact, with every penny spent, they were reaching someone with the gospel.

My early business training was actually at Holland Furnace Company, which in that day was a very reputable and large corporation with over 5,000 sales personnel. I was directly tied into sales and marketing at the home office in Holland until I noticed the company was using questionable business practices. Some of the key people who were Christians—the treasurer and the secretary of the corporation—resigned, and, although I wasn’t that high, I walked out too. I didn’t have a job. I never forget an aunt of mine who wrote me a letter saying, “Jerry, have no fear. The Lord honors those who honor Him. If you walked out because of principle, He’ll take care of you.” I managed to get a job at a struggling company where we didn’t even have office help. I was everything when I came there—the sales man, the office help, the bookkeeper, the whole works. That company grew and is now the Hayworth Corporation. I set up the original marketing organization there. Then in the early sixties another fellow and I started a company to manufacture dormitory furniture. There was a lot of marketing involved with that and subsequently we sold that to Holiday Inn and became a wholly owned subsidiary of Holiday Inn. I served as president of that company.
corporation until a group of seven of us, which included Mr. Slagter, formed RACOM Associates* to serve as a fund-raising promotion arm to the Back to God Hour. RACOM was organized in 1970, so we've been at that now for 12 years and the board has never changed—it has stayed the same. So that sort of brings us up to date.

Mr. Slagter: As for me, I'm a native of the Chicago area, born and educated in Evergreen Park, and I've been involved in that community all my life. I think when I look back I have to realize that God works providentially. Many times you have to be in the right place at the right time. Sometimes a Christian can be at the right place at the wrong time. Life is a series of experiences, and the way one reacts to those experiences is based upon one's value system. I am very grateful to my father and mother for giving me a value system which is based on the Bible. It's a Christian value system. And that's something that one can never lose. They can't take that away regardless of what one's life experiences may be. A great part of that, of course, is learned in the home. The home is basic, but I think also that it's an essential element to have such a value system in the educational system. I have been involved in educational causes for many years and I truly believe that Christian education is a strong right arm of the home, together with the church.

I had the privilege of going to the University of Chicago and graduating from there. It was possible to get through school in a shorter period of time than is possible now so I finished my education in three and a half years. In our last year of college the war broke out. It hit a lot of us by surprise, I guess. We knew things were rather threatening. I volunteered for what was called the Enlisted Reserve Corps, so I could finish up at Chicago. While in the service I went to Officers Training School, and a short time after getting out of school I ended up at Fort Benning as an instructor in the infantry school. Then, after several months in the States, I went over to Europe as an infantry soldier. We were stationed in Holland at the German border. I was taken prisoner by the Germans while out on night reconnaissance. They transferred me to Germany and on into Poland.

As the Russians came through in January, the Germans kept moving all their prisoners out. They had literally hundreds of thousands of people on the roads. The civilian population wanted to move because they had been moved in there by the Germans. All the prisoners that were there were moving—it was just bedlam. We spent the entire month of February marching out of Poland back into Germany and finally, when we couldn't make it any farther, we were put in a camp near Berlin. When the Russians came through April during the Battle of Berlin, they released us and spent two weeks with them prior to our rejoining American forces in May of 1945.

Then when I got out, I went around looking for a and there were several possibilities. Time-Life looked like it might be one of the better ones, so I started in v them and then spent 35 years with the company. I wo say it was a great experience and a superb compet olot of challenge and a lot of opportunities. And c confronts all of the questions and problems that c does when you're out in the competitive world. Th

*RACOM Associates is a group of seven men (business and professional) who are dedicated to promoting the interests of the Back-to-God Hour.

The important thing for a student to remember is to go into business seeking to do his very best unto the Lord.

Dialogue: What position did you leave at Time-Life the Back-to-God Hour?
Mr. Slagter: I was vice-president of the corporation charge of the subscription-service division.

Dialogue: You had a lot of people reporting to you the How many?
Mr. Slagter: Two thousand.

Mr. Jonker: Just a little sideline. Having observed his position as vice president of Time, I had the privil of consulting him a number of times in his office, whi was on the top floor of the Time building in Chicago. I had a big suite of offices there. When he was being viewed for his Back-to-God Hour job, someone ask him, "Just what kind of work do you do there at Time
he said, "I don't work, I just make decisions." In a
situation like his I always found it wonderful that he was
ing to see me at any time. If he was in town, I could
him, and on occasions he would adjust his schedule
break a date in order to visit and go over some of the
ings that we needed answers on. He was willing to
time off and go and travel with me on occasions—
says at his own expense. That willingness to be
ed is a really neat thing. And I think that's one thing
we in business have to bear in mind: that our jobs
re to be used for the Kingdom. The Kingdom concept
very important one and like certainly had that.

Jonker: Now, both of you are working in direct con-
with the church. Is this what you mean by using
job for the kingdom?

Jonker: No. Some people think that to really serve
Lord you have to get out of business and get into so-
led "full-time kingdom endeavors." I don't agree with
at all. I think where you are you've got to do the very,
y best you can until the Lord opens up an opportunity
you to go elsewhere. If everybody got out of
iness, the work of the church would really suffer. But
is also room within the kingdom for a person to
ke a commitment to directly-related activities.

Jonker: A primary question for people at Calvin is
just how does a Christian go about living a Christian
and demonstrating a Christian commitment in the
iness world, especially given that Reformed
ians want to maintain that in any sphere of life, be
itics or business, there is that distinctly Christian
roach? We were talking last night about how to
roach the interview and it occurred to me that Mr.
eter's retirement gift from his staff was a rare Bible.
how do you see things you did at Time-Life as
hing that kind of witness to the people around you?

Jonker: That's a little hard for me to talk about. I was
ly touched at my retirement party. The group
cted an old Dutch Bible that really is a collector's
and gave that Bible as a gift to me along with a
ation from Micah that says to do justly and to love
y and walk humbly with your God. And you wonder
her one can. It was a completely voluntary
ession on the part of the staff. I was very deeply
ched by it. It's a little difficult for me to talk about it,
way.

Jonker: But that does open the door to some of our
ral concerns. For instance, what does it mean to be
ristian in business? Are you a Christian in business,
s there such a thing as doing Christian business?
se are questions that are bantered about at Calvin.
at do you think?

Jonker: Well, I think that if one goes back to life as a
ies of experiences, he sees that he is a Christian in
world, and so he is really a Christian in business. He
acts out of a Christian value system that has been nur-
tered and developed, one in which our basic source is
pture and all the things that we've been taught. A
ristian makes business decisions based upon that
ystem and so becomes a Christian businessman
he's first a Christian in business. There are a lot of
ings that one must look at, starting with the whole con-
cept of man being created in the image of God and also
with the concept of sin. There is the whole question, for
stance, of racial relations. I was fortunate throughout
my entire work career in that respect. We had all kinds of
ings that were both when I came and when I left—a
large staff of what are called minority people who
ome to a majority. We have to realize that they're all
reated in the image of God and thus they should start
out with equality. We made a lot of studies, for instance,
as to how productive minorities might be and what their
ork habits were and they always came out to be
parable to the rest of the work force. Those are hard

There are more and more
people in key positions who
have graduated from a
school by the name of Calvin.

things for a lot of people to recognize. It doesn't make it
y easier, but I think that's an illustration of where one
omes from as a Christian businessman. It gets into the
whole question of business ethics and there are times
when it's difficult. But it's difficult in all of life. I don't think
it's any harder to be a Christian in business than it is to
be a Christian in many of the other relationships of life.

Mr. Jonker: I think that's true. There are a number of
ings like said that I'd have to reiterate. One is this
hole matter of the providence of God. Dr. Nederhood
aid to me some years ago that God uses certain people
at certain times to do certain things for the certain
oming of His kingdom. What we have to recognize,
what students have to recognize, and what the
ousewife has to recognize is that the most important
eing you're doing today is for the kingdom— that God's
t you where you are doing something now and you
etter do it as well as you can. I think that commitment is
the important thing and I'd like to illustrate what that
mitment is by a story of what happened to me on a
plane trip to Winnipeg. I had to speak to a women's conference there and I had to write the speech on the plane. I was sitting next to a gentleman, and we had talked a little beforehand. I mentioned that my older son was at Calvin College at the time and then I excused myself. I said, "I really just have to get this ready." He said, "Okay, I'll leave you alone. But in five minutes try to give me, if you would, what the difference is between this Calvinism you speak of, and Catholicism, and all of those other religions." I said to him, "That's a big order, but I'll try." So in five minutes I tried to give him in a nutshell what our Calvinistic world and life view is. When I finished he looked at me and said, "You know, I had a reason for asking this. I'm president of an equity fund corporation, and we get into large corporations around the country, and I've noticed that in key positions there are more and more people who have graduated from a school by the name of Calvin. I know it's a small school, but I couldn't figure out why they had seemingly a higher percentage of people in key positions. But you've given me the answer: it's their motivation. Everything you do is for the glory of God." That really did my heart good to hear that, and that is really what it's all about. Whether you work, eat, drink, whatever you do, it has to somehow reflect the glory of God. I think in all of life, including your business relationships, what you do somehow has to reflect God's glory and the coming of the kingdom. You can't help but be a Christian, then, in business. On the American scene the businessman operates within a framework of a lot of laws, governmental regulations, and policies, all of which have been structured by the society in which we live. The very fact of the matter is that many of those things are set up for you, and to the extent that they may conflict with one's Christian beliefs then one has to say, "Look, I can't abide by that and I have to stick with what I believe is my fundamental Christian value system." But you still operate within that framework. Some people, I think, have a little philosophical problem with this issue, but in the real world you have to realize that Christians have not always set up the American scene the businessman operates within. That person has to consider that one when it comes to decisions in relation to return on investment or profit. Those kinds of decisions come to you in the business world it's a terrible jungle and the are no Christians. There are wonderful, committed Christians in some of the finest organizations. We do have to apologize at all, nor do we have to back down on any of our principles.

Let me tell you about specific jobs: I was in marketi all my life. I can tell you some of the biggest contracts ever wrote were given to us as a result of some Christ principle that I held and refused to bend on. For example, working on the Sabbath. I didn't proclaim it, I just had a policy that I refused to do business Sunday. I got one of the largest jobs we ever got, with the government of Connecticut, and also with the state of Nevada, just because I was introduced as the fellow who won't do business on Sunday. Now you can hed on many things, but you don't have to hedge on principal things. Once you have made a commitment to principle, you had better stay with it. If you start hedg ing, your Christian commitment is weakened. It doesn't mean that you're hard-nosed and so forth. If you don't wear it on your sleeve. But the point is, if you have that commitment in your heart, it is going to reflect in your attitude, and people will do business with you. I've found that one of the things that has to come through from a Christian is honesty. So often in selling people try to make their product be all things, but I what the limitations of my products are—what it will a won't do. Frankness and honesty have made the difference between serving a client and serving a client.

**Dialogue:** There's a point I wanted to get in, particularly in reference to what you said about there being social legal environment that a person has to operate as a part of the business world. What would you tell Calvin student who wants to get into business, be small business or be it as an administrator in a large corporation? How should he go about it? What kind things should he be thinking about as he's making those day-to-day business decisions, about whether buy product A or B? Or whether to hire this person or that person? Those kinds of decisions come to you desk every day in business. Is there something that Christian business man has to consider that one wasn't a Christian doesn't?

**Mr. Slagter:** In many cases the issues which confront the Christian and non-Christian are very similar; in fact the similarities are greater than the differences, if only because most people are looking for honest employees. Most businessmen are trying to make the best business decisions in relation to return on investment or profitability. I think where the discrepancy might come is w
is of business one can really be in as a Christian, rather than the business environment per se. I do think there are businesses which a Christian has difficulty being in. For instance, I think I would have had a very difficult time working for a publishing firm that put out a product I couldn't feel proud as a Christian, then I have save." It's kind of like the issue that Mr. Jonker faced at Holland Furnace. You get in an environment where you recognize that there are some things occurring that aren't right from a Christian standpoint. Different problems occur in different businesses. Sometimes it's mechanics of handling the accounting, in other instances it has to do with how things are sold. In others it might deal with the whole matter of ethics in terms of relationships with competitors, and so on. So it lies, but I do think there are more similarities as to how you look at things than differences.

**Jonker:** I would echo that. I was thinking about this at the interview and my background in marketing. I always had three points to my marketing. One, you have to have a good product, not necessarily the best, it has to be a good product that you can be proud of. Two, you have to sell it enthusiastically. If you don't, no one else is going to. Three, tell the truth about it: its good points and also its limitations. Now, whether you're a Christian or not, that's something everybody would do. You don't have to be a Christian to do that; the difference is that when you do your work as unto the God, conscious of the fact that you're created in his image, conscious of the fact that you're accountable to him, and that you're not working for this life alone but you're working for his kingdom on earth even as it is in heaven. Then your approach to things becomes different. Then I think the important thing for a student is to go into business seeking to do his very best unto the Lord. That's how you have to approach it. I don't think you should run away from hard situations. I didn't run away from Holland Furnace right away. I don't think you have to run away just because there are some problems. You have to work within the framework, trying to change it. But when you finally see that in spite of everything you do there isn't going to be a change, then you'll have to make a decision. Can I live with this? If not, then you have got to get out, even though you might have to walk out not having another job. But that's where you have to be prepared to make sacrifices.

**Mr. Slagter:** Well, back to your point—I think one thing I would tell the Calvin Business student is that you should recognize that there's a vast army of Christians and non-Christians out there who have a similar style in terms of integrity and dedication and so on. One of the things that one becomes amazed at is the fact that there are so many fine, dedicated people out there who have almost no religious basis to what they do. They're just moralists, but they're honest and they're hardworking—occasionally they put Christians to shame. And that's where you have a problem: you have Christians on your payroll and you have people who do not profess Christianity who just put Christians to shame in terms of the way they handle and conduct themselves or perform on the job. I think that a person who's going into business
should recognize that and say, "I can live with it and there's nothing wrong with it."

**Mr. Jonker:** I think that's right. You know, Ike, some of the biggest problems I had in some of the companies I've been at involved Christians who spent their time trying to convert their fellow employees instead of doing the job they were supposed to do. I think you have to do your job, but you do it as a Christian. I've had many problems with so-called overly-evangelical Christians who were sloughing off on their work, and that's a bad situation.

**Dialogue:** Right. There's one other thing that we should talk about. A major student concern that I experienced as a resident advisor in the dormitories was reflected in the attitude of some people who said, "I don't believe I can be a Christian and be successful." In fact, one person told me pointblank that he was giving up his Christian commitment because he thought he had to choose: am I a Christian, or am I going to be successful? And another whole area of concern is: can I be wealthy and be a Christian? Can I live well and be a Christian? You both have done well in business and so forth, and maybe you can give some advice on things in regard to those kinds of issues.

**Mr. Slagter:** I'd love to. I think the greatest success one can have is to be a Christian. Nothing else counts in relation to that. You're not giving up a thing—you're receiving a free gift—a marvelous gift that one should treasure above all other things. As far as whether one becomes wealthy or not, I guess I would say that is something which is the blessing of God. Most Christians who become wealthy probably do that with no original intention of becoming wealthy. It's something they receive. I can just speak for that personally. The things that I received on the job and the way that I was treated were in no way my goals. Those are by-products. I would not like to leave the impression with anyone that you get a cornucopia of material blessings by being a Christian. I still believe with a great deal of fervency that whom the Lord loves he chastises, and we all get chastisement in life in different ways.

**Mr. Jonker:** Yes, I would echo what Ike says on this. I think there's a danger here in those questions. It is the same danger that you see on "religious" television, where a man gets up with a big smile and says, "If you become a Christian, everything's gonna be all right." You're gonna be healed, you're gonna have money and everything else." Now that's not true. It's absolutely not true, and that's one of the worst things that's being peddled on television today. The commitment to become a Christian has to be made regardless of the circumstances. God never promises that everything is going to be rosy. Now you may get security as a by-product, but a person first of all has to make a solid commitment to God. If he does, then, as a Christian, wealth, riches, power, and everything else become secondary; you see it in the right perspective. Now, the only reason God really gives us wealth is so that we can further the work of his kingdom. In the work that I'm doing in fund-raising, I have found so many wealthy Christian businessmen who really struggle with how they're going to use their wealth to further the cause of the Lord. So you've got to get the priorities straight on this. But to come back to that question, surely being Christian doesn't prohibit a person from receiving an enjoyable wealth if he does it as unto the Lord. Here the whole matter of priorities comes in. If your priority is wealth, chances are there's something wrong with your Christian commitment. I've always maintained that you show me a man's checkbook and I can tell you what his Christian commitment is. It's a barometer of your commitment.

**Mr. Slagter:** That's the old question of "I can only have one or the other." It existed in our student days also. Are there were those who did it. They said, "Look, in order to make money, I have to give up the Christian Reformed Church. I can be a more nominal Christian, and then have a lot of freedom to do things that I might not be able to do." That's just a mistake. You don't have to give up Christianity; there are no self-made men.

**Dialogue:** I'm really amazed at how well you all have steered yourselves through many of the concerns that students have.

**Mr. Jonker:** We have the same concerns... you'll have those concerns 'til you die. It's a struggle. The Christian life is something you have to work with. I used to look some of these old elders in the church and say, "We've got it made," but then when you start talking to them, they'll tell you that the older you get the more you know about the word of God, the more you realize what struggle you have, and the more you realize that it's all grace—it's a gift of God.
Peleg's ship;  
Ahab's sea,  
And round its symmetry sang Ishmael's echoing.  
He who ne'er hummed Platonic tunes to structure night;  
Nor saw too much, nor labeled forces of the dark,  
Though with averted eye, cratered age,  
Realized the whole huge form in one cindered tear  
That robbed the treasureous ocean dry.  
Ah Ahab, iron king, whose iron road  
Sought that living part of heaven  
In years floating, gazing,  
On that epitome of biers.  
And lastly, letting one like you tack,  
Amid angelic shrieks, the final free-wing of the air:  
All to succumb to ocean's nonplussed brow.  
Or  
If and as we'd like to do: accept the landlocked sermon  
Though he pulled the ladder up:  
Father Mapple one, the others, one.  
Rear, awe, and ancient script  
Forewarned that all inward judgments would not do  
(Repentence pointing outwardly).  
Could say too, symbolically, that the starry hawk...  
Was nailed to wood through savagery,  
Enthroned within a scarlet flag that flapped,  
In paradox,  
An earthly spire of Pandemonium.

Since Ishmael
Did Not Say

Richard Bernath
Beginning.
Beginning is the worst.
Where does one begin?
Does one begin with those wheels which mble softly through eternity, gently nbracing all creation within their blazing ms?
Does one begin with that nervous clockwork 1ich animates the unseen many-legged eatures of the earth?
Does one begin with the bestial rage which causes the clouds to press, twisting, growling against the land, lips frothing, eyes flashing, wild with the scent of summer?
Should he consider that ragged infinity of sawtooth green, that chaotic universe of trilling voices, nodding heads, and spinning blades which is savannah?
Should he patiently observe the singing and the splitting of the earth?
Or should he rather contemplate that curious structure of coral, copper, and glass,
which is man?
Where does one begin?
Union.
These are curious questions for one asked to discuss art. What do they mean?
To be totally honest, I must admit that by writing these words, I'm trying to buy time, hoping that inspiration will strike me like lightning from heaven, so that I can avoid showing everyone my great storehouse of ignorance. I know nothing about art. I cannot say anything about art. I am a fool.
Therefore, I will continue to babble about rainstorms, rats, and crabgrass.
Union.
One must begin with all these things.
One must ask how the flames of heaven and the breath of storm unite with the ashes of a thousand generations to create a green thing which lives.
One must ask what mysterious furnace distills from this emerald life the essence of sensuous existence.
One must ask what moves man beyond the sensuous to think and to create.
One must realize that there is no man, no thinker, creator, politician, or fool, no animal, plant, sun, or stone. There is only creation.
This is the beginning.
Union.
What can I say? What constitutes good art? What is bad art? I am mystified. I do not know. The only thing I can say with certainty is that the art world is in a state of turmoil which approaches anarchy. But that's been said before—many times.
Art today is like the scent of summer rain mingled with the rancid odor of death. Welcome to the real world.
Union.
Everything operates in and for the wondrous whole which is creation. Every thing has its place within this whole. To remove ever the smallest ticking insect is to change the substance of the whole.
Creation is an image in the mind of God created out of nothing for no reason, except that it pleased him to do so. When God thought of this image, and brought it into being, he laughed, and the wheels of creation tumbled.
So why do we hate? What malignant force propels us to shatter that unity which once was? Where do we get the hell-spawner audacity to think that we are better than any of our brothers in creation?
Where is understanding?
Where is love?
Where is union?
And what does all this have to do with art? I am not exactly sure. Maybe I'm saying that art and science, and religion, and running are basically the same thing. Maybe I'm saying that only petty humans make these distinctions, but in God's eyes all things are one. Maybe I'm making a timorous plea for the world to understand the artist and vice versa.
Maybe I haven't got a clue as to what I'm talking about. I don't know. I don't have the answers. It's late and I'm tired.
Good night. Prepare for Reunion.