Dialogue

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How Come?

The following introduces a new column in Dialogue. Each month Dialogue will present concerns or questions to the faculty and/or administration and elicit their responses. Students are encouraged to send questions which they feel ought to be addressed to the Dialogue Office, Student Annex.

Question: Why has the college never provided a means for students to cross the Beltline between Burton and the FAC?

Answer: In 1978, when it was first decided to expand the East Beltline, Calvin presented a proposal to the State for how traffic could get on and off campus and for how students could cross the Beltline. The proposal consisted of a two-tunnel system, one tunnel North of the FAC where the present tunnel is, and one south of the FAC where most students currently cross. The north tunnel was not a problem. It was found, however, that the south tunnel would be very expensive. The roadway through the tunnel would either have to go so low that a pumping station would have to be built, or the Beltline would have to be raised all the way from Burton to the FAC. The cost for both of these solutions would have been prohibitive. (A sidewalk under the Beltline, without a roadway for vehicles, would not have had to be so deep and could probably have been built; but now that the Beltline has been constructed, this is no longer an option.)

Calvin then offered to meet the State halfway on the cost of an aerial walkway. The State acquiesced but warned that experience had shown that students would cross on the ground most of the time anyway. Thus, this idea was scrapped as well.

If they could not go above the ground and could not go below the ground, the only way left was on the ground. But this area was too close to the Burton stoplight and the road was too busy to make a pedestrian crosswalk a possibility.

As a result, nothing was ever done. So far, no one has been hurt. But students continue to cross between traffic, and there seems to be no way of stopping them from doing so. The streetlamp lighting the pathway was disconnected to absolve Calvin from guilt in the case of an accident and to make the pathway less appealing, but this has had virtually no affect on the number of students using it. The only way to put a complete stop to it would be to erect a fence. But to be affective, this fence would have to run from well past the FAC, down to the Kelly property (the wooded area on the corner), around it, and down past Theta-Epsilon. Again, the cost would be high, and the college is very hesitant to start fencing the campus in.

Thus the college continued to worry but was unable to convince students to use the controlled intersection at Burton Street.

Recently, however, there has been a new development. According to Lt. Gillis of the GRPD, since January, their office has been flooded with calls from motorists complaining about student pedestrians darting out between cars, and several official complaints have been lodged. Many of these complaints were lodged on the day of the ice-storm in early February. Random street crossing is a common phenomenon in campus districts, but in Calvin's case the problem is compounded because the traffic on the Beltline is so fast and so heavy. As a result of the numerous complaints, the GRPD has assigned units to watch the area and to issue tickets for infractions of Section 10: crossing a street between two adjacent intersections controlled by stoplights and where crosswalks have been provided. Fines would range from twenty to twenty-five dollars.

Now that the fining policy is in effect, perhaps students would use an aerial walkway if one were constructed. In any case, it seems it will be some time, if ever, before K.E. residents can safely take the most direct route to breakfast. Alarm clocks will have to be set a little earlier.
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**dialogue**

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Racism is alive and well and living in Grand Rapids. I rather suspect that few would argue with that proposition, but I also know from experience that most people would so restrict the idea of racism that it would never apply to them. For that reason I would like to give a brief statement of what I think racism is in North America and, thereby, in Grand Rapids.

Racism is that complex of attitudes and actions of white persons, as individuals and through the institutions of society, by which persons who are Black, Hispanic, Asian, or Indian are effectively prevented from being free culturally, residually, economically, and, yes, even religiously. Racism, in other words, is in North America a white sin. Now the tenderhearted may want to call it a fault, a defect, or a sickness, but I prefer to think of it as an evil which is properly a sin. Some even reduce racism to mere stupidity, and others more politely call it insensitivity. Nonsense! In our society it is a white sin.

Hastening to settle this matter which helps us avoid all those silly little discussions about "reverse racism" and the like, we may now inquire about the evidence of racism in Grand Rapids. There is little or no legal racism left in Grand Rapids. There are some pesty little restrictive covenants on property deeds which claim that the property may not be sold to any "non-caucasian," but they are no longer legally valid. Some local cemeteries have such restrictive covenants which prohibit the burial even of American Indians in the same ground as whites, but they too probably would not stand legal scrutiny. The day of legal or de jure racism has passed in Grand Rapids even though the paper vestiges of it can still be found. There is some concern among Hispanics that the proposed requirement for all migrant workers to carry identity cards to distinguish them from "wetbacks" or "illegals" may be close to de jure racism. Only Hispanics are going to be stopped and detained pending proof of citizenship or legal entry. The proposal sounds dangerously similar to the identity cards required in South Africa under the legal racist system known as apartheid.

To say, however, that legal racism does not presently exist is not to say that racism does not exist. On the contrary, de facto racism, although more subtle, may also be more virulent. For example, the outward politeness of a landlord facing a prospective Black tenant may be a mask concealing an attitude of disdain and fear. Rarely is the Black person dealt with so openly and honestly as the recent inadvertant revelation of a Wyoming city councilman and landlord who scribbled, "She entertains niggers." All that is known is the effect. The apartment or house is not available. No reason is given.

Racism is best known by its effects. And the effects in Grand Rapids are evident everywhere. Let's consider a few. The current unemployment rate among Black youth between the ages of 18 and 25 is estimated to be somewhere between 60 and 75%, about triple the rate for whites in the same category. Some hard-headed realists are beginning to wonder whether some of these youth will ever be able to find non-subsidized employment in their lifetimes. The consequence need to live off the street is disproportionately high among Blacks. To hustle becomes a key to survival, and the successful hustler, pimp, prostitute, numbers man, or whatever, becomes the tragic model not only for survival, but also for success. Criminal acts further victimize the Black community. Black on Black crimes tend to be regarded as inevitable. It often appears to Blacks that only when the victim is white do the police and the courts take proper concern. And then the all-too-common attitude, spoken or unspoken, of the police is that whites should move out of neighborhoods in which Blacks live. And, of course, many whites have fled, usually to the suburbs. It is this "white flight" which most eloquently speaks to Blacks about white racism. It is not de jure segregation imposed by a few demagogic racists who have political power. It is de facto segregation that is a consequence of hundreds of individual decisions to shun or escape contamination by Blacks. And the final litmus test to demonstrate this white racism comes in the form of those rhetorical gems: "Some of my best friends are ___" and "What if your daughter married one?"

Having said that racism is thus alive and well in Grand Rapids, I must also say that there are encouraging signs in Grand Rapids which have certainly mitigated overt racism in some ways in recent years. In 1970, for example, the police department in general was viewed with antagonism by the Black community. It was seen as an occupying army of white oppression. The greater openness of the police department to Black community concerns, the better training of police officers, the recent establishment of a neighborhood patrol unit which gets out of cars and works with people who are victims of crime, all these have contributed to a better understanding between the police and the Black community. That there has been an affirmative action
The plan for the hiring of Black police officers has also contributed. And politically such things as a city affirmative action plan, a minority set-aside for construction contracts, and even the requirement that those businesses who contract with the city must have their own affirmative action plans have been accepted with little overt political controversy. I would like to think that Grand Rapids voters see the justice of such programs, but it may just be that private grumbling has not yet dared to express itself publicly. And here in Grand Rapids we have had the truly remarkable program by which the local Real Estate Board contracted with Ann Schreuder of Calvin's Social Research Center to do testing for racial steering by local realtors. In most communities the Real Estate Board is the mortal enemy of those groups which are trying to promote equal opportunity in the field of housing.

These are all good signs, but what of the churches? And what can Calvin students who live in the older sections of Grand Rapids do to help alleviate racism? My overly simple one-word answer is PRESENCE. Presence requires being present, and it requires being in open and loving association with the Black community. That often is not easy. Many Christian Reformed churches have stayed in the Black community, but being present did not entail loving openness. We have had to learn how to overcome prejudices and our fears. But we have learned essentially by doing. By coming to know our neighbors, by coming to understand their hopes and their fears, and by coming to see their desperate need, and ours, for Christ's redeeming love—all these things have taught us how to show love. And when we have learned, however slightly, how to show love to our neighbors who are Black, Hispanic, Asian, or Indian, we have then also begun to temper our racism. Presence, of course, is rhetoric too. To translate that rhetoric into deeds is our challenge.

However, not all forms of "presence" are good. Some forms of "presence" are, in fact, clear examples of racism. All too frequently students regard their residences in the older and Black sections of Grand Rapids as a license to indifference at best and to exploitation at worst. Conduct that they would think to be unacceptable in a white suburb or in their parent's homes is freely enjoyed in the so-called "ghetto." Those "ghetto houses" of Calvin students which quickly get identified as "party houses" are clear expressions in deed, although rarely in word, of racism. The clear impression left on their Black neighbors is that such Calvin students and their houses are embodiments of moral and religious hypocrisy. Such hypocrisy and such racism serve to undercut the efforts of others to practice open and loving association with those same Black brothers and sisters in Christ.

One final temptation must be considered. It seems to me that the Devil himself prompts us to this one. We sometimes say that the cultural and religious freedom mentioned in our definition of racism means that we should encourage the development of Black churches rather than mixing races and cultures in a church like the Christian Reformed. Yes, I too would argue that Blacks must be culturally and religiously free to have their own churches without any sense that such churches are degrading, more emotional, or inferior to white churches such as the Christian Reformed. And I do agree with the local pastor of True Light Baptist Church, Rev. Patterson, when he advises his congregation to invite whites to True Light just as whites invites members of True Light to Sherman St. or Eastern Ave. Christian Reformed Churches. But all that avoids the issue. The issue is racism, and the symptom at this point is avoidance of real open and loving association with Blacks in our churches. Happily in many Grand Rapids Christian Reformed Churches this openness which is rooted in the fellowship and love we all share in Christ, is now coming to fruition. We whites have at least in a slight measure learned to alleviate or temper our racism because we have come to see it to be a sin which Christ Himself hates. Our neighbors, with Christ's help, are becoming our brothers and sisters. Calvin students who are present can also participate in this presence.
homes

somebody mounts my home on wheels
rolls it down the pasture
into a cornfield
hangs purple curtains in the windows
calls it theirs
I stand by the hole
the cellar where we saved our fruit
watch the weeds begin to push their roots
between the bricks

in a dream
years later
the trees in the orchard are taller
than I remember
I run about under them
dive for apples as they fall
miss
the apples bruise
soft under the skin
like sacs of water
I leave emptyhanded
hungry

I buy a house
someday
plant fruit trees in the yard
my brothers and sisters visit
leave with bushels of unbruised apples

—Laurel Vanderkleed
It was a day of woven cold light; the wallpaper pattern of autumn consumed, where all feelings were the same, for anyone, like me who happened to be at the end of a field and the start of a new one, feeling the texture of burlap in the sky and the trees and the beads of the leaves as they are parted by wind revealing faces like that of my dad who sat out alone with a combine, going through ribbons of soybeans, as it digested each row, and he sat across from me, dirty, and ragged, eating an apple, he, renting disappointment, he, whose hands are corn and eyes are wheat, whose lungs are weeds long dead, whose hair is the head of burr bushes hanging in plowed-in caverns, whose face is that of a man not yet sacrificed by ravens.

—Dave Shaw

Weekend at Home

(“Weekend at Home” won second place in the Writers’ Guild’s winter poetry contest.)
Imagine a cat: jungle strains thinned out by time, disciplined by human hands; its fur adorned with a red ribbon; a purr musical, soft-mannered, guaranteed. Such is the initial picture E.J. Pratt impresses upon the reader of “The Prize Cat.” The cat, at first, seems calm and lazy. But the appearance vanishes as quick as the cat can pounce on a bird rustling in a nearby patch of grass. His leap is “furtive-wild.”

Much of the poetry of Edwin John Pratt is as sudden as the leap of the cat. In one quick second, a salmon jumps “a full eight feet” (or was it ten? or fourteen?) but in another, and just as quickly, he snaps the line on which he was caught. A sudden tug on the line in another poem sprays excitement over the face of a seventy-year old fisherman:

His old and language-weathered face
Shone like a glowing asterisk!

E.J. Pratt grew up with the sea. He was born February 4, 1883, one hundred years ago, in Western Bay, Newfoundland. He grew up watching seaweed and seagulls tossed into his backyard, thousands of seagulls circling through the horizon, or, simply, a thick northern fog lifting over the morning. The coastal life is as much a part of Pratt’s poetry as fish are a part of the sea. Newfoundland Verse (1923), his first book of poetry, exemplifies that closeness. There, the crags “stiffen the muscles of the waves,” the tides “run within the sluices of men’s hearts,” and the winds “hold a partnership with life.” Newfoundland swam in his blood.

But what touched Pratt’s nerves was the conflict between the natural world and the people with whom he had lived; it is a conflict that saturates his poetry as often as the pounding waves taunted his memory. One of the battlegrounds on which man and nature clash is portrayed in “The Cachalot.” Four harpooners, determined to fill their three thousand barrels with whale-oil, are pitted against one sperm-whale. The hunters and the hunted face off in the Indian Ocean. The match is hardly underway when several sudden, fatal slaps of the whale’s tail send three of the four harpooners into early retirement. And, still, “the Maharajah of the seas” has “scarcely spent a conscious tithe of his power.” However, the fourth harpooner whizzes one spear after another into the cachalot’s flesh. One of them pierces the heart. The match is over. Perhaps. Perhaps not. For, exhausting whatever energy remains, the sperm-whale punches the man and his boat, a feat Pratt is quick to call, “a double-stroke of death.”

A flag flying at half-mast tells the score of another match in which a determined fleet of seal hunters had sought to wrench free from nature a bevy of seal skins. But man’s determination cannot counter nature’s retribution; the skins are stripped but not without cost. Sixty hunters freeze to death in this, a Maritime story:

Of twenty thousand seals that were killed
To help to lower the price of bread;
Of the muffled beat . . . of a drum . . . that filled
A nave . . . at our count of sixty dead.

What consistently seeps through Pratt’s poetry is his heart-felt concern for nature. Perhaps the animal world can be subdued but, for Pratt, most certainly it cannot be done without grave penalty.

Man possesses not only the determination to subdue nature but the intelligence to shape it into new forms. Out of the earth’s resources can be built an intricate machinery, a product of intelligence and imagination. The 1932 lyric, “The Man and the Machine,” pictures a man who, after years of tending the fires in an ore-smelting factory, is now driving its finished product, an automobile. But something is unsettling. While the automobile is “steam-lined,” its driver is “warped and bent.” As the machine glides with “cougar-grace,” the man has “slag upon his face.”

The same detrimental qualities of man’s intelligence come into play in the construction of the airplane. Nature is wrinkled over the imposition of such an invention. An eagle, perched on a towering crag, where “space was his empire,” feels his majestic stature shrivel at the sight of a silver flash

Shining between two peaks of the ranges
But the “silver flash,” in “Come Away, Death,” is a World War II bomber:

The poplars straightened to attention
As the winds stopped to listen
To the sound of a motor drone—
And then the drone was still.

The stillness is “the Monologue of Silence,” the quietness when clocks can be heard ticking and blood pumping, the lull between the
moment the bomb is released and
the moment the bomb explodes:

What followed was a bolt
Outside the range and target
of the thunder

With all her storms and strength, nature cannot wrap a rope around the product of man’s intelligence. Through the eye of the eagle and the ear of the wind, nature can merely look and listen in passive dismay. Man himself crumbles in his effort to bend nature. He is bettered by what his hands have made. Pratt’s insinuation, as drawn into “From Stone to Steel,” is that what man believes to be accelerated progress is actually devolution in disguise.

However, the qualities of determination and intelligence persist as the qualities on which Pratt places his trust for a better society. Such a twisted belief inevitably results in a contorted understanding of man’s relationship with God. This misunderstanding is inherent in “The Truant.” A “little fellow six feet short,” after being dragged to the throne of the Almighty Panjandrum and cursed as a “coprophagite” and a “third cousin to the family of worms,” asserts himself, grows “six feet high,” and retaliates:

Your astronomical conceit
Of bulk and power is anserine.
Your ignorance so thick,
You did not know your own
arithmetic.

Through the truant’s words, the poet speaks: whatever splendor man attributes to God is illusory, “a cosmic myth.” Somewhat ironically, Pratt was an ordained Methodist minister (he preached from 1913-1920), a son of a Methodist minister, and an owner of theses on demonology and Pauline eschatology. But, while his faith waned, in its place arose beliefs in evolution; a “cosmic myth.” Pratt was an ordained Methodist minister (he preached from 1913-1920), a son of a Methodist minister, and an owner of theses on demonology and Pauline eschatology. But, while his faith waned, in its place arose beliefs in evolution; a “cosmic myth.”

Jesuit missionaries, blown over from France to New France by the “winds of God” and armed with the charge that they are the salt of the world, set out to sprinkle their beliefs through a catalogue of misfortune are drawn by Pratt with care and sympathy. Outside of the persistent calamities of snow, hunger, and disease, there were the accusations levied on Brébeuf whenever there was scarcity of game or when famine or the Iroquois paralysed the camp. Yet, Brébeuf had mastered much. He befriended the Indians with a success that no other missionary could enjoy. The Huron language rolled off his tongue with fluency. In the eyes of the Indians, Brébeuf was “high as a totem-pole,” a “lion of limb and heart,” “the very incarnation of the age.” But he was not ignorant of the danger into which he could suddenly be thrown. And danger and the Iroquois were synonymous. When the Iroquois finally did strike, they pillaged each camp, uprooted every fibre of Huron life, and captured the Jesuit missionaries with the intention of keeping them for the torturous ceremonies that every Indian tribe venerated as a human art. But Brébeuf remained undaunted. His torturers were stunned by his courage, his strength, his refusal to cry out in pain:

Why did not the flesh of Brébeuf cringe to the scourge.

Respond to the heat
The thread on which Brébeuf’s life had so finely hung eventually did snap, but only to cast his body into a martyr’s mould.

Pratt’s final publication, in 1952, “Towards the Last Spike,” netted him his third Governor-General’s Award and well-exemplified the narrative style he had previously employed and the themes of conflict he had earlier explored. Like “Brébeuf” and like his other narratives, “Towards the Last Spike” is a work in which the events form an archipelago, in which numerous episodes, each told in twenty or thirty lines, breathe like islands in the same body of the poem, yet in the correct
chronological and rhythmical order. And like the lyrics of previous publications, "Towards the Last Spike" exposes conflicts between men. Sir John MacDonald, for example, being the father of the Union and "the general of the patronymic march" must argue his plea to have a railway built from sea to sea with Edward Blake, a man who counted hundreds of thousands of dollars in pennies, a man of eloquence:

Who with the carriage of his syllables
Could bid an audience like an orchestra
Answer his body swaying like a reed.

But the heated debates inside Parliament were but a microcosm of the redness colouring many Sunday conversations:

The theme was current at the banquet tables,
And argument profane and scarlet rent
God-fearing families into partisans.

While the nation divided on whether or not a railway should connect West and East, a Dutch-American, William VanHorne, "fast as a bobcat," was pulled into the picture. He would become "the champion of an all-Canadian route."

MacDonald realized three things. He needed to satisfy promises made to British Colombia and prevent her from hooking up with California "who like a sailor-lover was wooling over-time." He needed to dip deeper and deeper into the nation's purses. And he needed to discover methods by which to throw a railroad across a landscape where mountains stood in the way and where rocks made defensive treaties with ice. Both Pratt and the railroaders realized that it would be sheer determination and intelligence that would eventually push a pathway over lakes and over land.

The construction continued:

Sections Strewn
Like amputated limbs along the route
Were sutured.

But the earth, tickled at first by the iron spikes, grew to regard the railroad more as a permanent scratch in her surface. Dirt began to fill her cavities and tunnels were punched into her shoulders. Nature proceeded to do battle:

She gave
Them trial of her strength:
Abutments tottered;
But the earth, tickled at first by the
iron spikes, grew to regard the

Or the last weapon in her
armour—

The first and last—her passive
corporal bulk,
To stay or wreck the schedule
of VanHorne.

The schedule was stayed. Railway directors, their hair whitened, their faces wrinkled like road-maps, gathered to drive the last spike into a frozen and exhausted earth. Nature was again appeased by man's determination and intelligence:

The Road itself was like a stream that men
Had coaxed or teased or bullied out of Nature.

"Towards the Last Spike" is a fitting flower to Pratt's poetic career, a career that dug its roots in the Newfoundland coast and a career that stemmed the tides of changing twentieth-century stylistic trends. Pratt's use of the narrative separates him from modern poets. What distinguishes him most from his contemporaries is his content. He was as much a Newfoundland resident in his first publication as he was a Canadian in his last. But what is much more significant is his insistence that there be harmony between men and between man and nature. Although Pratt fails to ground such cohesion in the example of Christ, he is persistent to point out the need for people to be invisibly sewn together—as are his narratives—and intent in his concern that the sounds of nature be heard. In the final lines of "Towards the Last Spike," Pratt allows a warning to trickle through: that is, that although "the breed had triumphed after all," that same breed, allowing one ear for the sounds of whistling steam and drumming wheels, must allow the other to hear the sounds of rolling rivers and cracking thunder. It was in the decades between 1920 and 1950 that the Canadian arts bit most heavily into Canadian life. Pratt's contribution was integral in that development. While the Group of Seven slid canvasses under an unpainted wilderness and while the Dominion Drama Festival slipped a stage under the feet of aspiring actors and playwrights, E.J. Pratt sliced a wedge from the sphere of modern poetry, injecting colour and drama of his own and beating shape into an art that, in his own country, is too often referred to as undefined space. Seldom is Pratt's work exported but, for that matter, seldom is it sold domestically. It is not that his poetry is faultless. Whether it be in lyric or narrative form, Pratt unleashes such an array of vocabulary that often the leash breaks and the words escape a clear understanding. Readers are sent scrambling for dictionaries. And Pratt's themes of a potentially triumphant race hardly fall in place with the despairing, waste-landic themes of modern poets who can claim world wide success.

Yet, one-hundred years after his birth, Edwin John Pratt remains cat-like and his poetry "furtive-wild." His phrases may at first seem lazy and soft-mannered. But when the words within are read in quantity and sincerity, they can leap at the reader like a cat after its prey ... or like a leaping tiger-wave off the coast of Newfoundland ... or even like the "sheets and tongues of flame leaping some fifty feet above the smoke" after an Iroquois raid. And Pratt can catch an unwary reader as sure as time can thin a morning fog.
Do You Remember, Mary?

Do you remember, Mary,
When you first told Dad and Mom
That you were going to marry Mike,
Who wasn’t a Christian,
Next day,
And that night
When you came to talk,
And you were sitting in the brown chair,
The one that could rock and turn in any direction,
That we gave Dad and Mom for their anniversary,
And Mom was sitting at the table
With her knitting in her lap,
One hand on each needle where they came to rest
When you walked in,
And Dad at the couch, nervous and angry,
And I heard them for the first time talk about God
in the first person
And they were saying you shouldn’t marry Mike
Or leave the Church,
And you started to cry, and get angry, and then
scared, and then angry?
Do you remember, Mary?

I wanted to scream at you that night.
And I wanted to scream at Dad and Mom for making you cry.
And I wanted to hit you and hit you for making them
make you cry.
And I wanted to run to you and hug you and shake
you and kiss you and slap you.
I wanted to love you and hate you.
And I wanted to run away from you and Dad and Mom
And run upstairs and slam the door between us
And bury my head under my pillow and cry forever.
I was so young, Mary.

But I didn’t.
I sat at the table in the next room,
Listening,
With two tears running down my cheeks,
While Sarah sat over her homework, staring at a
spot on the table.

—Greg Oudeman
Angry Young Man

—Marvin Norman

There’s official despair creeping up from the waters below. The dark waters find a corresponding lagoon in my own soul. I’m angry. These docks can hardly support it, this intense anger of mine. My transfer was unceremonious and nasty, and I still haven’t adjusted to all the bull#®· Night after night my job is to simply watch the Delaware tide roll in. Mausoleums of steel and concrete wink at me from Camden, causing shimmering light to bounce off the waters—the eternally shifting waves of oil-choked algae and brine. They pay me four dollars an hour to guard these docks from Jersey seagulls you know. My superiors tell me that many scavengers would love to take advantage of a dying sugar processing plant. Plenty of old timers with week-old pink slips seeking revenge no doubt. These are rough times, even for the formerly immune old timers of South Philly. Unemployment for August is nine-point-something nationally. I counted over a million on the way here this afternoon.

As I stare into the starry nighttime, I can’t help shuddering. I’m really lucky to be working at all I keep telling myself. But that doesn’t appease the anger I feel. It doesn’t change my revulsion at the indignities I suffer daily. Even 100% unemployment couldn’t change one hard fact: this job sucks!

I’m beginning to understand the vague angry feelings in our culture. I find myself relating to some of society’s dread, if not the unemployment-blues aspect of it. I have a crummy job; naturally I want out, but I can’t quit because I need the money. Realizing that without a summer job tuition itself would be impossible, I’m forced to tolerate a maddening Catch-22 situation. Being one of the fortunate ones with a job this summer has been little consolation in light of these miserable circumstances.

I’m a Globe security guard doing the three to eleven P.M. shift here at Front and Delaware Ave. I’m trying to look on the bright side, for the romance that is said to be in every situation. All I’ve gotten so far are mosquito bites and close calls with wharf rats. I can now say categorically that Otis Redding doesn’t know what he’s talking about.

* * *

A walk around the dock warehouse at least once a night is obligatory I guess. It isn’t too intolerable a duty if done with a modicum of curiosity and a tolerance for pesky dock wasps and the smell of wet sugar. The air reeks with a bittersweet odor. I can’t seem to get this mysterious lump from out of my throat whenever I’m here. The spirit of this place, sizzly, rusted, and skeletal with its guts on the outside will haunt me for years to come. A few remaining workers walk around ghost-like, doing their jobs as if in a trance. Some manage to laugh and vow to take their forklifts home with them as compensation for the company taking thirty of their best years and rewarding them with an ignoble statistical identity. This is as close to the apocalypse these old gentlemen care to get in a lifetime I suppose. Some of these fellows will certainly never work again.

They know it, but they grit their teeth and talk about jobs waiting for them in Seattle, Dallas, and Orlando. If I were in their situation I’d definitely take a course in Phillipino languages, but I keep my opinion to myself. These men are in deep pain and I don’t have any words of comfort for them. I’m too involved in my own fears to get involved in theirs.

Luis Gonzalez and I alternate positions every two hours. From three to five I’m forced to stand mindlessly, like some black scarecrow in the company parking lot on Delaware Ave. Come rain or broiling August heat, my job is to merely be a presence; a highly visible symbol of authority to the disenchanted, laid-off masses. My uniform is supposed to exude authority and “no nonsense” in all of its crimson glory. If only these workers knew how much disdain I have for this badge. Everyday at five Gonzalez relieves me in the parking lot and I head for the docks where I sit and watch the tide roll in until seven. Since I’m not allowed to carry a book or radio, I have to entertain myself by thinking. Sometimes I even manage to pray, but those prayers are usually Old Testament prayers, so I postpone them until later.

From seven until nine I patrol a completely empty parking lot. I questioned my superiors about the wisdom of this assignment once. They simply reminded me that I have my orders—case closed. I gave the traditional Seig-Heil and thanks-for-the-information-boss salute. These are the replies one usually gives to superiors in fascist infrastructures.

It’s easier to pray when the sun is down and a rare August breeze winds its way through the lot. Sometimes I manage to forget my resentment even to the point of forgiving my superiors for their crudeness and lack of consideration. But suddenly I remember some outrageous stunt that headquarters tried either on me or one of my buddies, and the fury returns seven times seventy.

From nine to eleven I have dock duty for the fourth and final shift of the night. This is my favorite shift because of the heavy cover of darkness and the breezes off the river. I watch the showboats making their way up and down the river, blasting their disco music for on-deck parties of secretaries and Center City executives engaging in
the seven deadly sins. Sometimes it's a real struggle staying awake. There is only the monotonous sound of the waves splashing against the dock supports, speeding tugboats leaving gigantic waves in the river as they speed by, the cawing of a seagull foolish enough to fly at night, and my wandering mind attempting to bring order out of the chaotic pieces of my life.

Damn! I just clocked in and Lt. Calley is already giving me grief. I really despise these square-headed junior officers with their golden badges glittering in the sun.

"Why aren't you wearing official shoes, Norman?"

"Uh, what do you mean by 'official shoes' lieutenant?"

"Your shoes Norman, your shoes aren't regulation."

"You don't say! Well, listen up Calley. I have a week to go. I'm not about to buy a pair of $60.00 shoes for this chicken crap assignment."

"Globe guards don't wear dock sideders Mr. Norman. Kindly procure a pair of black shoes or don't come in tomorrow."

"Aye-Aye suh! Ah hears ya' loud an' cleah, suh!" It irritates the hell out of me hearing him say that. He's just a lieutenant so I don't take his commands seriously.

"I'm all ears."

"You make more than me amigo. Stop complaining."

Gonzalez is a crazy driver so I have to remind him to slow down as we approach red lights. There are a couple of hoodlums carrying on outside a bar we have to pass. For some reason Gonzalez is slowing down to stare at them. They stare back, not sure of what to expect.

"What are you doing Gonzalez?"

"You ever notice how startled these boys get whenever you stand up to them?"

"We're in a car Gonzalez. This is hardly standing up to them!" But Gonzalez did have a point. There's usually a ten second delay before anything happens, but it isn't a delay out of fear. They're simply deciding who they like least, the black guy or the Puerto-Rican. Then the trouble would start. Gonzalez is finally coming to his senses and pulling out. He smiles a lot. He reminds me of Matt at school.

"You were originally at 841 Chestnut. You had a 'caviar and champagne' assignment. You must've screwed up bad to get shipped down here."

"Not quite Luis. I'm here because of gross injustice."

"Hmm, an unceremonious transfer huh—well, they reserve the right." But the details ....

"I'm all ears."

"Really don't matter bro'. You ain't the first guard to get his butt kicked for no reason and you won't be the last."

Gonzalez is smiling to himself again. I can see him mentally patting himself on the back for his so-called words of wisdom. He has a right to be smug I guess. He's waiting for the results of state trooper's test in Connecticut—a prisoner looking at imminent release. He's not like me—a prisoner getting used to the food.

"We have sleazy bosses, Luis, especially Nick and Frank down at headquarters. They're the type that always end up being reincarnated."

"We're all kind of sleazy if you look at it realistically Norman. We're all associates; we're all in this together." I often wonder if Gonzalez is some sort of perverted Calvinist or something. I hate it when he gets philosophical.

"By the way Norman, headquarters called and left a message for you, you're ordered to wear official shoes tomorrow or else."

"We work for petty and depraved men, Gonzalez; you know that?"

I decided to wear penny loafers today. Lt. Calley is calling headquarters to find out if they're acceptable. The Sarge is shaking his head as usual.

What are we going to do with you Norman?"

I always hunch my shoulders and smile whenever he asks such rhetorical questions.

"How'd you get shipped down here anyway smart-ass?"

"Do you really want to know Sarge?"

"I'm all ears.

"Last week I got a call from headquarters. They told me I'd been transferred so I went downtown to find out why ...."

"What's the meaning of this, Nick. Why did you pull me out of 841?"

Nick looked surprised and bored at the same time. He was used to the sight of outrage. He wiggled his nose ratlike at his desk. The room smelled of coffee, cigarettes, and persperation. The air conditioner was broken again.

"We reassigned you," he said already bored with my presence. Picking up his assignment book he looked up my name. I felt like calling him scumbag and tossing my badge into his styrofoam coffee cup yelling, "Screw you, rat-face. I quit." But it was too early in the morning for such nastiness.

"You weren't doing the job, Norman," he said casually.

At first I thought I'd misunderstood him. "What do you mean?" I asked, suppressing my anger. I watched him take a long drag on his cigarette. He reminded me of a large sweaty muskrat with his bleary 'ho-hum' eyes.

"Well, it says here in the report that you didn't adequately carry out the duties of your supervisory office. You never collected time sheets or phoned in the hours of your subordinates."

"Are you sure you're talking to the right person, Nick?" I said impatiently.

"What's this 'supervisory office' crap?"

Nick was visibly irritated. He looked down at his desk and seemed to be mouthing words, but no sounds were coming out. "You were the site-supervisor. It was your job to do these things. We had to send a man down there every week to do the things you should have been doing. That's why you were taken off." "Are you out of your frickin' mind?" I asked, laughing at him, though I knew it was no laughing matter. "How was I supposed to know I'd been promoted to site supervisor; no one ever told me? You guys screwed up, not me. I'm not clairvoyant, you know. One phone call could have taken care of this mix up. Man, this is some sleazy stuff you're pulling here."

Nick rolled his eyes and grimaced. He seemed to be looking on the top of his desk for something. He was treating my
As a temporary interruption of his usual mindless duties. He found his memo pad and began writing something. After a minute or two he looked up, as if suddenly remembering he was in the room. The phone began ringing continually. He ignored it and stared at me. He leaned forward in his chair and asked, "Why do you think you were getting $4.50 an hour anyway Norman? That's a higher rate than what we pay our lieutenants. Why should we pay you $1.15 more than what we pay the other guards?" he asked, defying my outrage.

"Uh, isn't it because I did good work?" I blurted out.

"Are you out of your frickin' mind?" he asked, his eyes bulging.

I was embarrassed by his exaggerated shock. If I weren't a Christian I would have kicked him in the face. "Look here, Nick. In two weeks I'll be going back to school. Let me have two more weeks in 841; then I'm gone."

Nick handed me a sheet from his memo pad. "You've been reassigned to Am-Star, a sugar processing plant in South Philly. We decided not to lump you down to $3.35 an hour, but we are knocking fifty cents off your pay. Your hours are the same: three to eleven P.M., Mondays through Fridays."

"What? I worked six days—Mondays through Saturdays."

"Take it or leave it," he said callously. "We've had no problems with you so far, Norman. Don't start now. This is an easy assignment. All you have to do is keep an eye out for vandals. Am-Star laid off about 3,000 workers last week. It's closing down and moving to the Philippines where the union rates are cheaper."

One bastard company goes to the aid of another bastard company. How very typical of the holders of this mentality. Meanwhile, the poor worker gets the shaft as usual.

I didn't want to make a foolish move just yet. Every fiber of my being cried out, "Quit—Quit!" and various expletive deletes. My fist trembled and yelled, "Kill without mercy," but my head said "shhh—shhh. Be cool. Don't quit yet. Look for options. Look for—Lesli."

I was in Lesli's office before Nick noticed I was gone. I knew she would be sympathetic. She groaned with embarrassment at the treatment I'd been receiving. As the Personnel Manager and the one responsible for hiring me in the first place, she felt a special responsibility toward me. I waited in her office while she went to investigate the situation. I realized there wasn't much she could do in light of the machismo attitudes of her co-workers. I didn't want her endangering her position for me anyway, but I was deeply appreciative of her efforts on my behalf. I never have to speak, she'll defend me. It's automatic, like the rising of the sun, like her beautiful smile. I only wish I were five years older and established. I'd ask her to marry me in a second.

"What's the story, Lesli?"

"I spoke to both Nick Capone and Frank Kinkowski, the Operations Manager. They feel that since you're leaving for school soon, they should start training someone else for your position at 841."

I tried not to pout in front of Lesli. I was very mature.

"Since there was a mix up about your promotion, the fact that you weren't notified, they've decided to drop your pay by only fifty cents and reduce your work hours to a regular forty-hour week. No more time and a half."

"Lesli, they want to send me to South Philly."

"I checked for alternate assignments, but I couldn't find any that met your 'no work on Sunday' demand. I'm sorry."

"Should I quit Lesli?"

"No. You haven't done anything wrong. You need the money, and you'll only have to deal with it for a couple of days."

"It's mindless work Lesli."

She looked at me with her hazel blue eyes. I felt all resistance melting away. "I wouldn't blame you for quitting, but I'm asking you to stay."

"It's eleven o'clock Gonz. Time to roll out of here."

"Sorry, you'll have to roll without me tonight. Lt. Calley is sick, vomiting his guts out. I want to stay and keep an eye on him. Maybe call a doctor if necessary. I just don't feel right about leaving a sick man, even if I don't like him."

I can't believe what I'm hearing. Luis is actually going to stay overtime and help this bureaucratic rockhead. I admire his courage, especially this late at night. Well it takes all kinds to make the world go around.

"Well, see you tomorrow, Gonzalez. I gotta get home while the trains and buses are running."

"Yeah. Be careful man. See you tomorrow."

"Yeah, I will. Thanks."

After punching the clock I stare at Lt. Calley standing over a waste paper basket in the street. He's vomiting spasmodically and I can hardly stand the sight of it. I'm relieved that Gonzalez has time to minister to him. I have more important things to do—like get home.

The air is clear but my conscience isn't. I finally realize that there really isn't much of a qualitative difference between Nick and myself. I'm a replica of my enemies in a small way. Tonight is the last night I'll watch the tide roll in from Jersey.
Everyone has a set of opinions and ideas that we call our philosophy of life. Every experience we have ever had helps to mold this philosophy of life. Some experiences have more of an impact than others. The experience that has had the biggest impact on my life in recent years has been the time I have spent at Degage.

What is Degage? Very simply, the Degage is a Christian coffeehouse in downtown Grand Rapids where volunteers attempt to share Christ’s love with the people, mostly poor and unemployed, who come in off the street.

It would be difficult to describe what happens at the Degage or what it feels like to be there. But I can describe how the Degage has had an impact on the way I think and on my philosophy of life.

For one thing, the Degage has enlarged my societal view. It's very easy to live at Calvin, safe, secure, and warm. Living on a college campus has a way of building a big white wall between us and what goes on in the rest of the world. Although the Degage represents only a small portion of that world, being there is still a way of getting in touch with things that are a little closer to reality. By “closer to reality” I mean that my experience with the Degage has begun to teach me what really counts in life. When I've been at the Degage I feel a lot like my roommate did recently after visiting a relative who had been battered by several life threatening diseases. He came back from talking to her and said, “I just realized—I don’t have a problem in the world.” That is the way I feel after talking to some of the people at the Degage. I realize how easy I have it in life.

Add it up. If you're like me, here is how it looks. You were born in one of the most prosperous countries of the world. Within that country, you were born into the middle class. Because of that status you were able to get a good education, good food, good medical care, good clothes, etc. Chances are your parents didn't beat you and that they generally gave you love, attention, and support. On top of all this, God chose you to be a Christian. Whether you have truly accepted Christ or are just following a tradition, the fact remains that you have probably been exposed to Christianity all of your life—the catechism, the sunday school classes, and the many, many sermons. Life has been very comfortable for most of us. But that kind of a rich background also gives us a great deal more responsibility before the Lord. I have begun to realize this especially after having been to the Degage.

Working at the Degage has brought something else to the forefront of my faith. I always knew about it, acknowledged it, but it never hit home as much as now. I have met Christians at the Degage, but usually they are people whom I, in my sinful prejudice, would tend to shun because they have a different way of doing things. As Christians, they do things that I, by my traditional religious upbringing would judge to be wrong—things that would cause me to doubt their Christianity. But now more than ever, I have come to see the one thing that is the only absolute essential in being a Christian—Christ. Usually when a person says he believes in Jesus Christ as his Savior, not in himself. I must accept him with joy. When I talk to non-Christians at the Degage and elsewhere about Christianity, I must talk about the one essential thing—Christ. There is still a sinful urge in me to judge people by my traditional standards. I like to call this “box Christianity.” We build a box of moral
standards around ourselves, and it seems that when we see someone who doesn’t fit his life into the same box that we use, we often judge that person to be a little tainted or unfit to be a Christian. We establish moral criteria which they must fill before we feel they are worthy to be called Christ-confessors.

For example, I met a Christian man at the Degage who said that he sometimes bought bottles of wine for his friends downtown who were suffering from withdrawal. He said that he offered this as service in Christ’s name. A couple of years ago, I would have blustered and objected and argued that this was no Christian service at all. I realize now that if a person truly believes that what he does is God’s will, it is. I believe that what that man did was a pleasing sacrifice to the Lord. He was doing his best with the knowledge that he had been given.

The same thing, I believe, applies to how we view each other’s sins. The man just referred to also fell occasionally selling dope, using it himself, stealing, or fighting. Of course it was sin; and he realized that too. But I must deal with my own sin before watching his. His Christian struggle involves stealing, drugs, etc. Mine involves pride, lust, etc. We both work to conquer them—we both fail. But we both stand before Christ forgiven; he is my brother in Christ. So what right do I have to judge him or to think of him as any less of a Christian than I?

Do not think, however, that I am advocating the same type of relativity at Calvin. I am not saying that as long as a person is a Christian I can not disapprove of his drinking, his stealing, his fighting. You and I have the greater responsibility I spoke of earlier. If you have grown up with the rich blessings of a Christian background and if you claim to be a Christian and still think that you can do whatever you want and are free to live by whatever standards you want to, you are kidding yourself. If your background is at all similar to mine, God is calling you to a more godly life and to a greater responsibility before Him.

The biggest thing that the Degage has taught me is thankfulness. Do you realize how good we have it? I dare you to take your blessings for granted after some of the men from the Degage have told you about their backgrounds and present situations. And by “blessings” I mean both spiritual and physical. I live as wastefully as anyone, but lately I find myself smoldering a little when I see students throwing away two whole pieces of chicken with only a small bite missing, or a half plate of shrimp, or a couple of glasses of juice. When I think of how the people of the Degage live, I get frustrated with people at Calvin who consider Western’s food as being somehow not quite good enough for their high tastes.

My time spent at the Degage has made me more sensitive to many things in life. It has given me a wider view of reality. As a result, my view of life at Calvin and my faith have changed. Going to the Degage for only one night would probably not have the same kind of effect; but it will open you to a different world than you are used to here at Calvin. Come sometime! Broaden your horizons.
Although we met only once, we quickly achieved a firm and unanimous consensus about the future of WCAL. The unanimity was undoubtedly aided by two reports presented to us and each member's long, hard look at the station's problems.

We feel that WCAL should not and cannot profitably continue its traditional type of broadcasting. The station's nearly total devotion to various styles of music and muzak, heavily emphasizing sugar-water rock and roll, merely copies, in an inferior manner, the broadcasting of other local radio stations. WCAL cannot successfully compete with these stations; its present format does not offer enough unique and beneficial programming to justify the expenditure of time and money needed to maintain the station.

We think that WCAL needs an entirely new image based on a radically different type of programming. It must primarily serve the "academic community" aspect of Calvin College by broadcasting culturally and educationally beneficial programs which are unavailable elsewhere. Some of these programs would include speeches by or interviews with members of the administration, faculty, student body, and Board of Trustees, panel discussions on controversial subjects, coverage of community events, broadcast of concerts, extensive reporting of Calvin College news. We think that WCAL will justify its existence and offer the community a worthwhile and distinctive contribution only by adopting the "informative-educational-cultural" type of format.

The lack of a qualified and enthusiastic staff has been a major obstacle to the successful operation of the station; this problem will probably become worse since most of the first semester staff was interested only in spinning "their kind" of records.

We think that there is a great need for the informative educational type of programming in the Calvin community. The potential audience exists, technical equipment and resources are nearly sufficient; the money is waiting. If the change to the new format cannot be made successfully and if this spring's organizational meeting is unproductive, WCAL's future is bleak.

"Radio is an immediate means of communication, even more immediate than the printed page," Prof. L. VanPooien shared with Dialogue recently. The impact that the radio has had in the history of communications can hardly be overestimated. With this invention, music, opinions, messages, or news could be broadcast to a worldwide audience. Decisions being made in the capital could be common knowledge for the average citizen within minutes.

For the subcommittee

Marlene deGroot

"Radio is an immediate means of communication, even more immediate than the printed page," Prof. L. VanPooien shared with Dialogue recently. The impact that the radio has had in the history of communications can hardly be overestimated. With this invention, music, opinions, messages, or news could be broadcast to a worldwide audience. Decisions being made in the capital could be common knowledge for the average citizen within minutes. In 1963 a group of Calvin students had their eye on the potential influence of this medium when they began the college radio station, WCAL. And for the last twenty years, members of Calvin's student body have struggled to make this vision a meaningful reality.

The letter printed above was written in 1969. During that year the General Manager position of WCAL was vacant, and no one capable or willing was found to fill it. And the faculty and administration were upset because the WCAL staff had taped and broadcast a "closed" faculty meeting. The station was officially dissolved in November of 1970, and in October of '71, since WCAL had been "inactive for nearly two years," the assets of the radio station were liquidated. The Cayvan room was offered any records which it wished to add to its collection. All the remaining records were sold at a Senate-sponsored record sale. And all the WCAL equipment owned by Senate was also sold. That seemed to be the final stab at the vision of a Calvin College radio station.

However, in 1975, students once again met together for the purpose of establishing radio as a medium of communication on Calvin's campus. What did they wish to communicate? Did they hope to improve on the WCAL of 1965-69,
the WCAL which the author of the 1969 letter claims had a staff, “interested only in spinning ‘their kind’ of records?” This new group modified the 1964 constitution to express their intent to change the image of WCAL. The October 1964 constitution stated the object of WCAL to be as follows:

This radio station, under the jurisdiction of the Communications Board, shall provide an opportunity for participation in the activities of a radio station, information on intracampus news and current issues, religious programs, and general interest programs both cultural and entertaining.

The April 1978 constitution had added another sentence to the purpose. It states: “The radio station will be different from other radio stations in that it will provide a Christian alternative in the area concerning radio listening pleasure.” Prof. L. VanPolten, the faculty member advising the students interested in getting this radio station on the air again, confirmed this concern among those involved. He recalls that they were a closely-knit group with a strong sense of purpose.

In their attempt to find an organizational structure under which they could operate, they had three alternatives. First of all, the group of students approached the administration of the college, hoping to gain their support and involvement. The response was not enthusiastic. It was suspected that the administration feared for the college’s image and did not want to seem so vocational as to support a radio station. Next, the students knocked on the door of the Speech Department. Thespians, an organization sponsored by the Speech Department, was well-established and running smoothly. Could not the same be done for radio broadcasting as had been done for drama? Again the answer was less than enthusiastic. The only alternative was to form an independent student organization under the jurisdiction of the Communications Board, much like Chimes, Dialogue and Prism operate. They decided to take this route, and it was hoped that with some background, time, and energy they could formulate a concise philosophy and offer high-quality alternative programming.

Having had plenty of time since 1975 to develop a working philosophy and to improve the quality of their programming, one must ask whether WCAL has achieved its purpose? Do they offer radio broadcasting unique to WCAL, and noticeably different than that of commercial stations in G.R.? A random telephone survey of the campus resulted in a generally negative answer. According to this survey, reception is poor in many dorms, and most students prefer to “listen to the regular stations.” The one’s that play “songs that I like.” The only exposure most of them have to WCAL is in the Commons cafeteria, where it is occasionally broadcast over the speaker system during meals. Even then, most students are not impressed with the programming of WCAL. One student suggested: “Like they can talk into the end of a hockey stick and Calvin wouldn’t know the difference, but it would be a lot cheaper.”

One problem seems to be that there is no consensus among the thirty-eight members of the WCAL staff about the purpose of the radio station. Tony Kamphuis, a current disc jockey, admits that WCAL has not developed past “its adolescent stage.” “We’ve just got to clarify our purpose,” he states. While some believe that providing a Christian alternative means broadcasting primarily Christian Contemporary Music, another DJ intimated with a gleam in his eye that he plays as much heavy rock as he can get away with. Each DJ is required to play a set minimum of CCM, jazz and popular music, according to rotating schedules, explains the present General Manager of WCAL Howard VandenHeuvel. Certain musical groups are not allowed on the air and songs with blatantly offensive lyrics are censored. In general, WCAL wants to challenge its listeners to be discerning, and will not censor the work of quality artists who deal with life’s questions in an honest manner. Beyond these guidelines, individual DJs are granted considerable freedom in their time on the air. One DJ admitted that the only thing uniting the personnel of WCAL is their use of similar means: the radio. They appear to be striving toward different ends.

It would be unfair and superficial if we placed the blame for these difficulties on the present staff of WCAL. Most of the present members are simply responding to the opportunities available to them, each in their own way. At times, as is evident by the disbanding of WCAL in 1969, there has been a lack of guidance and leadership. Perhaps a structural change is needed to provide a continuing leadership which will outlast individual student managers. A faculty or administration member who is heavily involved in the station from year to year would enable it to grow rather than remain fixated in an adolescent stage. There is very little student interest in vacant positions and thus they are often filled by people with very little experience. The present personnel boasts an average of only three months experience, and training for their work usually is done within two hours. A sponsoring department or a
small permanent staff offering a more thorough training program would bring greater continuity and better quality to the staff of WCAL. Another consideration which the radio station should face is whether WCAL ought to limit itself to Calvin College? What kind of audience could WCAL appeal to? What unique resources does Calvin College have that no other radio station in the area can draw on? Perhaps the broader Calvin College community, including interested Grand Rapids citizens and supporters in the outlying areas, could benefit from what is happening culturally and educationally at the college. University radio stations such as WUOM, broadcast from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, do not limit their audience to students at that institution. WCAL could do more than imitate the programming of commercial radio stations for campus students.

These improvements could only be made worthwhile by a better transmission system. Even on campus, a common complaint is that “I can't find it,” or “It's really fuzzy.” The Federal Communications Commission approached Calvin already in the 1950's offering the college a license to establish an FM radio station. At present the radio current is run through the wires which power the buildings on campus. WCAL engineers spend hours every week attempting to repair malfunctioning transmitters. This past January WCAL was not on the air because their main amplifier burned out, and they fear that most of their listenership was lost in the process. With such a limited audience, it is difficult for WCAL to involve more people at this college than those who work for it.

KDCR, a radio station affiliated with Dordt College, provides an example of a much more successful attempt to involve students in the work of radio broadcasting. Directed toward the community surrounding Sioux Center, Iowa, it has three full-time staff personnel and broadcasts in a 140 mile radius of Dordt College. According to Denny DeWard, its manager, KDCR has so many students wishing to work for the station, that they must limit participation to Communications Majors having certain course prerequisites. Training usually begins one semester before the student may be on the air and involves approximately twenty-five hours of work. Boasting almost 100% placement of their alumni, KDCR offers to Dordt students internships worth nine credit hours, and some are on Work Study programs where they are paid for their time. In terms of programming, the radio station claims to be "Proclaiming a God-Centered Culture." This involves broadcasting of daily Dordt chapels, interviews with faculty and administration, recitals, basketball games, as well as programs called Community Close-Up, with local news and interviews, and Illumination, an hour of Christian Contemporary Music. Choosing to avoid playing any rock music, KDCR concentrates on devotional music during the morning hours, and classical music in the afternoon and evening hours. Decisions about programming and other policies are made by the KDCR Radio Board, which consists of a representative from the Board of Trustees, a member of the Communications Department, the President of the College, and the Manager of KDCR. The project does not receive its funding by selling commercials, but by holding fund drives where it solicits donations from individual listeners and local businesses. Dordt College foots the remainder of the bill. KDCR has evidently been highly successful in offering to students and to the local community the benefits of a college radio station.

If Calvin College wishes to improve its radio station, the change will clearly require greater efforts from more than the present staff. As Howard VandenHeuvel put it, "As long as we're confined to carrier current transmission, in a basement, with volunteer help, WCAL won't be more than a student organization." They need the initiative of a core of people interested in making WCAL into what stations like KDCR show it could be. This initiative would require the support of a cooperative administration, the participation of the student body, and the encouragement of the faculty. The present staff, in its situation, is incapable of magically transforming WCAL into another type of radio station. It must be a community effort.

They have inherited an incompletely defined radio station and will need our help to improve it. WCAL could communicate a valuable message to the Calvin community. The purpose of WCAL must go beyond that of providing experience for interested members of the student body. A radio station's function is to communicate to an audience. A quick look at an article by Jan Chapin published in the November 1977 Dialogue throws the issue into much broader perspective. He writes:

So why have radio at Calvin? Because it is another method God has given us to take his Word into the world. And if we are to do anything for the Lord we are to do it as well as possible, which means with training and experience. And if our work is to be significant and worthwhile, we must be well trained, able to compete in the world of technology for the time and attention of those we are seeking to reach through our media. Where better get that training than at a liberal arts college like Calvin?

WCAL has too much potential for its center of purpose to remain in the basement of the Commons Annex. Let's hear you out in the open, loud and clear! How about it Calvin?
Touloose set out to walk one day,
He walked to school and then to play.
From there he walked three miles or more,
To reach the "Centipede Book Store."
He pushed a footstool to a chair,
Curled up and settled down right there.
He put his glasses on his eyes
And read a book on fireflies.
Quite later on when he was through,
The sky had turned to black from blue,
The moon was gold for it was night.
The bookstore lady shut the light.
Touloose would walk wherever he went,
No bikes, no trains, no cars to rent.
He knew that he should head for home,
But it was dark; he was alone.
Touloose tried hard the road to see
When someone hooted from a tree:
"You fool! You're lost as lost can be,
Why walk when you can fly with me!"
The great owl swooped down through the air,
His eyes glowed orange, his feathers fair.
He held his wings out wide and strong,
And told Touloose to come right on.
"I'll fly you home in minutes, Fool!
You'll like the flight; it's fast and cool.
You'll never make it on your own,
You're lost, it's dark, you're all alone!"
Touloose thought this might be just fine,
But something made him change his mind.
"I wish I may, I wish I might,
But something tells me it's not right!"
Touloose walked on. The road seemed strange.
The trees threw shadows on the range.
But still the little centipede
Walked only where his feet would lead.

In a while he heard a splash.
He saw a pond was in his path.
Someone croaked at him and said,
"Why aren't you home, asleep in bed?"
"It's late at night," the toad went on,
"You're lost and walking all alone.
You must be tired, your feet must ache,
Let me pull you across this lake."

Without ado he hopped right in.
The water lapped about his chin.
He held up a leaf—the stem was long—
And told Touloose to come right on.
"I'll take you to the other side.
I'll pull you swimming—you just ride!
It's fun, it's fast, it's even free.
You must be tired, so come with me."

Touloose thought, "This could save my day!"
But something made him turn away.
"I wish I may, I wish I might,
But somehow I don't think it's right."

He took a turn, the scene was new,
A high hill came into his view.
Just then he heard some branches shake,
And when he looked, he saw a snake.

"I've watched you come from miles away.
You've walked all night, it's almost day.
I can be helpful, if you will,
I'll gladly take you up this hill."
The snake crept close, his words were slow.
Touloose decided not to go.
"I wish I may, I wish I might,
But I know this cannot be right."

So up the hill he went solo,
Foot by foot, toe by toe,
Until he reached the top and then
Down the other side again.

At last the sun began to rise,
Touloose was in for a surprise.
For right in front of his bright view,
Mama', Papa', and sister too!
"Come home with us, we missed you so!
We searched all night. Where did you go?"
He ran to them, his heart was high,
The sun shone brightly in the sky.

THE END
—Sandy Cares

("Touloose the Centipede" won third place in the Writers, Guild's winter poetry contest.)
Dear Family,

Ever since Mother and I returned from our visit to Arkansas during Calvin College’s reading recess, I have been wanting to write to you and tell you something about your aunt and uncle on my side of the family and about the people among whom they live. So here goes:

"South of Hollister, turn left on 86. This will be a right turn and fairly easy to miss. So watch close. 86 is a fun road, a real rolly coaster. It takes a mighty plunge down to the lake, crosses and goes back up the mountain. In about 10 minutes you'll intersect Missouri 13. Turn left (south). You come to Blue Eye which is smack dab on the border, and Missouri 13 becomes good old Ark 21. Course you just hang tight to 21, and you're bound to get to Kingston sooner or later. But you have to have faith! The road signs don't make much mention of Kingston!

"When you reach the 'bustling' town square of downtown Kingston, you cross and exit out the diagonal corner up a steep hill past the new fire house. You go up to the top of the mountain. Then you come down the mountain. You run along a pretty little valley (Dry Creek) for about 1/2 mile or so. Our mountain (Logan Mountain) will be coming up on your right. At the end of the valley you swing right up the mountain. About 1/2 mile up on your right you'll see a couple of mail boxes by a little lane. Come on in!!"

Following these instructions, and in spite of darkness, Mother guided us unerringly to the little lane. Then we drove a half-mile through the woods until we saw a light. Everything else was dark; the only sound was the barking of Winnie-the-Pooh, and alert half-dachshund-half-terrier. Your Uncle George and Aunt Joy came to greet us and led us down to their simple home. They live in what was once the basement of a two-story cabin which they had built themselves and which burned down—something not uncommon with these home-made dwellings with their wood-burning stoves. Much of their furniture they have loaned to Keith and his wife (about whom you shall hear later), and what they have left is old, soiled, and improvised. They care little for cleanliness, it appeared to us. Insects, they kind of hate to kill since, "they have a right to live also." (A cricket which, among his colleagues, had serenaded us most of our first night, was captured by George after it had run down my leg, across the floor, and up his. This creature was then carefully warned and carried outside.) George talks to trees, animals, and insects quietly and gently. Two cats roamed over the "sofa" which I suspected was to be our bed. But they, George and Joy, were very friendly and did not seem ill at ease with these erstwhile relatives from the big city. We talked a bit about our trip, but Joy, who is over 70—remember she's about 14 years older than George—was sleepy, so we were soon bedded down beside the wood stove on two chests upon which 2" of foam rubber were spread (that's the sofa). Their bathroom was surely a considerable improvement over an outhouse, but the same care and decorative principles were evident in it as one might expect in a rural facility down a path. The window was out. It was chilly! Cobwebs and spider webs were prominent. Cleaning was minimal, but

William Sanderson is a Professor of Psychology at Calvin.
there was running water from a cistern. That first night’s sleep was rather fitful.

We were all up fairly early. George eats a large bowl of pea soup for breakfast: I could have waited ‘til lunch. They try to eat entirely from their garden, so I presume they are de-facto vegetarians. That’s the reason for the pea soup—protein. They also liberally serve a fruit drink made by placing whole pears (minus the stems) and apples into a blender and grinding up the works. There as a little too much sediment in it for me. They eat loads of vitamins and six large calcium pills every day. George earnestly took his own blood pressure using a device which he highly recommended; then he took Joy’s (I wonder if this wasn’t a gracious way to monitor her condition); then mine. We all passed. We learned that he doesn’t raise the sheep anymore. A partnership with two returned Peace Corpsmen in the area had fallen through, although George and Joy had done most of the work in any case. They are living from their garden now, and from the sale of 90 acres which they had bought for $50 an acre, in addition to their first 120 acres, some twenty years ago.

After breakfast George and Mother and I set out to explore the mountain. We saw the remains of the various buildings he had once used to raise pigs and the meadows he had cleared to graze the sheep. We stopped to admire a great black walnut tree and to exult in the walnuts which lay about on the ground or which still clung in large numbers to its branches. George patted the tree affectionately and addressed a few appropriate words to it. He showed us the boundary stones of Civil War vintage that are the legal markers of the corners of the 40-acre plots, the basic territorial units in the area. We climbed to the crest of a low ridge and looked out over a beautiful valley where other ridges, heavily wooded and just beginning to color, were clustered. After a while we reached a road and followed it to an old 19th century cabin fashioned of hand-hewn, squared-off logs. It was a scene spot, among pecan trees and overlooking the same valley. It turned out that this shack had been purchased together with 40 acres by two young women who were looking for a very lonely place where their lesbian love could be enjoyed in peace. It took them a long time to overcome their chagrin at learning that these hills are populated, and that “George” is a friendly patriarch who passes by along the road each day to help the chap just down the way to build a house. These two have since succumbed to the bright lights of New Orleans, George averred, and they only return for very brief visits—not always with each other. This was our first realization that every shack here-abouts has its story, and the story in brief is that the youth of the late sixties—samples of various sorts at least—have settled in Arkansas—some on Logan Mountain or thereabouts.

Down the road “apiece” we entered the fenced acreage of Robert Bridgeton. George, as he approached, let out a loud yell: “So we don’t get shot,” he joked. We first met a number of cows. Robert was one of the Peace Corps partners in the sheep venture. He’s from Montana, so George made a trip up there with the big truck he had then, to get the sheep. Robert had worked in Upper Volta in Africa and on a hacienda in Peru—now he’s “into” cattle and tree planting in the south. So we met Robert, an intelligent, bright-eyed, energetic man, and also his wife Rose, a tall, full-bodied, erect woman, wonderfully open in her ways and countenance. They were proud of the house they had built of stones and logs. The logs are cut in two to three-foot lengths and laid cross-wise and mortared together like huge, wide bricks. We went into their crowded kitchen-sitting room, together with a black cat (who spent his/her next hour in my lap) and a chihuahua and a beagle. We sipped herb tea. Your fastidious mother’s cup had two bugs in it, which were quickly joined by a bee, but she nevertheless chatted and drank most graciously. Robert has been reading the multi-volume history of the world by the Durants: he’s up to Rome. George hinted that he would like to read Volume 1 on eastern civilizations, so Robert quickly got it for him. We talked of U.F.O.’s (our host had seen one in Montana) and about mysticism just a bit—I, expressing my skepticism on all such matters while affirming my Christian faith—Robert, thinking that if one could believe the latter he could believe anything. It was a delightful chat—as if we had been friends for a long time. Rose was the second one with whom Robert had lived here for a year. The first one hadn’t worked out (so George was sure it was a good thing he hadn’t married her), but Rose had really fitted in—so they had recently been wedded. We could have stayed all day it seemed, but Robert was making preparations to take a crew for the next four months into the “south” to plant trees for a lumber company. He talked of the problems he had had with the government when he had tried to manage his crew as a cooperative venture. Tree planting apparently pays well for the short-term intensive labor. Rose expected to remain in the woods taking care of two children for another woman who needed to earn money and who was going south with Robert’s group. She intends to make a monthly trip to see her husband and to take the children to see their mother.

Well, on up the wooded road we hiked, George pausing now and then to remove rocks and fallen limbs, something which others never seem to have the time to do he said. Thinking of rocks, Rose likes them too, as I do, and when she heard that I was searching for just the right rock to take home, she ran and got a favorite of hers—a dark rock with strange upraised circular swirls. George insisted on carrying this heavy treasure, so I carried the Durants’ Eastern Civilizations. Thus armed we headed back up the side of the mountain. This brought us into Rod’s acreage. Rod and Robert had become great friends in the Peace Corps in Upper Volta. Rod had fallen in love there with a beautiful black woman, and they had had two children. Apparently the relationship with Rod helped her to become upwardly mobile in her country’s government. In time, however, she married a black man, leaving her American lover heartsick and still carrying the torch. Perhaps she foresaw that back in the U.S. she would live in a shack on a hillside. Rod actually had no cabin on his 40 acres, but George had supervised the creation of a beautiful pond and meadow for him. Each partner was to have had a hundred sheep and was to develop cooperatively his own land. George was very proud of this work he had done for Rod. Now, though, Rod works for Save the Children and spends most of his time in Africa. George says he is a wonderful person.
After lunch, Joy joined us, and we headed off in another direction to visit Keith and Marie. And of course herein lies another tale. Keith’s brother Jim had settled in the 60’s in a commune somewhere in the area. Among these peaceful brethren were quite a number of women who had had bitter experiences in the past with men of various sorts. As they realized they could survive here on their own without the hated males, they drove out the men of the group by intimidation—even flashing knives. Only Jim stuck until, after he had threatened to sue, they helped him purchase another forty. Now he works as a carpenter for a wealthy man who is renovating a home (building a new one is against the law) on a nearby protected river. Jim’s brother Keith and his wife had been long-time participants in the drug culture out in California. They had reached the end of their string selling drugs until they were deeply involved with ex-Hell’s Angels and ex-convicts, taking drugs until their minds were wild and blurred; and they had two little sons. Jim persuaded Keith to come to Arkansas and try to regain some sort of stable life. George turned over to Keith three acres of wooded land near the highway on the side of the mountain—again a glorious view. He and his brother helped Keith build an ambitious two-story shack using old lumber from one of George’s out-buildings and from a local farmer’s abandoned barn. Long posts to support the roof and sides were fashioned from nearby trees. Joy had a vision in which she saw clearly Marie’s face long before the young mother came with the two boys from California. Marie herself is rather blank of countenance as if in a perpetual daze. At times she totally blanks out. They lived for a time in a small van body, and in an old trailer which George had used when his own house had burned down some years before.

We arrived after they had just moved into the new dwelling. No tar paper covered the cracks in the floor yet, but the outside of the structure was encased in it. One little boy was asleep on a mattress over by the wall. The other, older lad, was proud of the loft his dad had built for him over the one completed room and just under the corrugated metal roof. Their mother seemed quiet, perhaps dully, pleased to have a home at last in some security. Joy was teaching her to bake bread. The family was already on government aid. Marie believed she was pregnant again, and with the help of the unborn they were receiving $300 per month in stamps. We chatted as if theirs were a new suburban home and we were all sitting in some comfortable living room. Keith arrived full of pride and a kind of fierce determination. He had built this place, he informed us, entirely with a chainsaw. He was dirty; long hair covered his beard and face. He explained with great satisfaction how for fifty dollars he had converted a large oil drum into a furnace which only last night he had stocked to a fiery heat to demonstrate its effectiveness. And there it was right in front of us warming us. (One blessing, incidentally, is that all these places can readily get electricity thanks to the old R.E.A.) The older boy went up to his mother begging her to paint his face red: like Frank Zappa the rock star, Kevin explained. On the wall hung a small bedraggled clown costume which someone had provided for the coming Halloween. (Now I see it; that’s why the older boy wanted to look like Frank Zappa!) We enjoyed our visit and finally headed off into the woods, wishing them success in their new home and earnestly praying that they would “make it” somehow. We passed the freshly constructed outhouse—no house actually, just the “out;” two rolls of toilet paper standing on end served as sentinels.

Then, lest they be offended, we had to visit Steve and his wife and their two children. Their house on the other side of the highway had burned down also; George had been helping them rebuild. They were constructing a modern cottage. Steve was a grizzled, cigarette-saturated, proud, competent carpenter. “Kind of a redneck,” George called him. He was a true native of the area, no Peace Corps, no peace movement, no drugs, no commune, a more routine product of the 60’s. The family was living temporarily in an old battered trailer in an unbelievably littered “yard.” But enough of this—we left them to their work and headed through the trees over the outcroppings of lichen-encrusted rock back to George’s place.

After supper, we had a long talk about our basic beliefs. George explained to me how important it is that we divorce ourselves from the idea that we are bodies, or egos. (He has lost all of his teeth, and he is glad to be rid of them, although the false ones are a nuisance.) The great goal of life is to achieve higher levels of consciousness and to move toward oneness with God. Everything he has ever done (though, remember he was Phi Beta Kappa in
philosophy at the University of Kentucky, earned a master’s degree there and completed the course requirements for
the Ph.D. with a teaching fellowship at the University of Illinois) has led to failure. But he sees in his life the hand of a
“cunning” God carefully leading him to the realization that this world and his “self” are all evanescent and that the true
good consists in renouncing them all while striving to live in harmony with nature and while serving your fellow
creatures as you are able. One must live as simply as possible and as frugally; and one must share whatever one has
with those in need. We live many lives, he explained to us, each one a part of a quest to grow toward oneness with
Deity. In each life people are drawn to us whom we have loved or hated in past lives; so he is careful not to hate.
Christ and Buddha and others are our examples of this God-centered consciousness. And so, in a small way perhaps,
is George an example, living there among the youth of the 60’s, giving of himself unsparingly and asking nothing in
return. They are those with whom his fate had presumably been tied in past lives; they too are on this quest—though
not so far along. Small wonder that Joy “knew” already the needy Marie before she ever came east, ans she “knows”
Marie will make it. The last conclusions are mine. George’s views are drawn from Vedantic Hindu philosophy.

What could we say? Two brothers following very different paths; we acknowledged this to be the case. He seems
more Christlike by far than I. Each of us rather believed that his views somehow included and accepted the other.
Surely, I “hope”—and we are entitled to hope—that the blood of Jesus Christ somehow covers those who follow him
and through a vision so darkly clouded, yet so committed to “caritas.” Joy had fallen asleep. Gradually we brothers
reached some understanding of each other.

We left “High Farm” early (5:00 a.m.) the next morning, stopping for one last rock and reaching St. Louis in time for
lunch with Pam. We picked her up at Westminster Academy’s beautiful new campus in St. Louis after finding her hard
at work in a spacious library filled with October’s sunlight and looking over the still green fields of Ladue. How grateful
we were that our lives had led us to each of you. You are, after all, children of the sixties also: you whose lives
embody our hopes for Christian integrity and service. You have never failed us, never failed to honor your father and
mother in the one manner that counts; namely by living your lives in a way that strives to please our God and our
Savior Jesus Christ. May it always be so. We shall have much to be thankful for this Thanksgiving.

Love,
Dad
Calvin: Seeking to Serve or Survive

—Ed Nyman

The following article explores the ways in which Calvin is dealing with the double problem of declining enrollment and tightening budgets. Dialogue spoke to a number of faculty and administrators for the information contained in this article: Dr. Kuiper, Tom Harkema, Evelyn Diephouse, Dean Rice, Dean VanHarn, and Vice President VandeGuchte.

In 1979-80, enrollment at Calvin reached its peak. Since that time it has been decreasing at an ever increasing rate. Each year the decrease in the number of 18-21 year olds in the United States is greater. By 1992, it is expected to be four million less than it was in 1979. This presents a serious problem for an educational institution such as Calvin; fewer students means fewer tuition dollars, fewer programs, and the possibility of less external support. The effects of this demographic depression could be especially harsh for Calvin because it has traditionally served a clientele composed chiefly of 18-21 year olds and because the decrease in their numbers will be even greater than the national average in Michigan and in the CRC, usually the two primary sources of Calvin’s students. If Calvin continues to work as hard as it is but does not take concrete steps to increase the number of students here, Calvin’s 1991-92 enrollment could be as low as 2,800 as compared to 4,025 in 1979-80.

Several other factors are also affecting Calvin’s enrollment, such as a possible weakening of the commitment in the Reformed community to a Reformed higher education and a growing emphasis, instead, on pre-professional training; a growing concern that Calvin is less affordable than it once was; concern about the government cutbacks in aid which the media may have blown out of proportion; and increased competition between schools, especially the Reformed schools, since they appeal largely to the same audience (though these five schools have agreed to minimize overt competition). Further complicating the matter, the economic recession and the resultant need to trim budgets will limit the measures Calvin can take to increase its enrollment.

Fortunately, however, there are some things that Calvin can do and is doing to ameliorate this situation. For instance, Calvin has been stepping up its recruitment work in order to attract more students. Since 1971 Calvin has taken a more aggressive approach in making itself known to evangelical Christians of all denominations. A decrease in the number of CRC students has made it possible to invite increasingly larger numbers of non-CRC students. It is also trying to attract more minority and Canadian students. And recruitment publications have been promoting Calvin’s growing commitment to liberal-arts-based professional programs, hoping to appeal to students who are interested in a particular profession but who also want a Christian education.

Calvin has the facilities, but people need to be made aware that they exist. It is hoped that the Times Guide’s recommendation of Calvin will help serve this purpose; it seems to be reaching people who have never heard of Calvin and those who have heard of Calvin but were unsure of its quality.

Calvin is also considering adding new programs to its curriculum to attract students who might otherwise not have come here because Calvin did not offer what interested them. Ideally these new courses would be taught by present staff members and would be self-supporting. Other programs which are currently offered but which are not self-supporting may be offered in conjunction with other institutions.

Calvin is presently studying the feasibility of expanding into Adult and Continuing Education. This would attract many people who have either never gone to college, have gone but never graduated, or have graduated but need to further their education. These students would be integrated into the regular system as much as possible, but because many of these students will also be working full time, alternative night-time and weekend courses would have to be offered.

Calvin is also working on increasing its retention rate: that is, decreasing the number of students who do not return from one year to the next. Many students leave for reasons Calvin cannot influence: they never meant to graduate; their program must be completed elsewhere; or they simply decide that college is not for them. But there are a number of ways of keeping students here who might otherwise have left.

The Academic Support Program, which was begun about five years ago, serves in this capacity. Although its primary objective is not to keep students here at all costs but is to help poor students become better students, hopefully poor students who do better will be more likely to stay.

A second major development which will hopefully improve the retention rate is the improvement of the academic counseling system. Both faculty and students were becoming increasingly frustrated with the present counseling program. On the advice of the Ad Hoc Committee on Academic Advising, the President has decided to appoint a Director of Academic Advising. A direct correlation has been found between a student's perceptions of how interested his professors are in him and his likelihood of staying here. Thus, improving the counseling program is expected to increase retention. The new Director of Academic Advising will also be responsible for developing an early alert system for potential dropouts and for establishing a team of retention counselors to which potential dropouts will be assigned.²

Now that Calvin has finished construction of its buildings, it is in a unique position to be able to increase the amount of money directed towards financial aid and scholarships, and will be able to replace the money that the State and Federal governments have stopped allocating to students. This will not make it necessary for as many students to drop out for financial reasons.

Certainly the next decade will be a difficult one for Calvin. It will be walking a narrow tightrope between increasing its enrollment and lowering its budget. But Calvin seems to be in a particularly good position to weather this dry spell. It has concrete plans for development geared to increasing the enrollment, has no significant outstanding debts, and has an alumni and the CRC denomination behind it, firmly committed to keeping Calvin running. In fact, if all goes well and if Calvin is able to develop its curriculum and expand its recruitment program effectively, its 1988 enrollment could even be as high as 3,780, approximately its current level.

But it will be a difficult job. And Calvin will have to be prepared for the change that will come. There will be fewer CRC students, more minority students, and more returning "adult" students. The new student body will have different needs, and almost certainly, different viewpoints. And the curriculum changes will bring shifts in the number of students enrolled in each department. Calvin will have to learn to grow with its students.

Therefore, the coming decade looks relatively good for Calvin. Many other colleges and universities are going into this decade with huge debts, fewer students, and little outside support. Many will not make it.

Within our own circle of Reformed colleges, it is uncertain if there are any who will not survive the decade. The Redeemer College in Burlington Ontario is young but has a great deal of support among Ontario Christian Reformed Churches. And the King's College in Alberta is just coming through a period of serious financial difficulties. According to its President, Sidney DeWaal, the next six months will be difficult, but there is no danger of King's having to close. As for Calvin, as Vice President Vande Guchte told Dialogue, "We don't know what the Lord has in store. It may be 3,000 students. So be it. Calvin has been blessed with tremendous resources, and it is our job to take these resources God has given us and to make them of service to young people and old people. That—and not fighting an enrollment decrease—is our job. We can be at peace with what the future holds because we are here to be of service."

² Faculty Memorandum from Provost Peter A. DeVos, 5 January 1983; re: Director of Academic Advising Position Description (Tentative), pp. 2.
Edouard Manet's "Le Dejeuner sur l'Herbe (Luncheon on the Grass)" was and is a startling painting: a matter-of-fact young woman has inexplicably and shamelessly removed her clothing while a pair of fully clothed young men lounge indifferently beside her and another young woman, draped in a chemise, bathes in a pool just beyond. Imagine the shock this produced on a convention-ridden public!

The public expected an artist, especially in a picture of "Le Dejeuner"'s dimensions, to show how closely he could approximate the perfection of the academic formula. Not picturesque according to the standards of the day, not historical, and not anecdotal, "Le Dejeuner" seemed unexplainable except as a work of an incompetent or a prankster. However, the painting actually is an adaptation in contemporary dress of the venerable tradition of demonstration paintings, showing figures in a landscape—a synthesis of nudes, nature and still life as an exhibition of skill. But Manet's painting differs from typical demonstration painting in that it does not have even the thinnest disguise of allegory or idealization. By refusing to idealize the figures or to minimize the contemporary character he offended many and received much ridicule.

"Le Dejeuner" is, in fact, a re-interpretation of the subject of Giorgione (a 16th century Italian artist) painting "La Fete Champetre" in terms of real sunlight and atmosphere and consideration of the problem of the place of the nude in the realist's paintings of modern life. Through this re-interpretation, Manet negates the classic "La Fete Champetre" and everything it stood for. Giorgione, though he put two nude women in the company of two musicians dressed in Renaissance costume, had done so on the strength of a Greek fable. Manet, on the other hand, deliberately set both theme and pose in a contemporary context, ignoring their mythological origin. By doing so, he broke with the past and laid foundations for a new order in painting.

The public and critics responded to "Le Dejeuner" by referring to the painting as a shameful sore not worth exhibiting, as displaying doubtful morality, and as a painting by a vulgar man who paints nudes that are inevitably indecent. Today, in comparison, it is more common to recognize that the bland impersonal treatment of the nude denies any element of seduction. The sensuality of the figure is the sensuality of paint, not of woman.

Thus, Manet's "Le Dejeuner sur l'Herbe" is a realist, straightforward portrayal of un-idealized subjects of his own time, concentrating on a reality that is much less comforting than the romanticists and is a complete rejection of a certain type of aesthetic that had existed since the Renaissance.
M— — —
I hear you just made life
with a weak strand of hair
to which you cling.
I hear you almost
lost your grip
and tumbled into nothingness.
I hear you now
climbed up to the follicle
and have your bearing.
But is it true
a careless comb
could knock you out of place?

—Solange Claudette