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dialogue
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Editorial

On Friday, March 4, Chimes published its now infamous “censored” issue. Despite attempts by Calvin's security department to confiscate the copies, a highly organized Chimes team managed to smuggle them onto campus and distribute them. Many students were uncertain as to what all the fuss was actually about. Others, who knew more, quickly took pro or con stances, and the issue was hotly debated for many days. But now three weeks have passed and perhaps it is time to examine what happened behind the scenes and what was really right and wrong with the editorial and the accompanying letters and articles printed in that issue. The purpose of this present editorial is not to attack individuals, but is to clarify what actually happened and why it happened. I have always highly regarded the individuals on the former Chimes staff and shall continue to do so. I offer the following only to clear the air and lay the issue to rest once and for all.

The dismissal of a Chimes staff is a very severe measure and has only occurred several times in Chimes' seventy-five-year history. It would not do to simply let the matter fade into the oblivion of apathy with so many questions left unanswered. The President's letter cleared the air over questions of the chaplaincy and the administration's role in the controversy. But many questions still linger as to why the Communications Board chose to “censor” the editorials, article, and letter. When the matter was brought before the Comm. Board on Wednesday, March 2, the debate centered on the propriety of a Chimes editorial discussing or even alluding to this case in any way. There were several reasons for not wanting it to do so: first, the college had promised the parties involved that it would protect their careers and reputations by protecting this case from the public eye; second, there was no factual evidence that there had ever been a breach of confidence; third, the express purpose of this editorial was to call the administration to come clean on whether or not there had been a breach of confidence, and the administration could not do that without revealing certain sensitive facts of the case; and finally, it was likely that even indirect allusions to this case would perpetuate rumors. Thus, Comm. Board felt that it could not allow anything about the case to be printed.

The question then remained: what about the issue of the Chaplain's role as both pastor and administrator? The Comm. Board felt that this was a very valid issue and ought, in fact, to be addressed. But could the issue be discussed any longer without the secrecy of the case being endangered? The allusive notice that Chimes had published in place of an editorial on Feb. 25 had tied the issue of the Chaplaincy in general to this particular case and alleged breach in confidence. Thus, the Comm. Board decided that it was now impossible for Chimes to deal with the matter sensitively and without forcing the college to break its own confidences. As the publishing board of Chimes, it insisted that neither the issue nor the case be dealt with in any way.

The Comm. Board also felt that this sort of editorial would set a precedent for trial by the public press; would, henceforth, every rumor receive editorial space, and would every person implicated by rumor be judged in print before a fair and impartial investigation could be conducted? Was this the type of power that one would wish to invest in any newspaper, such as Chimes?

By going ahead with publishing the editorials of the March 4 issue, Chimes rejected the office and authority of the Comm. Board. Comm. Board—and not the editor—is the publisher of Chimes. They are ultimately responsible for what is printed. All editors have publishers behind them who have authority over them, and who, in certain instances, may exercise that authority. No editor, least of all an editor of a student newspaper, has the right to print whatever he wants, especially if it will hurt other people. Editors, even student editors, are certainly given great freedoms, but every freedom
has limits and every freedom entails a responsibility to exercise that freedom without unnecessarily hurting others. Thus, the controversy was not so much one of freedom of speech, of censorship, or of administration versus students as it was a disagreement between editor and publisher.

Chimes seemed to be reacting to the Comm. Board's authority with an attitude of, "The administration is out to get us! They're trying to hide something!" What Chimes forgot, however, was that Comm. Board is made up of more students than faculty, has no administrative representatives on it, and that in fact, there was something to hide—something very worthwhile hiding (though perhaps protect is a better word). Not all secrets need to be revealed; some dirty laundry is best not aired.

In addition to the previous criticisms Comm. Board felt that there were some structural problems with the editorial itself which played games with the presentation of the situation. In the editorial, the writers claim that "we cannot nor do we intend to, determine the guilt of anyone .... " and "we do not know the truth or falsehood of these rumors which implicate our counselors," yet in several instances, they clearly presume that the Chaplain is guilty. The first instance comes in the first half of the thesis sentence—thus they have begun the editorial with an assertion of guilt, and as part of its thesis, it must be considered as one of the main arguments of the editorial. They say, "Although most of what we have heard and even substantiated is to be kept confidential, it does suggest that the counseling services offered by Calvin's chaplaincy may be unsafe for private concerns (italics added). The chaplaincy has been tried and found guilty before the topic is even brought up. The second assertion of guilt comes later when they say, "One must not be too quick to place the blame for the breakdown of the counseling system on the college chaplains." What breakdown? That had not been proven yet either in the editorial or in actuality. The writers simply assume it to be true.

And the editorial brings a number of subtle accusations against the administration by means of seemingly innocent questions. Questions such as "Why all the clandestine operations?" do not require substantiation because they are questions; yet they imply that there were, indeed, clandestine operations. Other questions such as "Could it be that appeals to confidentiality could be hiding an actual breach of confidence?" seem to beg an affirmative answer.

The editorial, itself, admits that it deals with "rumor, innuendo, and scuttle-butt," and admits that "imaginations continued to burn." However, it is neither rumor, innuendo, scuttle-butt, nor burning imaginations, but hard, factual, responsible reporting that is needed in such a delicate issue. Yet there is not a single shred of documentation or verification given in the piece.

Thus the Chimes's claim to be defying the Comm. Board for the sake of presenting the truth for the good of the community was an illusion—they did not even come close to presenting the truth, and it was not for the good of the community (at least in the way in which it was done). What may have been well-intentioned turned out to be a destructive mistake.

—Ed Nyman
Green Pepper

I was drawn to the supermarket today; to the fresh produce section. And the strange force pulling me came to an abrupt halt in front of a myriad of green peppers. They lay luscious and sensual in their taught emerald skins, crying out to be touched by a gentle fingertip such as my own. My fingers slowly spread, my arm extended.

The initial contact was cool and smooth as my bent appendages curled about the yielding vegetable. I brought the pepper close to my face and brushed my lips against its curving side. I slowly rubbed it against my cheek, slid it down my neck, until.

All the housewives in their bulging polyester dresses and eyes turned as if I had lost my mind. And instead of quickly dropping the fresh culprit and inconspicuously exiting from the store; I turned to them and deliberately let my tongue glide slowly around the forest colored friend until suddenly I bit it, broke out into a smile and marched away. Their mouths all gaped mechanically, exposing fat pink tongues and black hollow tunnels leading to distended stomachs.

The same force leading me to the store drew me away; laughing. A tiny piece of food tickled my insides as I drove home.

—Solange Claudette
The Role of Women in the CRC

—Dr. Louis Vos

The following series of articles discusses the future of the Christian Reformed Church. At the present time there are a number of issues which are creating a great deal of controversy within the denomination. Dialogue asked a number of people to examine these issues in light of their possible or probable effect on the CRC in the future. The articles are necessarily speculative and present the opinions of the authors themselves. Nonetheless, each article presents a provocative critique of the situation.

The fifth article in the series discusses the relationship between the CRC and her mother church, the Gereformeerde Kerk Nederland (GKN). It examines the current situation in that denomination and the accusations by portions of the CRC, and others, that it has become too liberal, especially following its controversial stand on toleration for homosexuals.

Each of the five authors were chosen for their familiarity with the topic and their accessibility to the editors. And in each case, the authors are responding to questions posed by the editors.

"Fools rush in where angels fear to tread." It is with some trepidation that I respond to your question about the impact that the "Women in Church Office" issue will have on the Christian Reformed Church (hereafter, CRC). That puts me on the side of the angels, I guess. But, I'm going to respond anyway and history will probably prove that I belong on the other side.

Dialogue: Regardless of whether or not it ought to be, the day seems to be coming when women may be ordained as deacons, elders, and possibly even as ministers. Assuming that this will inevitably happen, what impact do you feel this will have on the CRC and how will the members receive it?

Vos: Your question contains an interesting assumption—and I think that many CRC members would agree with it. However, the "inevitable" inclusion of women in the offices of the CRC may and will be viewed from at least two different perspectives. Some CRC members may view this as "inevitable" with a great deal of dismay and sorrow. They see the CRC as moving away from its traditional positions and its Biblical foundations. Consequently they will do whatever is in their power to prohibit or stall the inevitable. Other CRC members may view the inclusion of women in the CRC offices as inevitable because from their perspective it is the only right, just, and biblically oriented position to take in this 20th
If the CRC were an homogenous group your question would be easier to answer. The fact is, however, that the CRC is not an homogenous denomination and therefore the reactions would be varied, diverse and even polarizing. Some CRC members will be rejoicing while others will be sorrowing. To some it will signal progress and hope, to others it will be a sure sign of changes and decay. Perhaps we will learn to live together in the unity of our faith with the divergencies of our practices. Perhaps we will learn to recognize that we can be confessionally reformed without being consistently uniform. (We have learned that with regard to the member churches of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod of which we are a member. About one-fifth of the denominations represented in the Reformed Ecumenical Synod have welcomed women into one or all of the offices in the church.)

Dialogue: Will there then merely be a shuffling of membership so that like-minded individuals may join together in congregations?

Vos: As a matter of fact this has already happened and I assume that it will continue to happen wherever there are multiple congregations in close proximity. The problem, however, is bigger than the individual congregation and in this sense the issue of women serving in the church offices is different from the issue of women voting in the congregational meetings. The issue of women's suffrage in the CRC congregations is more a congregational matter—even though the CRC Synod declared that all professing women have the right to vote in the congregational meetings. But regarding women preachers, it is true that the congregations have the right to put whomever they wish on their slate of candidates for preacher, and congregations would have the right to call a female preacher if that were their desire.

Preachers and also elders, however, serve in a broader capacity than just the local congregation. Pastors and elders serve as delegates to classis and synod. I'm sure that there would be a rather unpleasant and tense scene if a female pastor from one church was delegated to classis meetings or to synod when most of the other delegates would not approve of her ordination. Some synodical delegates in the past were displeased that women were appointed to serve on the study committees to study this issue. It was said on the floor of synod, "We need an unbiased committee." And some synodical delegates were very upset two years ago when one female study committee member was given the floor to represent one of the positions of the synodical study committee. So you can see, I think, that there is some difference between allowing women to vote in the congregational meeting and allowing congregations to have female elders and ministers. The shuffling of members to the more like-minded congregations is no escape from nor solution for the broader problem.

Dialogue: Could we survive as a denomination if some congregations did ordain women and others did not? Or would it cause a split in our denomination?

Vos: We could survive only with a heightened sense of toleration and charity. We will need the type of toleration toward each other that we presently exercise toward our sister reformed denominations in the Reformed Ecumenical Synod which invite women to participate in one or more of the offices. We will have to recapture the distinction that John Calvin made between essential doctrines which bind the true church together and nonessential matters which should in no way be the basis of schism of Christians.

However, having said that, I would be fearful of a split in the CRC if women were ordained in the three offices. I think that some con-

Let's not minimize the disastrous impact that the refusal to ordain women...would have on the church.
The continual denial of women to the offices in the CRC will result—as it already has—in an exodus of a considerable number of members to other denominations.
How will the whole question of the interpretation of Genesis affect the CRC? Will this also be cause for another split? Is the existence of M.A.R.S. an omen of such a coming split? Can the "liberal" and the "conservative" elements in the CRC side by side for much longer?

The future of the CRC is of concern to all who are members of that fellowship, but there are others, too, who are watching with considerable interest. Some persons have thought about joining us, and certain denominations have been in conversation with us with a view to a possible merger. Some of these conversations have ground to a halt, and we are at a stage where little more happens than that we are staring at one another. Most of this is so because many are raising the question: "In what direction is the CRC going?" That the CRC is different than it was thirty years ago few would care to deny. But what is debated among us is whether the change is a good one.

Let me begin with some disclaimers. I don't keep a well-polished crystal ball. My reflections are usually in the area of what ought to be rather than speculating on what will be. Be that as it may, I am willing to hazard some "if . . . then" statements, and I invite you to pass judgment on my logic. If my "if . . . then" statements hold water, then possibly we can agree on what ought to be and then we can work at it in a united way.

You pose a double question. "How will the question of the interpretation of (the first chapters of) Genesis affect the CRC?" and "Will this be cause for a split?" Let's try some "if . . . then" statements.

If the church successfully resists the temptation of making an idol of literalism then there will be a generous measure of tolerance for one another's position as we wrestle with the meaning and intent of those powerful, and yet mysterious, first chapters of Genesis.

If the church can recognize that this insistence on literal interpretation is a relatively recent phenomenon and the result of the modern mind, then there is real hope that a temperate climate of tolerance will develop and with it a willingness to learn from each other, and listening to the saints of old.

If the church recognizes that the Bible speaks to us not only in an intellectual way, but also emotionally and volitionally, then we will recognize that our task is not to ask, "How may the Bible be restated in a propositional way?" but rather to ask "How does it help me in my loyalty to God?" When we address ourselves to the latter question we will develop a spirit of dependence upon and affinity with others. The Bible does address our emotions. This should be clear from the fact that the Scriptures do not say that God is Mind, but they do say, God is
love. This should be a clue to the heart of the Bible's message.

If the church recognizes that our faithfulness in ministering to the masses of mankind will be of the things for which we will have to give account at the Day of Judgment, (Matthew 25) then we will be drawn to others rather than withdrawn from them. Surely we don't think that we can handle the problems of hunger, abortion, war, injustices, etc. by ourselves, do we? If we recognize that we must cooperate with other Christians in dealing with such problems, then the matter of splitting among ourselves becomes unthinkable. Schism is permitted only when the church is clearly apostate. By apostacy we understand a rejection of Christ as God and Savior. I haven't heard a whisper of this in the CRC.

You pose another doublet of questions: "Is the existence of the Mid-American Reformed Seminary an omen of such a coming split?" and "How must we interpret the coming of M.A.R.S.?"

To your first question I would say, not necessarily. If some members of the CRC feel that Calvin Seminary does not satisfy the total needs of a trained ministry as they perceive it, then surely we do not have the right to suspect them of schism. On both sides of the Atlantic denominations have more than one seminary, and although one segment of the church may express itself as favoring one seminary over another that does not mean two seminaries will foster a split in the church. The freedom for varied interpretations of the Scriptures that I was pleading for above must also be granted to the founders of M.A.R.S. It may be of value to see that there are two different "minds" in the supporters of the two seminaries. Those who support M.A.R.S. seem to espouse a "resist the world" attitude, while those who support Calvin Seminary seem to advance a "minister to the world" attitude. Both of these emphases have their strengths and weaknesses. The former have a strong sense of identity; they know who they are! They belong to the church. They feel themselves very much in the citadel of the church. Sometimes they voice concern about our friends and relatives who feel they are more at the periphery of the church, and their main concern is to draw them into the citadel. But eventually life in the citadel becomes sweaty and smelly, and in-fighting is not uncommon. On the other hand, the latter, i.e., those who want to minister to the world rather than oppose the word, often do have an identity crisis. In their empathy with the world they can easily become part of the world. And yet if the church does not minister to the world it is doubtful that it may really be called the church. The church is like a hospital; if it keeps out the sick and needy it is more like a fenced-off country club than a hospital. If it takes in the sick it runs the risk of being exposed to communicable diseases, but that risk it must take. The M.A.R.S. group is very concerned about those communicable diseases; possibly their role is to help the church keep those communicable diseases contained in an isolation ward.

Your last question is possibly the most difficult to answer. How must we interpret the coming of M.A.R.S.?

Is the existence of the Mid-American Reformed Seminary an omen of such a coming split?

Some have responded to the new seminary much too negatively. Especially those of us who have emotional ties with Calvin Seminary can easily be put on the defensive. Admittedly some of the early comments floating about (were they rumors?) could be interpreted as an attack on Calvin Seminary, but the comments are much less shrill now and we must look for a way to live together in peace and harmony. Calvin has admittedly developed in a direction that to me looks like a "minister to the world" emphasis. The number of courses in counseling, urban evangelism, etc., point in that direction. Probably we need voices—well-articulated voices—to warn us about being co-opted by the mind of the world. But the mind of the "citadel" must also be challenged. It was this mind which looked for the one and only correct interpretation of a passage of Scripture, the one and only correct formulation of doctrine, and then heralded that formulation as the one and only formulation to be proclaimed (denouncing all other views, whether they were Lutheran, Baptist, charismatic, or whatever, as simply wrong, with the implication that one must have nothing to do with "them people"). Such preaching the church often considers good preaching. Admittedly, Calvin Seminary products are less "good at it" than preachers of another era. Many members are hungry for the type of preaching of that earlier era. It gave them a sense of security (and maybe pride) that their church was the true church. Calvin Seminary products are more apt to ask their hearers whether they are faithful members or the one body of Christ. Calvin Seminary students, as I hear them, may not be hammering on what is so distinctly reformed, but I am impressed by their vision of commitment to the call of the kingdom as it applies to all areas of life.
Since mid-century, the CRC has learned to see itself as an international family of churches. Even earlier, since the beginnings of the century, some were vaguely aware of a handful of scattered congregations located north of the border. Over the past three decades, however, the Canadian branch has come on strong. Membership-wise, the American/Canadian ratio now stands at three to one. Daily interchange is a reality of church life. The denominational building (also known endearingly as "the Pentagon" or "the Vatican") symbolizes our international stance: there on the front lawn the "maple leaf" and the "stars and stripes" flutter side by side in the breeze. How do Canadian and American wings on the CRC relate to each other? That is my assigned topic, captured in the following questions:

1) What differences in emphasis do you see between the Canadian and American branches of the Reformed community? 2) Does the Canadian council of CRC's represent an expression of dissatisfaction with their southern neighbours (or neighbors)? 3) What is your prognosis for future relationships between the CRC in Canada and the USA?

I shall call the shots as I see them—briefly and in the above order.

Back in the late fifties and early sixties such questions elicited vigorous debate. The atmosphere nowadays is more subdued. It may be appropriate to point out, however, that while the dust has settled on those earlier skirmishes, many of the issues are, in large measure, still with us.

First, the differences. Recognizing that concrete truth often gets lost in generalities, it is yet safe to say, I think, that the Canadian sector understands the inner workings of the American sector better than the other way around. In accounting for this, certain factors come readily to mind. Northern CRC's, moreover, are more self-consciously aware of the challenges presented by their Canadian environment than their southern counterparts are of their own. They, therefore, possess a stronger sense of national identity and calling, as well as international sensitivity.

Our Canadian community also sustains closer links with our common heritage rooted in the Reformed tradition coming up out of the Netherlands. This reflects itself, among other ways, in preaching.

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1 With apologies for the ambiguity involved in the idea of "American."
Our Canadian pulpits draw more heavily upon the exegetical and theological genius of Reformed thinkers such as Bavinck, Kuyper, Holwerda, Schilder, Ridderbos, and Berkouwer. The faith-life of the congregations is, therefore, more consistently shaped by a Biblical world-and-life view. This results in a greater emphasis upon Christian organizations as vehicles for a Christian presence and witness in society. In urban centers, moreover, Canadian CRC’s work together more closely on common projects bridging congregational lines.

There are signs, however, for better and/or for worse, that the differences are fading. We face a common overwhelming foe: the tidal wave of modern secularism. American CRC’s, because of long-standing pietist tendencies, may be somewhat less susceptible to this danger. Canadian CRC’s, because of their larger cultural vision, may be more susceptible. Yet we are in it together.

There is, moreover, a growing pattern of cross-overs. A sprinkling of American CRC’s opt for service in Canada. Meanwhile, in the offices at Kalamazoo Avenue and Twenty-Eighth Street we meet Kuyvenhoven, Hart, Tamminga, and Borgdorff.

Second, the Canadian Council. Reformed church policy has always allowed for regional synods as intermediary bodies between classes and general synod—as in the RCA. At one time the CRC as a whole considered moving in this direction. The Canadian churches have acted upon this idea, organizing eight classes into an all-Canada council. The basic motivation was not dissatisfaction with or protest against any particular situation south of the border. It was born rather out of recognition that as Canadian churches they live and move and have their being in Canada, just as the converse is true of American churches. National identity does matter in church life. If a body of churches is to proclaim a gospel effectively in its fullness to the social-economic-political world in which it resides, and is to address the government on matters of common concern, then it must have a consolidated forum for doing so.

At present the Canadian Council is struggling with a very ambitious agenda. A clear consensus has not yet emerged. At stake is the proper task and limited authority of the church. Some call for a “maximalist,” others for a “minimalist” approach to bringing the gospel to bear upon societal issues.

Third, a prognosis. Any Quebecois-like spirit of separatism, occasionally expressed in the past on both sides of the border, is now dead. Our quarter-century ecclesiastical courtship has issued in a pretty solid bi-unitary marriage. Yet, just as we must reckon with plurality on each side of the border, so we must also respect the honest pluralities which straddle the border. Whether we spell it “labour” or “labor,” we must work at it, that is, at unity without uniformity. For pressing the latter will surely destroy the former.

This has significant implications for the educational ministry of the church, for curriculum development in Christian education (fortunately the “National” in NUCS has made way for the “International” in CSI), and for across-the-border college relations in matters of curriculum, degree granting, student recruitment, faculty exchange, and credit transfer. We must not allow the border to degenerate into a latter-day Mason-Dixon Line. Nevertheless, within a pattern of free-flowing, two-way traffic, we do well to accentuate the positive qualities of bi-lateral diversity which help to make us what we are. As a parting shot, going rather far out on the limb, and from that precarious perch sending up a trial balloon, let me suggest provocatively, that I think there is probably more justification for developing a program of theological education oriented strongly toward the Canadian scene than for a second seminary south of the border...
What do you see as the future of the liberal, Pietist, Kuyperian, and Neo-Kuyperian strains in the CRC (according to C. Boomsma's categories, *The Banner*, Jan.-Feb. 1973)? Will they learn to work together? Or will they continue to co-exist in mutual dissatisfaction? Will any become dominant in the future?

Being labeled is frustrating, but it is difficult to avoid using categories while attempting to impose an orderly analysis upon cultural developments. Consequently those who have analyzed the past and recent character of the Christian Reformed Church have identified its "minds" with a varied nomenclature. Doctrinal Pietist, Pietist, Kuyperian, Separatist Calvinist, American Calvinist, and Confessional Reformed are some of the labels, and along the way scholars have pointed to sub-groups within the several categories together with larger distinctions based on regional and national boundaries. Frequently those who "get labelled" are not pleased with the boxes into which they have been stuffed. And they have a legitimate gripe because the gathered components of mind-making are far more eclectic, overlapping, and transitional than labeling permits.

My mother, for example, would seem to have perfectly represented the example of a Pietist who became increasingly Americanized by the contours of fundamentalism. She was a teatotaller and a regular subscriber to the *Moody Monthly* magazine. Her most cherished sermons were delivered by Charles F. Fuller of the "Old Fashioned Revival Hour" together with those of Harry Ironsides and Herbert Lockyear Jr.—both regular preachers on the Chicago airwaves of WMBI. But, among the few books which I inherited from her were a well-thumbed Scofield Bible and Abraham Kuyper's *Implications of Public Confession*. They seem incompatible—Scofield and Kuyper—and no doubt they are, but they were assimilated into my mother's pious perceptions with no observable tensions. A quick reading of Kuyper's book explains the matter. *Implications of Public Confession* urges pious thinking, feeling, and conduct, and when you add this volume to Kuyper's meditations (*To Be Near Unto God*), Kuyper himself can be considered a Pietist. Combine Kuyper's *Stone Lectures* with the meditations and a more complex Kuyper emerges—a Kuyper who defies labels.

Indeed, if the Kuyperians, Pietists and doctrinalists had conformed rigidly to the labels with which we have identified them, the CRC would have fragmented hopelessly long ago. At the turn of the century, when the Kuyperian Neo-Calvinists clashed with the denomination's doctrinal Pietist founders, both sides adjusted the angle of their vision to accommodate new and traditional perceptions. And actually a rather convincing case can be made for the view that the CRC has assimilated more variety than it has rejected. Even at its inception in 1857 it was more German than Dutch in ethnic composition. Furthermore the provincial variety which it embraced (from Frisians to Zeelanders) incorporated widely varied dialects and social patterns.
Then while the CRC's founders rejected unification with the RCA they also attracted and absorbed a significant contingent of double-predestinationists who had been meeting in separate conventicles prior to 1857. By the 1890's the denomination altered its identity to incorporate a number of Iowa Germans who sang both Hymns and Psalms while having little interest in the Christian Day school movement. So, if tradition carries any predictive capacity, it is easy to imagine that the CRC will adjust to its bi-national status and tolerate some variety of internal directions.

Of course the denomination's assimilative capacity has limits, for neither the CRC's tradition nor current composition will admit the views of the rationalist Enlightenment, and they are not evident in the denomination today. For despite the cries of "wolf" in some quarters of the denomination there are no liberal pastors in the CRC. Nowhere do we hear that Biblical truth must pass the test of human reason or that Christ was merely an exemplary teacher who, like Socrates and Ghandi, should inspire emulation. Instead we hear from all sides of the church that Christ is the divine Son of the Triune God and that Scripture is the inspired Word of God. The evidence suggests that the church historian Sidney Ahlstrom correctly assessed the CRC when he declared that it had probably, "become the country's most solid and dignified bastion of conservative Reformed doctrine and discipline."

Can we survive our differences—our various "minds" and regional idiosyncrasies? Why, of course, yes! Which groups then will dominate? Probably none that we now recognize but some comfortable blending of them all. That, at least, is what our past suggests.

(The Mother Church: In Mid-life Crisis?)

—Arie Nijman

Dialogue: For some time now, because of rumor of various events and opinions in the Gereformeerde Kerken der Nederland (GKN), the North American churches have accused their European mother churches of being too liberal. Assuming for the moment that the North American Churches' standards of what constitutes liberalism are correct, do these accusations have any basis in fact? Do these events and opinions exist within the church? Are these accusations more true for certain parts of the country?

Nijman: Assuming that these opinions may be described as liberal, then indeed I think the North American churches have a basis for their view of the GKN. However, I cannot designate certain parts of our church as being more or less liberal, according to social characteristics such as domicile, age, or education. A small number of members who have problems with the growing "liberalism" have organized, expressing objections similar to those of the North American churches. Yet, I do not believe that this "liberality" guides our church. As an average church member I believe that our church is still guided by the Gospel of Jesus Christ. But I do feel that there is more liberality in interpretation in our church.

Dialogue: What influence have Kuitert and Gott Met Ons (a controversial document on biblical interpretation) had and what influence do you think they will have on the Dutch church?

Nijman: The influence of Kuitert himself is more limited than is supposed in your church I think. Kuitert and several other European theologians belong to a new school of theological thinking. This school has a certain influence in the European churches—for instance in the Roman Catholic Church.

The report "God met Ons" will have a great influence on the GKN. For example, in our congregation it is a subject of discussion in dialogue-groups. Thus it is discussed on a grass roots level, but not without criticism. Such a discussion is not yet reserved for the modern theology.

Dialogue: What are some of the influences that led to the GKN's stand on homosexuality?

Nijman: I think that the influences that led to the discussion about homosexuality came mainly from outside the churches. The revolution in social standards after World War II did not leave our churches untouched. The so-called sexual revolution, right or wrong, has shown the Dutch and the North American churches that they have pastorally neglected a large number of brothers and sisters who have a homosexual disposition. The Synod of the CRC (1973 I think) and the Synod of the GKN (1979 and 1980),...
have passed sentences. My conclusion is that our Synod has not yet taken a firm stand. After all, there are a lot more things in heaven and earth to meditate on.

Dialogue: What was the reaction to this stand on a grass roots level, by the people in individual congregations? Was there general agreement with the GKN synod’s stand or was there sharp disagreement?

Nijman: There is still discussion of the homosexuality issue in the congregations. This has met with difficulty, but I trust we will be guided by the Gospel, and God’s Holy Spirit. The same discussion will take place on the level of congregations as in the Synod. In the future, the congregations will not be disposed to accept any statement off-hand. On the one hand we are afraid of judgments and on the other hand we, indeed, realize the danger of too much toleration. For that reason we are time and again Gereformeerd.

Dialogue: What has been the GKN’s reaction to the criticism of North American Reformed churches on this stand? Will it have any effect on their decision?

Nijman: First, I must say that the criticism of the North American churches on this point has hardly penetrated our church. Many of us who have relations in the CRC know by experience that the subject is difficult to discuss, either because of the statement of your Synod disagreeing with the GKN stand, or because our opinions about the issue are suspect. Regrettably, this disrupts fellowship between our churches. I expect that the stand on the Synod of the CRC and her arguments, will be studied intensively and that they will play an important part in our discussions. But I must expect that the question will be first asked, what is the Gospel teaching us, and then the views of other churches will be examined. I know that our Synod has raised some critical responses to the decision of CRC. You must understand that the statement coming from the CRC, in its English translation does not reach the individual member of the GKN. The point of view of the person who translated and gave his comment to the document will easily interfere with the original text. Moreover, I think prepossessed standpoints cloud the issue in discussions within and between churches.

Dialogue: How have congregations such as your own reacted to the Amsterdam church’s recent decision to baptize the infant of a Lesbian couple? Is this a sign of things to come?

Nijman: First: the baptism of a child of an unmarried mother will—under certain conditions—not meet with opposition in our congregations.

Second: we ask ourselves if it is correct to hold a friend (in what relation?) responsible for the baptism and Christian education of the child. (However, the phenomenon of a sponsor at the font without a specific relation to the mother, is not new I think.)

Third: this course of events gives the impression that different forms of community of two people, other than marriage, are accepted by the church on the same level as marriage. That is not on any account true, and I do not expect that to be the case in the future. By the way, it did not happen in Amsterdam and I don’t think that a possible homosexual disposition is the first problem in this case. Personally, I do not agree with what happened.

Dialogue: All of this represents a clear break with past tradition. Has this come about because of an attempt, whether right or wrong, to be more true to scripture, or has it come about simply from a desire to keep up with the times? Explore some of the historical and sociological influences behind this growing “liberalism.”

Nijman: It is clear that many things represent a break with the prevailing tradition. We do not regret that. We have seen in the past that traditions in the church have too often clouded the Gospel. We accused the Roman Catholics of that. Personally, I mentioned in the past that the Gereformeerde tradition has been of greater importance than the Gospel. The historical and sociological influences behind the break with traditions are, perhaps, that it was found that the prevailing systems and statements failed; that people screened themselves behind authorities and shifted responsibility upon others; perhaps also that in the booming prosperity after the war, things were found to be ‘beat up’ and a search after truth followed.

Our Reformed Churches have inherited more than a tradition. That means that there is an attempt to be more true to Scripture. It also means that the modern theology, or some advocates of the modern theology, are not followed without criticism, simply to keep up with the times.

That is, in my opinion, an important inheritance of the Reformation. It is not an attempt to keep up with the times. But we will meet the problems of this time totally from the Gospel of Jesus Christ, our crucified and resurrected Lord.

In het kruis zal 'k eeuwig roemen!
En geen wet zal mij verdoemen;
Christus droeg de vloek voor mij.
Christus is voor mij gestorven,
heeft gêna voor mij verworven!
'k Ben van dood en zonde vrij!

Translation:
I will praise the cross forever!
And no law shall damn me;
Christ was wearing the curse for me
Christ died for me,
Has gained the grace for me!
I am free from death and sin!
And that last is truly and surely.
"All of life." Those three words seem to be the very heart of what it means to be Reformed. They have always been the foundation on which the Reformed tradition in general and Calvin College in particular have been built—to provide a Christian witness in all of life, geared toward the development of a distinctly Christian culture. The idea permeates our thinking, our doctrinal statements, and our writing. The Calvin Liberal Arts Education document, Calvin's primary statement of its educational philosophy, reads,

in the school, we shall have to pursue the implications of the biblical revelation for recreation, for commerce, for politics, for art, for every area of human life. The development of Christian culture will be our ultimate aim [italics added].

Calvin has found that this was not a goal it could reach in one step. Reaching into all of life has been a gradual process. Over the years, Calvin has continued to grow, branching out, seeking to prepare Christians for service in more and more areas of life. Fulfilling the demands of the words all and every in our statements of purpose proves each day to be a greater and greater task; as life grows in complexity and scope if it is to ever fulfill the demands of all and every.

One of these dreams which has, unfortunately, been ignored in the past has been dance. Only now is Calvin making its first hesitant steps to embrace this part of human life.

Historically, dance has always been an integral part of our cultural and artistic expression. For dance is a means of communication; it is an expression of our emotions, our beliefs, our values, our feelings toward life and the world through the use of movement, color, music, rhythm, harmony and discord. Thus, if Calvin truly seeks to address all areas of life and if it seeks to develop a cultural expression of our world-and-life view it must explore dance. The absence of dance leaves a gaping hole in our curriculum and in our witness to the world. It seems inconceivable that a liberal arts curriculum whose purpose it is to develop a Christian cultural expression does not include an art form such as dance.

According to Provost DeVos, however, there is a very good reason why dance has not been considered before. Until recently, the attitude in the Reformed community towards dance has been of such a nature that putting dance in the curriculum was the very farthest thing from anyone's mind. The idea was simply never put forth, and if it had, would most certainly have been unpopular among the constituency. In 1982, however, synod’s dance report urged that:

Colleges which sponsor dances must also accept responsibility for providing leadership and guidance toward an ongoing evaluation of the constantly shifting patterns of contemporary dance and toward the development of new and genuinely Christian dances. Acceptances of such responsibility may well involve the development of courses designed to implement this task.

Thus synod has opened the door in a small way for the possibility of bringing dance into the curriculum. It is still up to the college, however, to swing that door wide.

But, there is still a problem with synod's dance report. Although the report recognizes differences among folk dance, social dances such as ballroom dancing, and modern dances such as disco, the report does not go far enough in giving dance its due as a legitimate art form. The report perpetuates the connection between dance and crowded, sweaty dorm basements, deafening music, and dizzying strobe lights. And while we applaud Calvin's recent efforts to deal with dancing of this type, it must be understood that dance in the curriculum is much different than that found in dorm basements.

Nonetheless, dance may now finally be considered. In fact, this past February, the Board of Trustees urged Calvin to find some way of fulfilling the obligation that synod’s dance report imposes on the college. Thus, the time seems to be right for bringing dance into the curriculum.

The Calvin Dance Guild is in the process of submitting a proposal to Provost DeVos giving a rationale for the inclusion of dance and an outline of a possible curriculum. Dance Guild's own spectacular growth over the past three years from eight members to 130 members is ample testimony that there is interest in creative dancing at Calvin (see October issue of Dialogue).

Provost DeVos told Dialogue that if he found the proposal acceptable he would form a study committee to look into the matter. This committee would have six months to report. If the report was favorable, the proposal would begin a long journey up through the college's internal superstructure, a journey which could, if the report passes every step along the way, bring dance into the curriculum in three to five years.

This door has now at long last been opened. We strongly urge the faculty and administration that they not hesitate to step through it.
Survey I: Results

1. What form of dishonesty do you believe is the most prevalent at Calvin?
   Freshmen: 60% say plagiarism
   Sophomores: 65% say duplication of assignments
   Juniors: 70% say duplication of assignments
   Seniors: 62% say plagiarism

2. How many students at Calvin practice a form of academic dishonesty?
   Freshmen: 90% say 25-50%
   Sophomores: 90% say 25-50%
   Juniors: 90% say 25-50%
   Seniors: 90% say 25-50%

3. What is the primary reason for dishonesty at Calvin?
   Freshmen: 85% say laziness
   Sophomores: 85% say the level of Calvin's difficulty
   Juniors: 75% say the desire to succeed
   Seniors: 75% say parental pressure to excel

4. Have you practiced dishonesty at Calvin?
   Freshmen: 84% say yes (80% of these cheat on tests most often)
   Sophomores: 90% say yes (90% of these plagiarize most often)
   Juniors: 80% say yes (52% of these duplicate assignments most often)
   Seniors: 80% say yes (52% of these plagiarize most often)

5. What do you do when confronted with someone else's dishonesty?
   Freshmen: 95% say they "look the other way"
   Sophomores: 99% say they "look the other way"
   Juniors: 99% say they "look the other way"
   Seniors: 90% say yes

6. Do you believe "looking the other way" is dishonest?
   Freshmen: 99% say no
   Sophomores: 99% say no
   Juniors: 95% say no
   Seniors: 90% say no

7. Do you believe the college adequately controls academic dishonesty?
   Freshmen: 80% say they do not know
   Sophomores: 65% say no
   Juniors: 52% say no
   Seniors: 66% say yes

8. What should be the standard punishment for academic dishonesty?
   Freshmen: 75% say verbal reprimand
   Sophomores: 75% say loss of credit for the work involved
   Juniors: 80% say loss of credit for the work involved
   Seniors: 89% say loss of credit for the work involved

9. Do you think professors can recognize academic dishonesty usually?
   Freshmen: 89% say no
   Sophomores: 90% say no
   Juniors: 77% say no
   Seniors: 75% say no

10. How would you describe the state of academic dishonesty at Calvin?
    Freshmen: 80% say it is a minor problem
        Sophomores: 90% say it is a minor problem
        Juniors: 70% say it is a minor problem
        Seniors: 65% say it is a minor problem

Survey II: Results

1. Whom do you think is primarily responsible for dealing with dishonesty?
   85% say individual professors, but with a college-wide, official policy laid down by the administration and clearly publicized for students and faculty

2. What do you think the primary punishment for academic dishonesty should be?
   92% say no credit for the particular work involved should be given; if the work were a major one, obviously no credit could be given for the course; for these, 60% recommended expulsion for the repeat offender

3. How would you describe the college's present response to dishonesty?
   75% say "inconsistent," usually too lenient

4. What do you think is the primary reason for dishonesty in the classroom?
   80% say the desire to succeed, value of "grades" over education, and undue parental emphasis on GPA

5. What do you feel capable of spotting cheating, other than blatant examples?
   90% say no

6. What is your present means of dealing with academic dishonesty?
   77% say verbal reprimand in combination with a "0" for the work involved

7. How often do you see cheating in your classroom?
   88% say very seldom

8. How would you describe the situation of academic dishonesty at Calvin?
   89% say it is a minor problem

Cheating is the most common in the following departments (in order): Biology, Chemistry, Physics, History, Political Science, Economics, Psychology, Physical Education, Philosophy, Education, English, German, French, Spanish, Computer Science, Mathematics, Engineering, Sociology, Religion & Theology, Speech, Art, Music, and the Classics.
Dishonesty is Academic

—Chris R. VanSomeren

NOTE: The two surveys which serve as "background" for the following article were conducted during February, 1983. The first of the surveys was sent to 200 randomly selected Calvin students. The students were partially chosen on the basis of their sex and grade level, so as to insure an adequately objective sample. Of the 200 who received the survey, over 75 percent responded. Their information is printed in the following tables.

The second of the two surveys was sent to 50 faculty members in all of the college's departments. Of these, 60 percent chose to reply. Their information, too, appears in the following pages.

It is a problem whose frequency has astounded many in the academic community. Parochial and public, community and private, colleges around the country have been shocked into awareness through the means of polls and questionnaires. As one German professor at Calvin said before reading the results of a recent poll, "It is a problem whose outlines are very misty." Sadly, though the outlines of the problem have become less invisible, their materialization has only served to confirm our most horrific dreams: academic dishonesty exists at Calvin and, quite possibly, is more prevalent than ever.

Academic dishonesty is a serious problem at Calvin, as it seems to be at many colleges and universities around the country. Richard Warch, president of Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin, is deeply concerned about the rise of academic dishonesty and writes, "There has been an alarming rise in incidents of cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty in American colleges and universities in recent years. Students have rationalized this behavior by referring to the pressures of a tight job market, tough graduate school admissions standards, and family expectations of achievement. As a result, we face a situation in which academic honesty is not seen as an absolute, but as a relative."

Warch is more accurate than he realizes. Results of the Calvin Academic Dishonesty Poll show that, indeed, a significant number of students are participating in dishonest forms of "education." But Warch's sweeping statements do not tell us much. To fully understand dishonesty on the academic level, to be capable of dealing with it administratively or personally, we must disclose its causes, its advantages, and its practitioners. With this information firmly in mind, Calvin can do something to rid itself of the dishonesty which, it now seems, may be a more common occurrence than was previously suspected.

The first issue, of course, is the prevalence of dishonesty at Calvin. We fully expect to find dishonesty at "those secular universities," but somehow we have faith enough in our Christian institution to imagine it free from this ailment. But as recent figures show, Calvin may be significantly affected by this difficulty. If small numbers of students were practicing dishonesty in the classroom, a slight reason would exist for concern. But when the figures number, as they do, in the eightieth and ninetieth percentile, then our concern must be transformed into outrage, and action becomes absolutely necessary.

Freshmen students admit to practicing academic dishonesty on occasion, with only 16 percent having escaped it altogether. Of these, most cite cheating on tests as their most frequent venture into the realm of the dishonest. Sophomores number even higher, with some 90 percent having practiced dishonesty in their two college years. For them, plagiarism has become the prevalent practice. Juniors and seniors each possess only 20 percent of their numbers who have avoided dishonesty completely. All told, then, over 83 percent of Calvin's present student populace has participated in either duplication of assignments, plagiarism on papers, or cheating on tests.

Such figures, coupled with the other incriminating responses of the 200 students who took part in the poll, leave us without doubt as to the urgency of addressing this issue. If by far the majority of students are practicing dishonesty while still maintaining their beliefs in Christ, then a serious discrepancy exists. As one sophomore put it, "It is a problem which needs attention. If students are earning degrees dishonestly, something must be done. It is definitely unfair and disreputable to those who earn them honestly."

The sorts of dishonesty which occur are also at issue. For some reason, we do not make as much of the casual exchange of assignment information as we do of the plagiarized paper. Something about the two, though we know them both to be offenses, strikes us as being different. The three most common types of dishonesty, at Calvin and at large, are duplication of assignments, cheating on tests, and plagiarism on papers. We view each of these differently and
place them at different levels in our minds. Many professors are even willing to overlook duplication of assignments, while remaining adamant about cheating. This hierarchy of iniquity only serves to cloud the issue. For us, a wrong must be a wrong. This is not to say, of course, that each wrong merits the same punishment, but it does mean that all instances of academic dishonesty must be met with the same moral indignation.

Among the new types of dishonesty on the horizon which are causing academic uproar are those companies who produce term papers on any subject for sale to students. One such company, Research Assistance, has been doing business with Calvin students at regular intervals. Two such students admitted buying two papers each during the course of last semester alone. Chosen from a yearly catalogue provided by the company, the papers are typed, xeroxed, and mailed to the student at the cost of $4.50 per page. An average size paper, then, may cost the student $40. The patrons of this service may be depressed by the quality of the purchased paper, however. One paper, ordered by Dialogue and submitted to a Calvin English professor who was unaware of the paper’s origin, was given a ‘C’ and described as being “riddled with errors in style and mechanics.” This occurs in spite of the company’s promise that “our papers are written by our staff of professional writers, all with advanced degrees and each a specialist in his field.” In spite of these deficiencies, the company continues to thrive.

"Calvin is a very difficult college and sometimes out of a feeling of necessity kids are dishonest."

Perhaps the most fundamental question about academic dishonesty is “Why?” What motivates a student to work dishonestly? The reason cannot be that those who do so are not capable of handling the work without it. When 80 percent and more of a college’s population is involved, the matter of intelligence is one we can put aside. The facts show that even those of high intelligence are occasionally compelled to cheat. But what is it then?

Both students and faculty seem to think that the major reason for it is not one which comes from within the student, such as laziness, but from the student’s parents and peers. The pressure to succeed, the pressure to maintain a GPA, and the pressure to get good grades as opposed to a good education, each unite to drive students into a situation where they compromise their honesty.

But others cite different reasons for the presence of such great amounts of dishonesty, some of whom blame the professors themselves for such rampant cheating. A member of Calvin’s Religion and Theology department feels this way and said, “Academic dishonesty on exams occurs when professors are too lazy to write new ones or to write good essay questions. There would be less plagiarism on papers if more shorter reflection papers were assigned rather than one lengthy term paper on a limited number of topics.”

A further explanation does not incorporate either parental pressure or professional neglect. It says that students cheat by virtue of Calvin’s difficulty. That is, they cheat because they have to do so in order to achieve even satisfactory grades. Those who hold this belief, that the college is maintaining not challenging standards but impossibly high ones, believe that this necessitates academic dishonesty on the part of the students. “Calvin is a very difficult college,” said one senior female, “and sometimes out of a feeling of necessity kids are dishonest. At times, it’s impossible to do all the work. Some professors are very unreasonable in their expectations and this, of course, encourages cheating. It is high time we recognize that.”

Whatever the reason may be, and they are by no means certain, the fact of academic dishonesty remains. One question which occurs to many is, “Why can’t the profs recognize cheating?” This is as difficult a question as any yet posed. The professors of Calvin themselves recognize their inability to ‘spot’ cheating. Ninety percent of them feel they cannot recognize any cheating but the most blatant. This figure is almost as discouraging as the cheating figures themselves. It can be argued, of course, that the students are simply so good at cheating that no one could notice it in them. This belief, however, cannot be substantiated, since there is no evidence suggesting that students are ‘better’ cheaters than ever before. Rather, this inability on the part of Calvin’s professors demonstrates more a problem of will than of intellect. It is not that professors cannot recognize cheating, it is that many of them are not sure they should take the pains required to eradicate it. One professor explains her attitude by saying, “I don’t look for cheating—I trust my students.” This sort of reasoning, however, is ridden with poor logic. A refusal to “look for cheating” is a vote to allow it. To be aware of the possibility of cheating in a classroom does not represent distrust of students, but rather a desire to look out for their general welfare.

If it is a rotten situation that professors do not look for the dishonesty in their classrooms, it is certainly not improved any when they do. For, upon discovering a cheater, plagiarist, or what have you, a professor embarks upon a course of action which is completely his own. He may verbally rebuke the student or he may recommend him for expulsion. Either way, unless the student has had some experience with the professor before, he is not sure about the consequences of cheating in a given course. This reflects a genuine disunity which presently exists in the college’s method of handling dishonesty. Most professors are not sure that an official policy exists, and thus, implement in their classrooms whatever discipline seems proper to them at the moment.

“I think different faculty members have quite different perspectives on dealing with academic dishonesty, just as they have different ways of raising their children. The matter is
an individual one.” This statement by a psychology professor typifies the present situation at Calvin. A professor metes out justice as he happens to conceive of it, leaving students unsure about the consequences of their actions. This encourages these cheaters who happen to have been caught by a “nice” prof to continue in their actions, while simultaneously building the resentment and anger of the student who was caught by a “bad” one. Either way, the inconsistency of college action cannot be appreciated.

All of this information, while interesting, seems only to depress and discourage us. Those of us who practice cheating are only reminded of its shame and those who don’t are properly aghast. But what should be done now that we know? Well, action should be taken, obviously, to stem the flood and prevent future outbreaks of this kind of dishonesty. But the healing of such a wound at Calvin requires not only an active, physical manifestation, but also an inner, spiritual one. We must address the outward problem of dishonesty, while healing the liar himself.

Suggestions for methods of stopping academic dishonesty at Calvin are few and far between. Professors and students alike are hard-pressed when it comes to offering practical advice. Some mumble a few words about more severe punishments, more conscientious “watch-dogging,” but nothing concrete is offered as advice. But there are those who have given thought to this matter and dared to offer solutions. One Physics professor, for instance, has devised a scheme which, though somewhat intricate, is clearly a well-thought out plan whose institution at Calvin could do much to bring dishonesty in the classroom to a dead halt. He explains it this way: “The initial responsibility should be that of the professors but I think there should be a faculty/student committee to whom all offenses should be reported so that multiple or repeated offenses in various courses could be handled by such a committee. Maybe there should be a separate committee of appeals. These committees would help the instructors in deciding how to deal with a specific case and also protect students from overly harsh response. Thus, the students would be involved in their own governing and discipline—a noble thought.”

This system, organized along the lines that the Communications Board presently is, would be the ideal sort of thing for a school like Calvin. Student involvement generally adds a degree of energy to a project, while faculty presence lends its wisdom to the venture. Under the direction of both, the faculty would have a board of advisors for especially grave or difficult cases, while students would have an advocate for a professor who had gotten out of line.

Academic dishonesty is as much a spiritual problem as it is a behavioral one, however. The effects of the problem could be adequately handled by the committees to which the professor has alluded, but the inward problem is a more difficult prey to bag. Many students believe that the college needs to take an official, written, and unreserved stance against academic dishonesty. The feeling must be instilled in the students that dishonesty is an incredibly gross sin and wrought by only the most pitiful scholars. Put aptly by a senior this idea runs, “Calvin should build up the ideal that it is so dishonorable to cheat that anyone caught would feel too embarrassed to attend the class again. It must be made into a shameful, loathful thing. This, after all, works in Japan.” His point is well taken, regardless of our distance from the Orient. Academic dishonesty must be categorized by professors and Calvin administration alike as something on which the college frowns tremendously. In this way, both the act and, possibly, the thought, could be nearly eradicated from the college. It would, at least, be a step in the direction of this goal.

This proposed system, then, contains two parts. First, it recommends that a committee, selected by students and containing members of both faculty and student body, supervise college policy in regard to academic dishonesty. Cases of dishonesty would be reported to this committee by the professors involved and that professor could seek the advice on any particular case of the committee. The committee would also be responsible for meting out penalties for those particularly difficult cases and would heal the appeals of students who believed themselves mistreated.

At the same time, the college would adopt a strongly worded, perfectly clear, document on the topic of academic dishonesty. It would be printed in the student handbook and be emphasized in all applicable situations. The principle of such a document would be that academic dishonesty, by its nature, prevents a student from receiving education. Since the primary reason a student comes to college is to get an education, a student who cheats stands in the way of his own objective. Behavior of this type, standing in one’s way, is a foolish and dishonorable practice. Thus, the academic liar is both ridiculous and pitiable.

These words sound harsh and, perhaps, a little too unrealistic, but when faced with the figures which Calvin faces, figures which suggest that more than 80 percent of Calvin students cheat, then harsh words are in order. This proposed plan is not the only option open to the college, but it is certainly one which would implement the desires of many outraged students and faculty. Its strong point is that it relies on both an outer and an inner correction to the problem. Since the problem does exist on both these levels, any correction of it must operate on them both. Perhaps the second strong point of this plan is that it could be incorporated readily into existing college structure, and its force could be felt soon. The depth of this problem at Calvin necessitates speedy reply to it, and so again this solution would be apropos.

Whatever solution is eventually adopted, it must be one which effectively deals with all the facets of this situation. One which merely erases the visible cheater is one which has failed to eradicate the bulk of the problem.

The results of the Calvin Academic Dishonesty Poll are extremely discouraging to the conscientious person. They say about the student body something which we all are loath to hear: things are not that different here. The trend is clearly for academic dishonesty to be on the upswing, and that fact concerns us most of all. The lack of seriousness with which some people take the issue is equally distressing. When asked whether or not he cheated on tests, one freshman maile grimly, and, we fear, prophetically, said, “Not so far, but I only be a freshman.”
Concerto
Poised alone on a geometric plane
(Silent souls in dark below)
The player lifts his bow,
Waits a moment
Until time is right,
Touches strings and sparks a light.

A small instrument
With quivering crystal strings:
Tremulous things
(Despite darkness and space)
That glow with power to fill
Those who are waiting still.

Hovering first in expansive air
(Souls in silence yet sustained)
The delicate strain
Now moves into darkness
Not around but through,
Those who sit becoming music too.

Sound later silenced, passed
(Souls in music swept away),
The player stops his play,
Looks at the strings, and
Sees them: of their own will
Glimmering, vibrating still.

—Lori Kort
Paul Gauguin's "The Yellow Christ" is the third in a series of three paintings done in 1889 based on the passion of Christ. The other two are entitled "The Breton Calvary" and "Christ in the Garden of Olives." Neither a Christian nor a member of any other religious group, Gauguin was intrigued by the mysticism he found in all religious cultures.

Once a successful stockbroker in Paris, Gauguin became increasingly dissatisfied with his life in the city. He made his escape to the northern French province of Brittany in search of a simple, honest, uncorrupted way of life away from the restrictions of technology and industrialization. Of his refuge he said, "I love Brittany. I find wildness and primitiveness here. . . ."

While painting in Brittany, Gauguin consciously simplified forms and colors in an attempt to capture the primitive spirit of the peasants and to express reality with obvious symbols.

Gauguin's culmination of expression in Brittany is said to be "The Yellow Christ" in which he beautifully blends symbolism and reality. Peasant women in their everyday work clothes kneel by an outdoor crucifix; or is it the actual Crucifixion? Gauguin's portrayal of the women's devotion makes the symbolic scene seem as real as if it were happening at that very moment.

The figure of Christ, derived from a crudely carved wooden crucifix in the chapel of Tremalo near Pont-Aven, in Brittany, offers a strange, eloquent mixture of crudeness and symbolism.

While some figures are quickly disappearing in the distance—perhaps allegorically—as soon as their prayers are finished, three Breton women continue to pray fervently. The simple portrayal of these women praying is Gauguin's pictorial expression of primitive religious feelings. In fact, Gauguin himself wrote that his purpose in this painting was to convey "the great rustic and superstitious simplicity of the peasant folk of Brittany."
Reversals
From the barn to the house.
Twelve and easily scared,
(Horrified in the dark),
I sprint home
During the evening hour.
But Dad walks
And smiles at my hurry.

Feeding calves.
Sixteen and impatient,
I curse a slow calf,
"You bastard!"
Immediately regretting,
I fear what bad fruit
Those words might yield.

From the barn to the house.
Eighteen and leisurely
Enjoying the night sky,
I watch Dad sprint by,
("Can't miss the t.v. news"),
And smile at his hurry.

Feeding calves.
Nineteen and listening
To Dad curse a cow,
"You bastard!"
Fear turned to shame.

—H.J. Buurman
The Last Adam

I have seen the eternal Footman hold my coat, and snicker.

—T.S. Eliot

Solemn, pale faces looked down at him as he walked through the room. He felt like an invader here, as if he did not belong. They stopped, standing next to the old lady, and he, being too short to see her, waited as his father said a quick, silent prayer. A somber quiet enveloped the people gathered along the edge of the room. They moved noiselessly, in slow motion. After a few minutes, the people began filing out in line, walking stiffly into the chapel. The boy followed his father, wondering if this is what he had meant by death’s sting.

He sat down on the wooden pew next to his father and tentatively glanced around. Looking at the aged, lifeless bodies sitting around him, he was ashamed to have his youth so intact. He felt out of place. His young, strong heart sent blood vigorously coursing through his veins, and he felt the blood, his life, beating in his temples. Staring at the statue of Christ hanging on a cross at the front of the chapel (Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today to lament the loss) he was especially conscious of the rhythm of his heart. He would hang on each throb, waiting for the next pulse to pound in his head. At first he tried to make melodious patterns of the rhythmic thumping; then, tiring of that, he pretended that in the interval between beats his heart had stopped. Sometimes he would hold his breath, making the intervals seem longer, his death more real. He would imagine that he could control his heartbeat, his life being held uncertainly in his will. After a while of playing this game (O death, where is thy victory) the voice began to drown out the sound of his heart, and he was brought back to the world of the living.

(He said to him, I am the Way, and the Truth) The boy examined his ornate surroundings with an inquisitive eye. The stained glass fascinated him. Its scene was one that made him feel good without knowing why. It was a colorful picture of a white dove, surrounded by blue, rising out of an orange-red, fiery depth. The scene gave him hope in what his father had taught him—what was lacking here—hope in life, hope in death. As he glanced at the soulless bodies surrounding him, he felt alive. Their listlessness seemed to affirm and perpetuate his existence. He shamefully admitted to the life within himself. It felt good, though it seemed out of place.

He stared at the woman in the pew in front of him. He watched the sobsless tears flow down the side of her face. He wondered why she made no move to wipe the tears away, letting them drop, staining the front of her dress. (Friends, there is no death in Christ) He watched as the stain got larger and he imagined it covering her heart. (Yes! Wretched men though we are, he delivers)

His father coughed next to him. The boy was aware that this service was nothing new to his father. The father had been through this last year when the boy’s mother had died. He watched his father’s thumbs battle each other on top of his folded fingers. The boy knew his father didn’t like all this talk of death. (Shall we pray. Dear Lord) He thought his father looked as uncomfortable as he felt. (Amen)
Afterwards the people stood in a white room, drinking coffee, tears blotting some of their ashen faces. The boy was surprised to think how much all this reminded him of the wedding he had been to years ago. Except, now, they were all wearing black. His father was the only one that seemed to be alive. He went around shaking limp hands, giving smiles to faces the boy vaguely remembered. Everyone else seemed statue-like, intimidating the boy with their motionlessness. As he stared at their faces, their eyes as sunken orbs floating in seas of salty tears, he got scared. His throat felt dry and his chest was heavy, making it difficult to breathe. He felt a need for air and as he moved towards the door, battling an infantry of legs, he sensed a dozen eyes staring.

He closed the door behind him and stood in the middle of the corridor. He stood with his eyes open, looking at the prickly texture of the wall, so he wouldn't have to see their faces floating through his mind. After a moment of composing himself he walked down the hall to the drinking fountain. Turning the star-shaped handle, he stood on the balls of his feet, stretching up to the stream of water. He filled his mouth with the cool liquid, swallowing quickly to wet his throat. When his toes got tired he released the handle and lowered himself back onto his heels. He tilted his head back and gargled the remaining water that was in his mouth, laughing to himself as he swallowed it. Turning around, he saw the door to the room where the old lady was, and being drawn out of curiosity, he approached it.

When his mother had died he wasn't allowed to go to the funeral, but he was older now. He had never seen an actual dead person before. His aunt told him his mother was only sleeping, but he knew it was different when you were really dead.

The metal coffin was cold when he touched it. He had an urge to see the old lady so he pulled a chair over, next to the coffin. Standing on the chair he could see her colored cheeks, her closed eyes, the smudged, flesh-tinted makeup on her forehead. She was dressed normally (not like a dead person), even the cross he remembered her always wearing was lying on her chest. Her face gave the impression of a peaceful state of dreaminess and the boy wondered if she was only sleeping.

He felt courageous for having come so far and yet scared at actually being there. He sensed his heart pounding rapidly in his chest, loud enough, he thought, to wake her if she was only sleeping. Finally, he decided he had better do what he knew he had really come there for, before his beating heart woke her. Taking a deep breath, he recklessly thrust his hand forward and touched death.

* * * *

The cool autumn breeze traversed the branches of the tree they were walking under, showering them with golden gifts blown from the limbs. He felt Kim shiver as the wind penetrated the warmth of his arm about her shoulder. He wondered to himself if perhaps it was symbolic of an inadequacy on his part but dismissed the notion as untrue.

Conversation between them was minimal tonight. When attempted it was like a dramatic play, presented with the utmost care for detail, with bountiful gaps for soliloquy and pensive monologue. It was not discussion but, rather, voiced observation—about the weather, the moon, the breeze or the lake. He reflected that the beauty of the night merited this precise and contemplative mode of discourse, but there were so many things he wanted to say to her.

They walked their usual route, through the natural dome created by the trees, down the grassy embankment of the lake, out onto the slatted build of the dock. They sat down simultaneously, resting their backs against a supporting pole. Adam reached for her hand from habit. Holding in his own he felt the ring he had given her. The metal seemed to absorb the sting of frost in the air, and against his flesh he could imagine it seering the skin of his finger with its frigidity. The ring's blatant honesty appeared to be presenting him with a message of great importance. An urgency seemed to lie in its bitterly cold metal, a symbolic offering in the way it stood as a frozen barrier between their skin.

Adam expunged his mind of the possible purport of the ring, concentrating instead on the beauty of his surroundings. The sky was clear and filled with stars. The moon bore a hole in the horizon with its bright glow, draping the ground with the shadows of its luminance. The lake was like a vigilant eye, reflecting all it saw, watching the stars on their trek across the sky, marking their path with an occasional wave.

Adam wanted to speak but didn't. To blaspheme the sanctitude that surrounded him would be a sin. And yet, he had so much to tell Kim—how he needed her, missed her when she was away, depended on her for so much of his existence. How he loved her. He needed to tell her these thoughts now, while they were still a part of his conscience. But he didn't. Instead he watched the stars perform. Dazzling him with their twinkling innocence, they paraded before him in an ongoing march. They reminded Adam of himself. He was caught in an endless search for something that eluded him and in that way he resembled a star that eternally journeyed to find a per-
manent place in the heavens.

It was a quizzical existence for Adam. He always seemed within grasp of an ideal, and yet he was never quite able to clutch that life-fulfilling essence. He wondered to himself why his life seemed to be missing something. Why, as he was approaching his thirtieth birthday, he felt safe but not authentically happy. However, then, in an accustomed style, he took inventory of his many gifts—Kim, his job, his security—and he decided that he was content, and, after all, that was very close to happy. So, dismissing it from his mind, he once again came to the conclusion that yes, Adam Conroy was a happy man. And for a moment, he almost felt fulfilled.

It was Kim who finally broke the tranquility that enveloped them. With haste, so as to show her respect for nature, she asked Adam if he knew any constellations.

"Some," he answered. "But I'm not sure I could identify them without consulting a book."

"The only one I know is the big dipper. That's it up there, isn't it?" she asked, pointing.

"I don't think so. It looks like it a little but the big dipper is larger."

"I guess there are just so many stars that it's easy to fool yourself into thinking you see the big dipper, when it really isn't there at all," she said pensively.

Adam meditated briefly on this thought. He pondered the significance of a star analogy. There did seem to be a ground of similarity between stars and people—their life, their death, the burning out of their inner light. He wondered if, as with the big dipper, people were fooled into seeing things in themselves that weren't really there. He contemplated this thought for a while then his mind took him back to his feelings for Kim.

He fantasized what a life with her would be like. Oh, how she obsessed his mind at times, emmeshing his life in a conflict between dreams and reality. He dreamt of their marriage. Although they hadn't discussed their plans for the future, he felt they both wanted a permanent relationship. He wanted it now. Kim made him feel so secure, so safe, wrapped in her binding love. However, of late, for every moment of security was one of indecision.

Adam wanted to marry her now because of what he felt inside himself. He perceived a seed of discontent, sensed its presence and its growth. He knew he must act now, immerse himself in safety, quell the seed before its roots reached his heart. He knew he must act now, immerse himself in safety, quell the seed before its roots reached his heart. . . .

He knew he must act now, immerse himself in safety, quell the seed before its roots reached his heart. . . .

permanent change for fear of leaving his unequivocal safety behind.

"I'm freezing. Let's start walking back," Kim said, interrupting his thoughts.

"You're always cold," he answered. Then, after a pause added, "okay, let's go."

They walked back without talking. Adam didn't ask Kim in tonight, he just walked her to her car and said goodnight, giving her a light kiss.

"Is something wrong Adam?" she asked, concerned.

"No, I guess I must be tired tonight," he answered. Inwardly he had a proclivity to incite emotion in Kim, perhaps through inviduous talk about his past romances. He had a desire to feel her love, to create jealousy. Instead, he gave her another kiss and shut her car door. He then watched as she drove away, wondering to himself if he loved her.

As he got ready for bed that night, he stood in front of the bathroom mirror and stared at himself. For a time he just looked at the reflection, but then he started probing the core of that facsimile, searching for hidden truths inherent within both of them. He searched for the love he had for Kim. He searched for happiness. He searched for the dreams he had had when he was young, dreams to become a writer. Carefully he examined his reflection for a hint of these qualities. For a long time he scrutinized the mirror image, looking for some idyllic hope in what its future held. Finally he reached out to touch the image, to share his familiarity of despair with it. His fingers were numbed by the chill of its surface while his soul was numbed by the emptiness of its depth. He got undressed and went to bed.

The next morning he awoke at the usual time, going through the habitual preparations for a workday. He shaved, showered, dried his hair, ate a bowl of cereal, dressed, picked up his briefcase, and was out the door at seven-thirty. He took the elevator down (after waiting the normal forty-five seconds for it to rise six floors) and walked to his car. It took him seventeen minutes to get to work, but he didn't notice any more. Once he was in his car it was as if he sat in a time machine. The car, after years of driving the same route five days a week, seemingly drove itself. He would sit down and let his thoughts carry him away until his car pulled into its parking space.

Today his thoughts on the drive into work were centered around his job. Should he stay? Should he leave to pursue a dream? Since he was eight years old he had wanted to become an author. Once he had gotten into college though, he had realized that he would starve before he was published, so he chose to go into business until he could save enough money to write. He had been a salesman for eight years and had saved nothing.

For some reason, today this dream of writing plagued him. It blossomed, filling him with a renewed hope. He sang, feeling an euphoria that stemmed from the blossom. He felt an elation that he supposed was comparable to religious ecstasy, which overwhelmed his heart, making it pump a faster beat. His mind swam in the hope for this dream. His body was revigorated, prepared to meet the challenge of this new adventure.

Yes! Others had pursued dreams, why not him? He hated his present occupation with its monotonous drone of sales pitches and endless flurry of "end-of-the-quarter" activity. He wanted to test the wings of his soul. He wanted to fly free, unburdened by the dictates of his conscience. He was tired of working for people who had little gratitude for his labor and little appreciation for the wealth of artistic destiny held within him. It was time he stopped living a life chosen for him by good sense, and started living a life of happiness.

Then, after several minutes of feeling proud of his newfound confidence, he asked himself what happiness was. He was secure. He had a job that provided him with food, shelter, clothing, and a few luxuries. There was room for advancement within the company, possibly all the way up to vice-president someday. Granted, it was not the most fascinating work, but how could he afford to quit? He would starve before he wrote his first novel. So, as his car pulled itself into its assigned parking space, he resigned himself to start saving money and to writing in his spare time.
He glanced at the clock on his dashboard, already knowing it would show seventy fifty-one. Then, grabbing his briefcase, got out of the car and headed into work.

The old man was bored and lonely. He had no children, no wife, not even a photo album to look at. It was as if he had never existed. When he died there would be no account of him. He was not documented in any record book, nor was his line extended by any progeny. He realized, with a desperate feeling inside him, that his name, Adam Conroy, was mortal.

He thought it curious that he should realize this so close to death. He laughed to himself. Yeats' poem, "After Long Silence" was right, he thought, when you're old enough to be wise you can't do anything with it.

The old man came from a long line of descendants, all of which (being first born) had the name Adam. Now the name was to die out with him. He was the last Adam in a series that began in 1824. This idea made him sad. He felt like a failure, worthless, dead. Yes, that was the word—dead. His life's energy had been since used up. He was a walking corpse, a life without life and had been since he was thirty years old. He had lived cautiously, safely, never taking a chance. His dreams hadn't died, they had just faded away.

"This is no time to get sentimental old man," he said aloud to himself. "You had your whole life to do something with, and you wasted it. Whether it was out of fear or apathy, you wasted it."

The telephone rang and he rose to get it. It was the grocery store wondering if he had his list ready. He read it to them and hung up.

On his way back to his easy chair he saw the Bible his father had given him when he was just a little boy. It was sitting in its traditional spot, on the end table where it had been, untouched, for years. Adam did not claim to be a religious man. His faith had died in accordance with his dreams. Looking back, he wasn't sure which had died first. He supposed it did not matter.

He thought about it for a while longer though, trying to place an event with his decision not to attend church. Then he remembered. It had been his father's funeral when Adam was twenty-two. The funeral had opened his eyes to the pervasive death in the church. The funeral had scared him with its resemblance to his aunt's funeral which he had attended when he was eight, back when he was still alive.

He had been scared at that funeral, but he had dared to touch death. He challenged death there, teased it with his youthfulness, and it had answered back, as it always did. It didn't respond immediately, rather, it waited until he had forgotten about it. Death had then crept into his limbs, moved into his heart and had lived there, unchallenged, for thirty years.

"Yes, he remembered his father's funeral, where he had said goodbye to death only to invite it in. He saw it clearly now, his memory true to him. He remembered thinking how the people had been like corpses themselves. He remembered thinking how people were lost in their hope for death. It was as if they emulated death in life just because they so looked forward to it, whether it was "to be with their Maker" or to get away from the "evilness" of this life. He remembered crying, not for his father, but for the people. They couldn't see. They couldn't understand that Christ died to give life in life as well as life in death.

He had left the church, taunting death, daring it to follow him. And it did. Before he realized it, he had accepted it into his heart, into his mind. Under the guise of safety it had conquered him. He gave up his dream of writing. He gave up his quest for life. He gave himself up to death.

The old man rose, with tears in his eyes and crossed the room to end table. He picked up the Bible and wiped his arm across the cover, sweeping the dust off. He looked at it for a while, then went back to his chair, sat down, and began to read. The time passed quickly, and before he knew it, the sun had set over the row of houses outside his window.

As he read, the old man felt an elation within himself. He smiled as he read, realizing something that had been hidden for years. He felt alive! His body was awake, tingling with a sensation he derived from the reading. There was a hope growing in his soul, a fire warming his heart. He read until he fell asleep.

He woke in the morning with the Bible on his chest. He smiled to himself. Inwardly he felt a flower blossoming, overcoming his hunger. He rose, and with the Bible in hand, he went into the kitchen. Opening a drawer, he took out a pen and some paper and then sat down at the table. And he began to write.
Object Lesson

You know the men who,
solid Sunday morning blue
with microphones clipped to part three
of a three piece suit,
...endeavor to relate to the younger
members of the congregation some
of the more fundamental concepts of
Scriptural Revelation
(This is how it appears in the
minutes)
These men are no doubt archetypal
I'm sure you've known one in your past

So this morning all the children
seated on the steps before the pulpit
listened to this too-tight-tie teacher
talk about the Potter's Clay
—this story, too, is universal law
We've known that we'll be squeezed to form
like the playdough in these pudgy hands
(the archetype has pudgy hands),
that we'll go hard if we're not canned
Yes, we all know how to be sardines
in tins, in pews

But the tale today
was counterpointed by a child
who, seeing by his side the speaker wire,
began to reel it in
—a young fisherman

Now the flat-footed man tried not to
flinch, but gently pulled the cable back
and the young boy played it out
but soon he coiled it up again
always grinning playfully
The teacher, beaming red, would not
rebuke him, yet, still, his story line was
strained when leash and choler
pulled him down

This concert continued until
the preacher's tale was sprung
and all the catechumen were permitted
to go to their families
and among the common condescending smiles
of which we're often guilty,
not a few glassy stares
of fish out of water
—Tom VanMilligen
This interim the Computer Science Dept. offered a course in computer graphics. The course, taught by Prof. J. Kuipers, emphasized "non-alphanumeric display of information" on computer terminals: that is, it concentrated on pictures instead of words appearing on the screen. Computers used in this way provide a great opportunity for creativity. The following is a collection of a few of the results.
Looking Back

—Cindy Abbott

Professor George Harper, who is affectionately known by his friends and colleagues as “Tom,” attended Calvin College during the 40’s and became a professor in the English Department in 1952. He is the second longest serving professor at Calvin to date, Professor Henry Ippel in the History Department being the first. Dialogue asked Calvin senior, Cindy Abbot, to interview Professor Harper in order to capture his perceptions of Calvin College as he has known it these past forty years.

My exposure to Calvin College didn’t start when I became a student of the college, like most people. I was reared in Grand Rapids in the neighborhood of the campus, and, therefore, I knew the history of the college well before I became a student.

I was told that the beginning years of Calvin College were really something. People put up a lot of money to start this institution. It was their school designed to train preachers, teachers, and a pre-med student or two. The staff was small, and it was considered to be the apex of anybody’s career to teach at Calvin College. Most of the professors were older. They were grandfatherly and most of them were ordained ministers or at least trained for the ministry. They were concerned with training young men in the biblical languages, philosophy, a bible class or two, and science. There were also a few young ladies allowed to attend Calvin so that they could get more training than a normal school would offer them.

The campus was on Franklin Street. The classrooms were very small compared to those we have now. There was only one dormitory which housed students. Other students lived in boarding houses. The whole neighborhood was full of boarding houses run by retired people with two or three rooms which Calvin students would occupy. The students would get their meals there. There wasn’t a place to eat on campus at all, not even a coffee shop. There were two other buildings, the seminary building and the library, which made up the campus. Around 400 to 450 students attended the college with a two to one ratio of men to women. It is understandable, then, that those attending Calvin at that time would feel like they were family.

The economic condition at the time was such that people went to college only if they had money. An individual’s family had to be fairly well off to finance a college education. Or else, some individuals worked for four or five years to save up the money to go to college. However, that economic situation did change at the beginning of World War II when there were a great many jobs to be had. My parents had no money, so I got through college by working a night shift at Keeler Brass while attending Calvin full-time. I started my shift at four o’clock in the afternoon and worked until midnight. Then I would walk home in the middle of the night. It took me an hour. The next morning I’d be on my way again for an eight o’clock class.

Attending Calvin College in those days was a highly dignified business. Nobody wore anything but suits and ties. Nobody had cars then. I had one of the first cars—a Model A. There was very little monkey business going on. But everyone knew everyone else and there was a lot of self-conscious intellectualizing going on. People were proud of brains. Ideas were the stuff that people went to college for. People were able to get away from working in the furniture factory and go to college. In those days even if they weren’t interested in becoming
preachers, people still read a lot of theology to keep up with their preachers. Preachers were the intellectual elite—the top dogs. It’s hardly true any more. Today in order to be recognized as a success one has to be involved in business. People in business are the top dogs today, but it wasn’t always that way.

My experience at Calvin was very good. I didn’t do well in the courses I needed for what I wanted to do, which was to become a forest ranger. My chemistry professor was very nice about my poor performance in his class. Since I was going into the army he figured that my grade didn’t matter much and instead of giving me an F he gave me a C. Grading was much more informal then! World War II interrupted my Calvin career as it did many of my fellow students’ careers.

-----------40’s

I came back to Calvin in January of 1946. There were many veterans around. About half of them were still in bits and pieces of uniform. Many of them had been all over the world. Some of them had been prisoners of war, others badly wounded. Still others were suffering from emotional and psychological repercussions. The result of all these veterans returning to Calvin was, I think, to instigate a change in the nature of the college in a more practical direction. Previously, Calvin had been an academy mainly concerned with brains and ideas. Suddenly the emphasis shifted from brains to real-life experiences. This wasn’t an easy transition. As a matter of fact it was often traumatic. For instance some of the professors—I feel sorry for them now that I realize what they went through—were lecturing on abstractions, such as war and peace, which half the class had actually experienced as a set of mean facts. The situation really gave a bit of trouble for some of the older professors who taught in the old mode of teaching straight from the books. But, the vets were not at Calvin to be spoon fed. I can remember very clearly a man who taught bible courses—a fine man who had an abstract knowledge of Reformed doctrine. I don’t think he had even one parish before he started teaching, but spent his life in his study. He hadn’t any experience with a real parish so he wasn’t prepared to deal with a roomful of people who had been in a war that exposed them to people from other religions and experiences. He was handing out abstract ideas called Reformed doctrine which the class thought had no relation to reality at all.

Previously, Calvin had been an academy mainly concerned with brains and ideas.

And he was challenged. I’ll never forget the day that he got onto the historical Calvinist provision for dealing with unjust rulers. According to the books, Calvin’s theory meant that you had to find the magistrate, whoever he was whether president, premier, or prime minister and had to point out that there was injustice and inequity because of a wicked ruler. Only the magistrate could organize a non-violent revolt against the ruler. That was the idea. Poor man. He was faced with a whole roomful of vets who were not about to take this theory as the answer. He didn’t know what to do. How was he going to answer the challenge? The book says that you go with the magistrate. And all the students were asking, What’s a magistrate? What do you do when you’re faced with a Hitler? Go to a magistrate? What do you do with a country that’s run by a Mussolini or Stalin? Find a magistrate? This was totally unacceptable to the veterans. The poor man was crushed and finally left the room. He never really recovered and one of his associates, who was much more realistic in his approach, took over. Along with every other educator in the States the educators at Calvin had to confront the fact that the people they were teaching would no longer settle for abstract knowledge.

The campus itself was overwhelmed with people. From September, 1945, to January, 1946, over 600 veterans descended on Calvin because they were all released from the military at once. The place was jam-packed with people. There were fifty or more students in a class. Professors were teaching inordinate loads of classes, and senior students were assisting them both in teaching and grading. The administration scrambled and got a war-surplus dining hall which was used for a classroom. We jammed a lot of people in it, which proved to be much fun! Eventually other buildings were added. First a science building and then a commons building. It really felt like a big college then!

Gradually other changes came about in the nature of the college. Students at Calvin were not content with the prospect of becoming preachers or teachers. They demanded more practical programs in a variety of disciplines. Therefore, the formulation of a variety of departments was instituted almost overnight. Instead of having one person teaching in education, there was a department of education. Suddenly there was a sociology department and other departments which grew out of the students’ interests. The standards within the departments were still those of the academy.

There was also an intellectual elite at that time. They were the ones who would sit on the front steps in warm weather and argue about whether Plato or Aristotle had the right line. In inclement weather they would gather in the lunch rooms in the bowels of the classroom building. The lunch rooms were designated for commuters and were jammed every noon. There were two little groups that would gather on either side of the rooms. One side was for members of the Protestant Reformed Church and the other side was mostly liberal Christian Reformed students. That’s where we went if we wanted to use our brains—there was always an argument going on about some controversial issue. No professors disturbed us. It was unheard of. We did have a couple of learned janitors join us, but overall it was just students. Lots of discussion and arguments even to the point of fistfights. Sometimes people would get pretty heated. It was very exciting. I think I got half my education in those caves!

When it came time to leave Calvin many students decided to go on to graduate school. There were good markets in those days for people with graduate training. There were lots of jobs and lots of people to fill them so
the job market became more competitive. It was very advantageous to get a graduate school training, which was fairly accessible financially, especially for the veterans who still had the support of the GI Bill. I and seven or eight of my fellow students were accepted into graduate school, and I didn’t return to Calvin’s campus until 1952.

--------50’s

When I returned to Calvin in 1952 I found that the campus was more exciting than when I had left, and that everyone was working terribly hard. It was a very interesting place to be at that time because there was a lot of controversy surrounding the college, and also, there was a new administration. President Spoelhof had taken over and found that the place was archaic in its administration. He found that people were doing things by hand that machines could do, and therefore working far too hard. He remodeled the whole administration; brought it up to date and did an unbelievably good job. Administrative officers were appointed to do jobs that faculty used to do in their spare time. Until then, there had been no Deans to speak of and it was difficult to regulate the demands on the faculty. When I first came I was expected to teach five courses. The first two or three years I taught here, I got three or four hours of sleep a night. All I did was work. I had a young family whom I neglected. The pay wasn’t good, so many of us had to work summers painting houses or whatever to make up the difference. The students worked terribly hard too. I think that they were challenged a little more in those days. But overall it was worth it because Calvin was an exciting place to be.

To be sure, Calvin was stimulating because the intellectual dominance was still there. Ideas were still top-dog concerns, which is not true now. Practical experience comes first now. The courses students take today are more “hands-on” than those in the 50’s or before. For example, students studying sociology in the 50’s were studying the books on sociology. There were

Ideas were top dog, which is not true now.

no surveys, inservices, or even courses in statistics for sociology students to take. If students were going into sociology at the post-graduate level, they had to get their statistics courses elsewhere because Calvin did not offer them. In many ways Calvin was still an academy, but there was a steady movement toward more practical courses in most of the disciplines. More and more younger faculty joined the staff and brought with them a relaxed and informal atmosphere that they had been exposed to in graduate schools. Their training was statistical and positivistic, not intellectual or philosophical. The older faculty complained about how unphilosophical the younger faculty was, and the fact that they were uninterested in ideas and more interested in doing things practically. But this younger generation of faculty was able to meet the students’ demands for practical courses that would make them marketable and able to make a living.

As I mentioned before, Calvin College was an exciting place to be in the 50’s not only because of the move toward more practical training, but because of various controversies. One controversy that was started in the Christian Reformed denomination, but inevitably got concentrated at the college, concerned the perspective of Professor VanTil from Westminster Seminary. He was making a big splash in those days with his version of Reformed doctrine, and he was asked to teach at the seminary. He was an exclusivist and was quite sure in all his writings that only Reformed Christians had the truth. According to him, all other denominations did not have the truth. Of course I’m oversimplifying his perspective, but the core of what he was saying was exclusivistic. There was a great number of people in the college who did not go for that at all, and they quarreled with him. Everyone in the college was involved in the discussion in one way or another. Lines were drawn and individuals and departments were either VanTillians or Kuyperians. The English and Philosophy departments were singled out as Kuyperian and were considered to be the liberal contingent. It was during this time that the Reform Journal was started. Tension surrounded the controversy for six or seven years. Students got quite involved in the discussion and sometimes would bring it into the classroom. Often there would be four or five students in a classroom that were partisan to VanTil, but they would become fairly angry and argumentative. But tension creates interest and keeps people on their toes. We could use a little more of that now. Arguing what it meant to be Reformed was a way of life around this place until 1962-63. Arguments could be heard in the halls, classrooms; and argument academies such as the Plato Club were established. It was an exciting, challenging place to be; but it could also be very exasperating.

Also, during this time there were people who willed the institution ill. There was a lot of meddling in the affairs of the college by outsiders who would pick the brains of students to see what professor X was saying about such and such a matter. Then off to the president or board member they would go demanding that an investigation be instigated. Sometimes it made me very nervous about what I said in class. Fortunately, things relaxed because President Spoelhof said that he wouldn’t put up with such nonsense. He wouldn’t consider any changes unless they were in writing and documented. That put an end to most of the accusations, but not all.

--------60’s

In the early 60’s, remnants of the Cold War scares and McCarthyism were carried over from the previous decade. The college was charged with harboring communists and individual people were accused of being communists. Again, it was people outside the college that were making the accusations. But the college survived.

Most of the college’s energies during this period were concentrated on moving to the new campus. This land
Life at Calvin in the 60's was not so much exciting as it was chaotic.

The 70's brought in a whole different generation of students to Calvin College. Gone were the days where students had to work long hours to save up enough money to go to college. Most parents had stable financial means, and were able to say to their children, "You get off to college because you're going to need an education to get anywhere." Parents were concerned that their children would be able to maintain the standard of living that had been set for them, and a college degree was the best assurance of that. Well, of course a lot of students came here with this concern in mind, but then decided that learning was fun. Fortunately they discovered that college was the place to be. Increasing numbers of students' high-school friends were going to college, so they did too. A lot of students came here because their parents said they enjoyed Calvin College, and encouraged their children to go too. Not a bad motive as far as I'm concerned. If one can't enjoy college, they why come?

Calvin College is a fine place to teach. It's a fine institution, but it does not have the family qualities that it used to. I don't get to see my colleagues from different departments more than once or twice a semester. There are even fifteen or twenty faculty members that I have not met, and probably never will because I have no occasion to meet them. Those that I do meet, I'm impressed with—especially the younger ones. They're smart, well-prepared and articulate. I do wish that I knew them better, but there isn't much opportunity. We are now a departmentalized college. Back on Franklin Street there was one room called the faculty room that we got our mail in. It had a table and chairs all around the walls of the room. That's where we'd go to get our mail, sit down and read it. Other faculty would be sitting along the wall waiting to teach their classes: philosopher, chemist, sociologist, historian, religion professor all sitting there and before we knew it, we'd be cross-fertilizing. I'd sit down and start conversing, and soon I'd
be asking a history professor what his disciplines' perspective would be on a particular situation. We were all accessible to each other then. That isn't the case any more. We've got a faculty dining room that's supposed to help us in the cross-fertilization, but it's not happening. There is, however, an intellectual crap game still going on around here, and occasionally I search it out either in the philosophy or religion and theology departments. But otherwise, we all stick pretty much to our own departments.

It's true that the family atmosphere at Calvin College is not the same as it once was. But the core of Calvin College is still intact, and has developed into an institution where everyone can receive the benefits it has to offer. The college is more service oriented than it ever has been, and I hesitate to prescribe whether or not that's a good move. At my age, it is possible to become sentimental and chauvinistic about the way one was taught oneself. I know that what worked for me fifty years ago is not going to work in 1983. I try to look at Calvin College not with prejudices from the past, but rather with understanding and acceptance of the changes that are inevitable.