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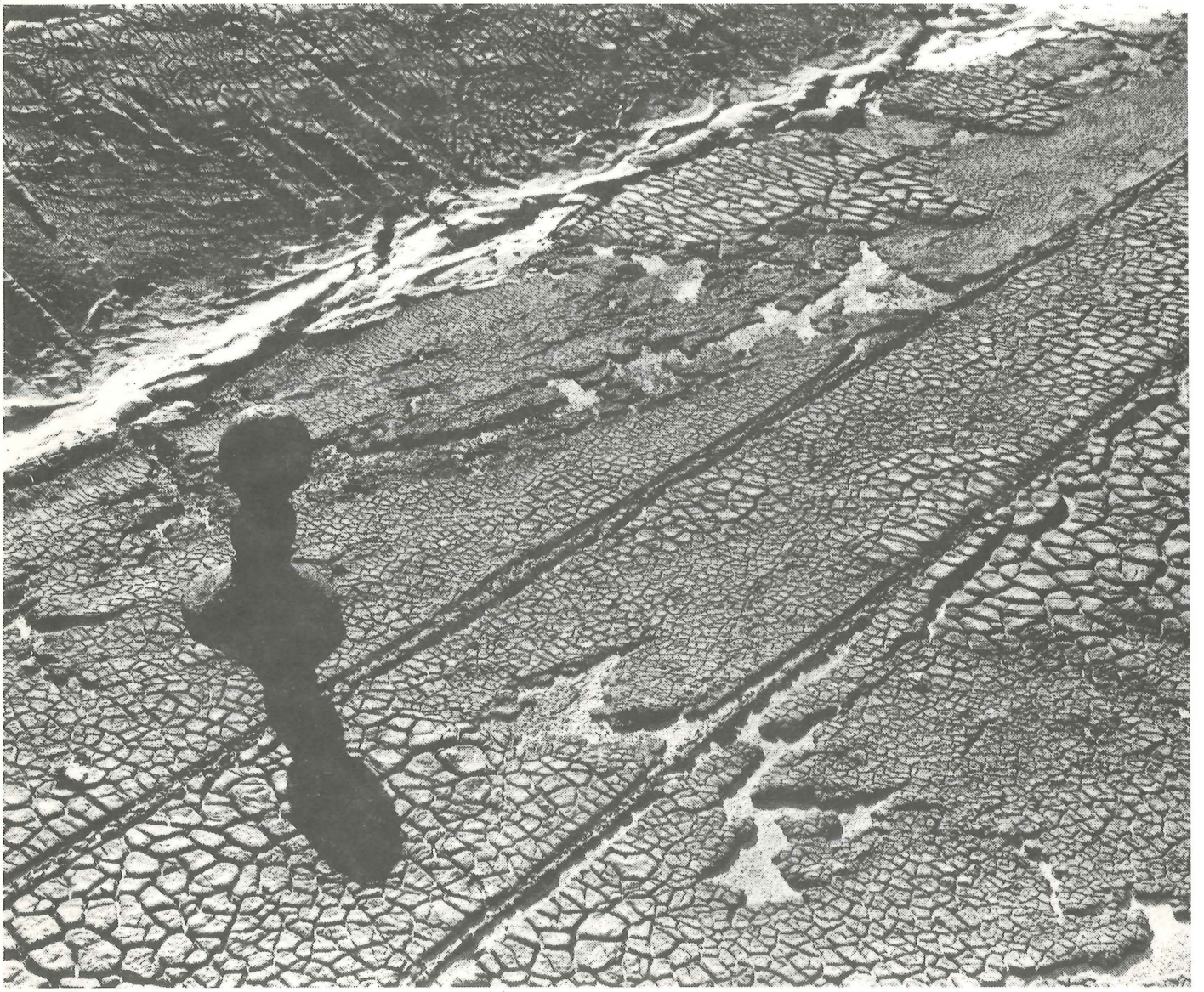

Krister Evenho

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. 20, No. 5 March, 1988

Editorial

Thoreau had Walden Pond; I have the Sem Pond. The muddy spring water overflows the metal waterline rim, and White Pine branches and needles clog the pond at the shallow end. The transplanted cherry trees that flank the east side are starting to bloom, and the weeping willow to the south is already a pale shade of green. Like Thoreau, I'm reflecting on civilization as well—in particular, Calvin College, a part of civilization that I and many others are about to leave. Many of us are sad to leave; the emotion will doubtless manifest itself in many tears, much praise and gratitude (and platitude) at graduation. At the moment, however, I am more in the mood of Thoreau. And so I present to you what I can only call—admitting first, like Socrates, I feel more ignorant than ever—a senior's "wisdom," accumulated after four years at Calvin College. Thoreau had a lot of things right. One of the most crotchety and anti-social human beings ever to have walked the face of this earth, he nevertheless had a lot of things right. Likewise, I spare no criticism; I only hope my complaining will not be far off the mark.

When I hear Paul Simon sing "When I think back to all the crap I learned in high school, it's a wonder I can think at all. . . ," I am tempted to echo "when I think back to all the *CR*ap I learned at Calvin," emphasizing the *CR*. The particular failures I have in mind, more rampant among students than professors, but more dangerous in the hands of the latter, are well-known: merely tacking on a Christian *interpretation* at the end of the course, merely providing *interaction* between two mutually exclusive categories, faith and learning, or even, more commonly at Christian colleges more evangelical than Calvin, *indoctrination* into a set of definitive "Christian solutions" to a discipline. As Arthur Holmes notes in *The Idea of a Christian College,* the three of these are faulty approximations of the ide the *integration* of faith and learning, which, fact, cannot be perfectly achieved in hum terms. What makes integration unique, I wo suggest, is that it is aimed (to use yet another " word) at the *individual.* The wor indoctrination, interpretation, and interaction bring to mind groups: a political rally, a minis explaining a Bible passage, or a clsss discussi But an integration of faith and learning is meshing of faith—the relationship between G and a chosen individual, and learning—the re tionship of that individual to the world knowledge. The next best integration of faith a learning comes when professor and student m on a personal level, neither typical "prof" r generic student, but both unique, and the stude is inspired by the professor's example as much more than what she teaches, by her attitu toward learning and the love of her specialty s displays. This is much more than a form synthesis of Christianity and a discipline, ho ever impressively worked out. It deman freedom in both directions—professor to st dent, and student to professor—an amount freedom uncommon at Calvin. Real learning above all solitary; the best performers are mi wives, teaching like Socrates or Kierkegaar negatively. The best students take up the pr fessor's challenge, and pardon the entymologic analogies, become gadflies themselves, buzzi through the Cave on their own; the rest get by li sleepy, mothlike parasites, hanging onto th professors' coattails. "It doesn't matter" we sa "all become useful members of society anyway It is frightening, though, when this latt tendency actually seems to be encouraged Christian colleges, when the commendable tra of Christian obedience and industry happily a

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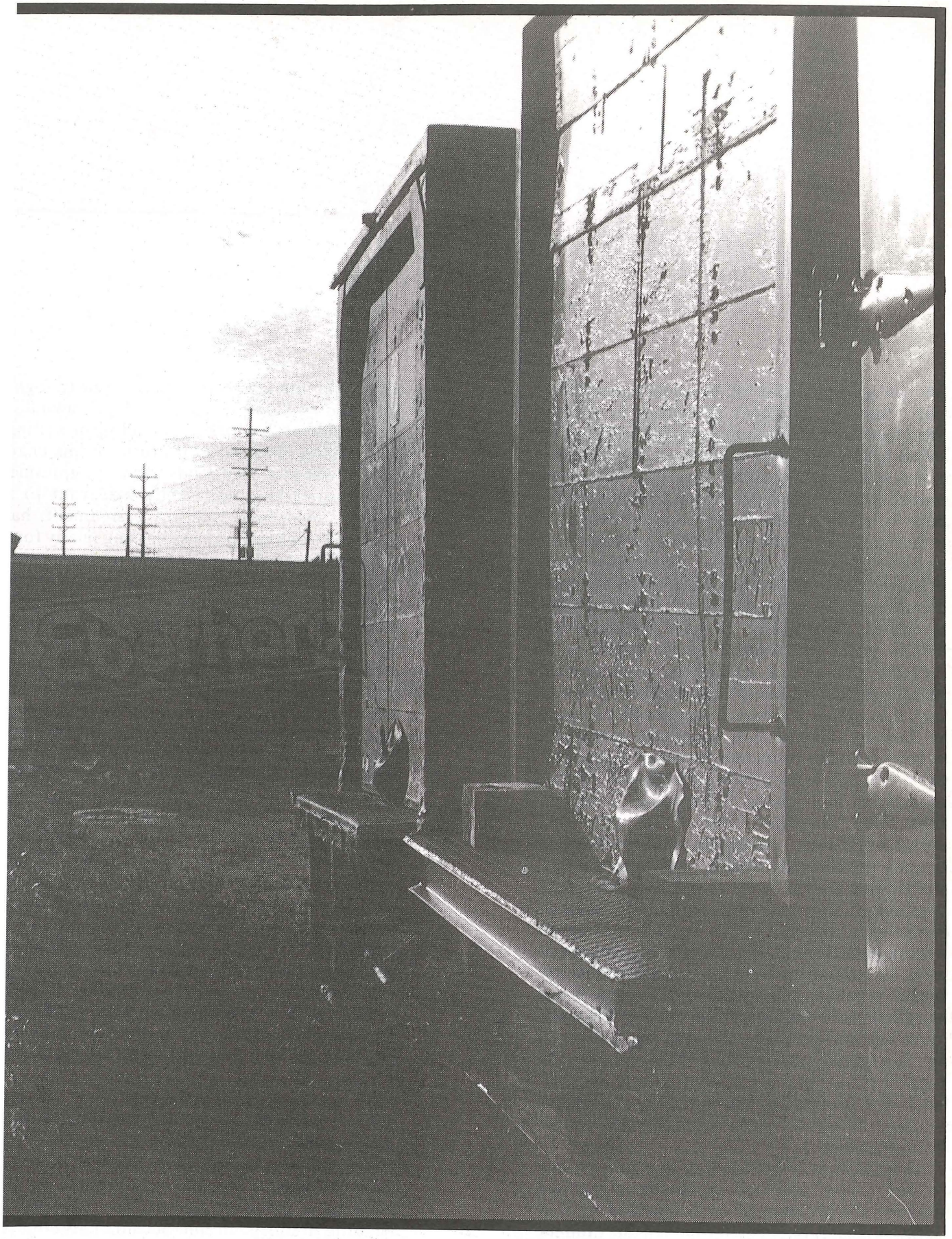


Annette VanLeeuwen

pend (or are appended by) by an 80's success instinct. Success in higher education in general today too often means constant conformity. The fault is hardly all Calvin's, however. The majority of the blame falls on the American system in general, and the degree to which Christians subscribe to it. The more the job market considers surface ratings of college students as important credentials, the more obedient and correspondingly dependent students will become, the more real learning will suffer. Calvin cannot abolish this "real-world" pressure, but it can, especially given its position at the forefront of Christian liberal arts education, work toward creating an environment that teaches selves to teach themselves. Perhaps I should call it recreating instead. Calvin has produced many impressive scholars in its past, most of them sympathetic to the Reformed world-and-life-view as summarized by Nicholas Wolterstorff in the previous three *Dialogues;* and it has produced several first-rate rebellious artists—Patricia Rozema the celebrity of late—who nevertheless, in critiquing Calvin "weren't slugging it out with styrofoam," to use the words of John J. Timmerman. But some of us wonder if the baton is being passed on. Is this spirit being communicated; to students anymore? If these doubts are correct, renewing this spirit won't be easy; it will take gutsiness from both professors and students. I have no four- or five-year plans; but I give you my "four-year" observations. These are hardly comprehensive; they are meant for individual students and professors, the individual being, inevitably, the surest common denominator in real communication.

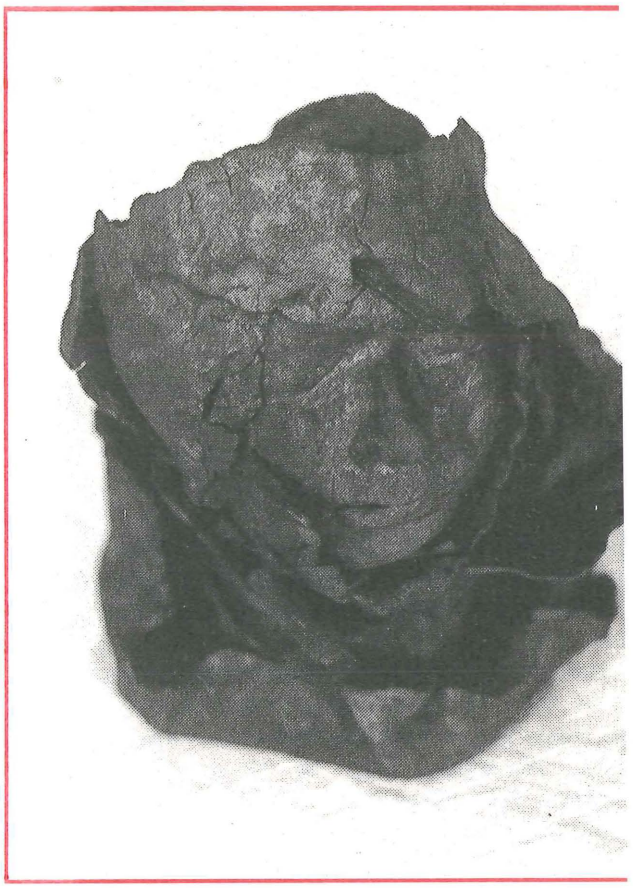
Students, first of all, are lazy at heart. We say we don't have time for independent learning anymore; the problem is, we don't make time. A genius, it is said, is a person who had one thought all his life, but also extended that one thought fully and as deeply as possible. One's own thir ing outside of class, whether reading or writing just talking, likewise seems to have this chara teristic oneness. Self-study, and the epitome this is something apparently irrelevant to a classes, unconnected to any assignment, has continuity and naturalness missing in any form work. Day by day interaction in class, in co trast, is a constant revising and readjustment scattered barely digested thoughts to appro mate the professor's as nearly as possible, shoring up of fragments against the ruins of c grades. Even the cleverest professor is hard put keep the student from the sensation that he being "spoon-fed." This explains why many student is most successful in what started out a mere hobby; it also explains why good studer find themselves turned off in their "favorit subject with the "best" professor in the depa ment. Their self is getting turned out of the pr cess. What can one do if this happens? On t simplest level, ask a question, or try to think o question to stump your prof. Better yet, got to t library, find your subject in the shelves (som thing to do for every class at the start of t semester), and check out a book or two to ge new perspective on that discipline. In doing you claim it for your own; your profess shouldn't have a monopoly. Best of all, hit bookstore. Grand Rapids rivals cities many tim larger in the size and quality of its bookstor Almost without realizing it I've accumulated ov 1000 books relatively inexpensively, and t power a personal library of even 50 well-chos books lends one is immeasureable. Many of the books are class books; many more will be tho recommended or referred to in class notes, so building a personal library one is effective building a college in microcosm. This college

rely your own; it can grow or shrink as you re; classes can start at 12 pm. . .or 12 am, and when you fall asleep. Tuition is free! The pro- ors are often world-famous and always in resting combinations. Henry Miller stands t to A.A. Milne stands next to John Milton. 3. Yeats is next to Gary Zukav next to Henry stra. Nietzsche next to Novak next to onnor. And Kazantzakis next to Keats next Ceillor. While colorful and pluralistic, such a ege is still at bottom the main instrument for integration of faith and learning in its owner. rofessors, secondly, can help by telling lents, of all things, that classes are not that ous. It took some of us four years to learn that ses can be enjoyable rather than simply urable. If you profess to make your students k hard, fine—a few of my best classes were s with extremely challenging amounts of k—but make it clear in the end that it's the k that counts and not the grade. More work uld mean more freedom on the students' part, more supervision and more frequent dlines, as is often assumed; otherwise the class omes a grind for a set of students who feel like ots. More often though, better to lighten up n to crack down. Hemingway's principle ore is less and less is more" certainly applies to college environment. Taking four or more ses at a time, most students soon find that ually getting into any one subject in depth ckly drags them down in the other three. The ier students become the more they learn eaucratic, organizational skills, and the more y switch to being business majors or crank out ond-rate assignments, products of technical ciency but nonexistent self-involvement. ades are inevitable, but too often they become tches which both student and teacher use to by with as little work as possible. In *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* Robert Pirsig tells how grades become chains that students frantically desire because they can't stand the freedom and the uncertainty of not knowing them. But he also notes how that temporary uncertainty (a veiled grading system in an English 100 class) frightened students enough to make them work harder than any other English 100 class at the college! It is always well to remember that the fear of God, not fear of the grade, is the beginning of wisdom, and good standing in the latter is no guarantee of good standing with the former.

Pirsig's main point in this fascinating book is that we Americans, both students and teachers, have so appropriated the systematic, technical mindset from Aristotle and Descartes that we have lost our sense of what he names Quality, what Martin Heidegger called the ground of Being. Consider the following analogy: my learning is like a deep river fed by the tributaries of classes. If I dam up the source in an attempt to give the tributaries more room, I end up with the original channel, real learning, reduced to a muddy trickle. It is at the source where the water is purest, and it is the lost art of self-teaching that is as refreshing as drinking icy-cold spring water. Thoreau himself, however gruffly, would have to agree.

The sun is going down behind the row of pines to the west, leaving half the campus in shadows. A couple on the other side of the pond that has been progressing by leaps and bounds through the stages of making out, reluctantly leaves. The muddy water of the pond is darker than ever. I wonder how it gets so full; the spring above the boulder-and-concrete spillway is dry. I shelve the question for now. It's time to go home.

—MJR



Marlene Schaly

INSOMNIA

Dear Candace, Thank you again
for coming to visit me in Orange City
and bringing Bradley. He'll be happy
I have more speculaas—in a new tin,
white Harlem windmills against navy blue sky. I bought it
when I got my prescription filled
at Bergsma's.

I wasn't sleeping well, after you left, though. Fancy, when you were
here, Bradley bouncing the chairs and crying
in the night, it was easier. But in *Life,*
I found an article: "Conquering insomnia:
The foolproof method for falling asleep."
It seems to work. I've had my best nights
alone since Gerald.

"Sleep is impeded by the accumulated clutter
of daylight hours," it says. "The mind
must relax, empty itself." Last night, after watching
headlights crisscross the ceiling, listening to tires
whisssching through puddles until 2, I tried it:
I am in a room, like our old living
room in Des Moines.

after you kids, inside because of a cloudburst,
have been rambunctious all afternoon—shooting each other
with Tinkertoy bow-and-arrows and guns.
I'm like a cooped hen. "Go outside!"
I say when the rain stops, "The sun is out."
I put the three of you into rain slicks and loose
you to dig in the flooded sandbox.

The house is still. I begin to clean—
put the Tinkertoys in their canister, the cornflower dishes
above the sink. I wipe the windowsill. In the dead space
between the panes is an irridescent green fly
on its back, legs curled. The sun escapes a cloud
and turns it emerald. I see my reflection
in the pane. I am a young woman again.

I wait for your father to come home, wait and clean.
Tonight he doesn't come. I take the coffee table
out the front door. I take your father's chair, the driftwood lamp, the sofa.
The furniture is light as dollhouse furniture. The walnut table,
the chairs, shaky or stable—all of it goes. Tired, I leave the walls for
last: the family reunion
pictures, your 1st grade "Home Sweet Home." The room is empty
now, my eyelids heavy as brooches. The walls drown in shadows.

—Mike Rubingh

Babes in Babylon:
Growing Up Christian in a Society that Consumes its Young

by Douglas Frank

It probably comes as no surprise to you that, seventy-five years ago, the Dutch Reformed community in America was worried about sin. Your own historian, James Bratt, tells us that in the period just prior to America's entry into the First World War, Dutch journals in Michigan rang out the alarm that, of all things, *worldliness* was on the increase. This worldliness posed a particular threat to the Christian deportment of Dutch Reformed youth. Bratt tells us that the Dutch "saw around them "a 'thousand and one forms' of pollution: 'Theaters and vaudettes. Intoxication in saloons and card-playing. Dance-halls and clubhouses. Autorides and immorality. Excursions on the Sabbath,' " all of these representing "challenges to sobriety and good order" (63). It seems that the Dutch elders were especially concerned about "dens of iniquity" where "the flushed faces, the glazed eyes, the short breath" of waltzing couples presaged an imminent loss of sexual purity; and the saloons, where the darkness and the alcohol weakened the inhibitions of Dutch youth (64). Materialism, too, was an increasingly prevalent sign of worldliness. As one Dutch journalist wrote, "Our youth live in a world which has been almost completely seized by Materialism. . . . People want gold. They want good. They want pleasure. . .the dollar is the idol before which they bow" (63). Another spokesman agreed: "How foolish it is to give your heart to the things of the world! It is just dust (stof). It can make no one really happy. . ." (63).

The Dutch were not alone in their concern. American evangelicals as a whole agreed that the devil was working overtime, particularly against the youthful citizens of their nation. Their spokesman was a man who fought the devil with every ounce of his considerable energy—the evangelist Billy Sunday. During the second decade of this century, Sunday was hailed as "the greatest soulwinner since Jesus Christ." (Sunday routinely bettered Jesus' attendance records.) The church-going middle class flocked to hear his sensational sermons, to shudder at his lurid descriptions of sin in America's streets and taverns, to cheer him as he damned to hell enemies of godliness and assured Christians t God was on their side.

In 1915, the flamboyant evangelist brought revival crusade to Michigan. The good Du folk of Holland and Grand Rapids didn't kn quite what to do with him. His crude langua and crazy antics didn't strike them as fitting fo minister of the gospel. His soulwinni reputation didn't particularly impress a peo concerned for the slow, patient nurturing personal faith in a communal setting. And boast that "I don't know any more abo theology than a jack-rabbit knows about pi pong, but I'm on my way to glory" didn't sit w with a people who figured you weren't much o Christian until you had come to terms w Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion.*

On the other hand, Billy Sunday was an ef cient businessman. As one Dutch journal noted, his campaign was "a perfect piece machinery" (Bratt, '62). That drew a certa admiration from folks who hated to see a pen go to waste. More importantly, Billy Sunday w against sin. That struck the Dutch folk Michigan as a pretty sound instinct. Over a over in his sermons, he raged against the decli of morals in America. Three things in particu aroused him to heights of rage and rhetor alcohol, embodied in the "booze gang" and t corner saloon; sexual promiscuity and t scourge of prostitution, which Sunday excoriat in such intimate detail that, it is said, grown m fainted; and materialism, personified by t wealthy "society woman." Here is what he sa about the "matinee-gadding, fudge-eating" s ciety woman:

> *I believe the most God-forsaken, good-for-nothing, useless woman on earth is an American society woman. . . .there is nothing, my friends, to her but a frame upon which to hang fashionable clothes, and a digestive apparatus to digest highly seasoned foods. . . . Hags of uncleanness*

)day, they walk our streets, they ride in heir limousines, sail in their private yachts, hey look from behind French plate glass nd hide behind rich tapestries. . . . They uaff their wine from gold and silver ankards and they eat from. . .hand-painted hina and society today, my friend, is fast astening to the judgment that overtook ompeii. . .when God Almighty made old Mount Vesuvius vomit and puke in a emorrhage of lava.

Leal, honest-to-goodness society women, of rse, didn't often attend Sunday's meetings. r, generally, did saloonkeepers and prosti-s. But by rallying against these ominous ures, Sunday clearly spoke to many of the pest concerns of American Christians in the t two decades of this century. The Dutch Re-med community in America shared these con-ns. No doubt, many of them warmed to nday's challenge to young men and women to youthful lusts, give up the bottle and sex and love of money, and get their acts together. So good number of the Dutch swallowed their ervations and gave Billy Sunday at least a mild lorsement when he brought his crusade to chigan.

is boast that "I don't know any more out theology than a jack-rabbit nows about ping-pong, but I'm on my ay to glory" didn't sit well with a ople who figured you weren't much a Christian until you had come to rms with Calvin's Institutes of the hristian Religion.

Now Billy Sunday was perhaps not the most ute social thinker and critic of his day. But he ew something was up, and he used the symbols ailable in his experience to describe it. What he s straining to describe, I would say, is the rtentious dawning in American life of a wholly v thing: a society of consumers, with its lically new definition of a good person and the od life. To the hard-working middle-class izen of the nineteenth century, the good life plied something called "character." The aracter ideal brought with it a certain suspicion the self. The self was the source of troubling notional fluctuations, unruly impulses. The f reminded one of the squabbling infant, vays wanting, crying, demanding, blatant in its al cravings. So a person of character cultivated f-denial, self-control, self-discipline, self-straint; and avoided, as destructive of good character and of the good life, self-will, self-expression, self-indulgence, self-gratification. This character ideal, closely identified with Christian morality, as Max Weber has shown, made for hard workers, who fit nicely the requirements of the early stages of the productive revolution in capitalism.

But at the turn of the century in the United States, industrial capitalism was quietly nearing a crisis. In a funny way, it had been *too* successful. Goods poured in ever increasing profusion out of factory doors. New worries preoccupied economists and businesspeople. Who would buy these goods? Certainly not the sober, thrifty hard workers whose long hours produced those goods—not, at least, unless you could change their minds about sobriety and thrift. What the world needed now was consumers, flagrant lovers of new things, new experiences, new feelings. Too much of the austere life would bring the industrial machine clanking to a halt.

So in Billy Sunday's time, beginning in the 1890s, giant industrialists and their advertising allies, bolstered by recent findings in psychology, were making it their business to replace the obsolete ethic of self-restraint, thrift, the suspicion of impulse or desire, with a new ethic of *spendthrift,* of instant self-gratification and the cultivation of infinite desire, the better to sell the goods piling up in warehouses. Their messages were blatant assaults on the old Protestant morality. Life is for fun, they said; luxury is your birthright; every human desire is healthy if it can be gratified, perferably right now, preferably for a price.

Billy Sunday did not exactly have it right when he blamed this assault on wicked *individuals.* In actuality, there was an historic, systemic change in motion. But his instincts were right on target. His favorite whipping boys—the saloon-keeper, the prostitute, the society woman—were in fact powerful symbols for the inner dynamic of the new consumerist ethic. At the moment he spoke, advertising agencies were finding ever more creative ways to inspire in Americans a shopping- and buying-addiction quite as enslaving and as intoxicating as the alcohol addiction; were discovering how to attach sexual meanings to material products, as enticements to consumers; and were in their ads consciously depicting the so-called "society woman," with her penchant for owning and displaying the latest in luxury goods, as an object of envy for every woman. Sunday may not have been very good at economics, but he knew there was a monster stalking the land, and that Christian character was its prey. He described it in the only words he had. Men and women today, he said,

are hiding behind. . .stocks and bonds, dry goods, infidelity, whiskey, beer, love of ease, my friends, Sunday and Sabbath desecration. Genuineness, purity, Christian nobility and integrity are lost in the search for fortune, and in their ambition to gratify their desires to drink at the bubbly spring of pleasure.

Billy Sunday, in his own way, supplied words to describe the human dynamic behind the consumer society in whose pleasant pastures we all now graze: an ambition to gratify our desires to drink at the bubbly spring of pleasure. His antidote to this liberation of desire was the old character ideal. His calls to Christian character are not absent today—of course. But increasingly they are outshouted by the appeal of the media to what the nineteenth century would have been quick to label our basest instincts. The media—television, particularly, but also movies, popular music, magazines and newspapers—surround us all from earliest childhood with their enticement to the consumer ideal. The strange mixtures of these ideals with one another, both in the media and in the primary social institutions, have meant that we do not often explicitly recognize that we are dealing here with two very contradictory sets of messages. But I would suggest that these two sets of messages do indeed comprise powerful voices within our very beings, and point us in very different directions behaviorally, to our own confusion.

Certainly none of this is news to any of us here. But it wouldn't hurt to listen to the two voices for just a bit, as a way of reminding ourselves of what we may be now be oblivious to, after years of the media regimen. The character ethic says to us: work hard—hard work is good for you, it builds character, it contributes to the welfare of others. The consumption ethic says: work is a drag—don't do any more of it than necessary; rather, play hard, and get as much leisure time as possible. The character ethic says: be sober, be moderate in everything you do, make your decisions slowly and carefully, act responsibly, and always consider the consequences of your acts, make sure they will hurt no one, and not bring disrespect to you. The consumer ethic responds: live it up, pull out all the stops, grab for all the gusto; you had better act quickly, follow your impulses—who knows,the sale may end tomorrow, the chance for ecstasy may not present itself again; do what feels good now, don't worry about the consequences—you can always deal with them by hiring a lawyer or getting a loan, a divorce, an abortion, a pill. The character ethic cautions: be frugal, save your money, be cautious with your resources—you've got to think about the future, plan for your family in the uncert years ahead. The consumer ethic responds: spe it now, while you've got it—there's no tomorr live at the edge of your means, or beyond, if th the only way to feel good; don't worry, we arrange easy credit, no need to wait. character ethic says: be loyal to your emplo give a good day's work; keep your commitme do what you promise to do, be a little tough yourself. The consumer ethic says: be loyal to one but yourself, your tastes, your needs, y feelings—other people are out there to use you, use them instead; keep your commitments so l as it doesn't cost you anything, and then, w people will understand, you've gotta do wh best for you. The character ethic, in its Christi

Sunday may not have been very go at economics, but he knew there wa monster stalking the land, and th Christian character was its prey.

voice, warns: only one life 'twill soon be p only what's done for Christ will last. consumer ethic responds: hey baby, you only one life, that's exactly right; you've got every ri to spend your days as comfortably, as happily, the next guy. If you don't, you're missing out what life is really all about. Only a jerk does th

Are these voices not familiar to you? They familiar to me, of course, or I probably would be talking about them. I hear them often, drawi me in this direction or that, warning me that t path leads to happiness, but no, that path leads happiness. Behind one are the morally and em tionally charged tones of childhood authority, parent, teacher, pastor, and yes, of God. Behi the other, the incessant and very seducti melodies of the media. Each voice carries variety of guilt for those who ignore its warnin the moral guilt of not being good enough, t existential guilt of simply not being *enough*. T character voice inculcates fear, the consum voice calls out yearning. Each tells us we can something, must be something, if we are experience life rightly, that we must have our a together in a particular fashion or else we w miss out, we will be nothing—or worse, we w suffer, temporally or eternally. But we cann obey both voices, not without a great deal

ɔnalization and self-decption. So we obey one, now the other, and fall prey to the ings of both voices, never really experiencing ɛwards offered by either one. One voice is ɪys condemning us, so a low-level anxiety be- es our companion.

ɪe voice which speaks today with greatest er, I believe, is the consumerist voice. When ' Sunday preached his sermons, and the good ch people of Michigan worried about the s of worldliness among their youth, the media young. Cinema was nascent, the *Ladies' ɪe Journal* only in its second decade, ʼision and radio networks non-existent, the ılkman" unimagined. One could still *notice* media. The ethic of consumerism, the siren to the immediate gratification of every ulse, could still surprise folks raised by the l maxims of the Protestant ethic. In our day, ever, the media have come to a pernicious urity, unleashing their imperatives upon an ı more submissive population, and yet a ulation which takes less and less explicit ce of the fact that it has been encompassed. media are no longer experienced as insolent ısts at our pocketbooks, our values, our ieties—thrusts which, in the 1950s, got ıgelicals out of their chairs in the middle of *Milton Berle Show* to turn down the volume he beer commercials. The media have become reality. That which is not media we see ɔugh lenses provided *by* the media. Those es, of course, have been fashioned by *ɪomic* agents. The profit margins and market ɛes of corporate entities are their single cern—notwithstanding all the impressive talk ntrepreneurial excellence and the protests one rs that the free enterprise system liberates ıan beings.

'o make money, the media must relieve us of s. This means making us, keeping us, *hungry* what, they are quick to tell us, only money can . They quicken and sustain our hunger by dis- cting us with some aspect—indeed, with every ɛct—of our personal existence. They incite iety, fear of missing out, worry about ap- rance, dissatisfaction with everything we e, everything we are. We hear from them one dominant, but all too little noticed, ısage: you are not enough. They assay at our pest human yearnings—to escape, to possess, opulate, to win, to excel, to be utterly happy fulfilled. They do all this by means now ɛant, now subliminal, but always calculated. ɛir accusations that we are missing what's best life, their soothing promises, are lies—but ɔealing, seductive ones. Even when we ɔgnize them as lies, we cannot escape the ıaging of our brains by their images, nor very easily shut off the inner voice, which whines, in Billy Sunday's words, but "life is for the gratification of desires, and for drinking at the bubbly spring of pleasure."

The late Ernest Becker described human beings as living "between appetite and ingenuity." Our century has amply demonstrated human ingenuity in the ever-diversifying application of rational technique first to the task of exciting our appetites, then to the pretense of satisfying them. The vast proliferation of so-called goods and services has not slaked but rather increased human appetite, not satisfied but deepened the hunger within. Early in the game, Billy Sunday knew that the society in which he lived increasingly had something to do with appetite, with hunger. "Our-indulgence," he said, ". . .feeding their passions, glutting their appetites on champagne, cocktails and wines, highly seasoned food, O God, that's what made the(m) wrecks." He urged the faithful to "fight against physical appetite. . .against the demands of an inflamed appetite" which cries out for "the gratification of some desire." Sunday shouted to another crowd, "So you people are being choked to death trying to gulp down the forbidden things of the world."

Martin Luther, who could be as creative with language as Billy Sunday, described his own society as "the filthy and deadly kingdom of the belly." How much more accurately he characterized American life in 1988. We are the people who consume and are not satisfied, but rather, ourselves, consumed. We conduct our business over meals, we relax by pouring alcohol and inhaling smoke into our mouths, we carry coffee with us to class, our natioinal news magazines feature chocolate in their cover stories, we flock to trendy restaurants and gourmet delis for enticing edibles from New Zealand and Bali, we devise ever new kitchen technologies, we pay more for a fancy meal than our parents spent on a large family's weekly grocery bill. Literally, we consume. But "consumption" now also denotes the promised quenching of our deeper emotional thirsts with an infinite array of manufactured delicacies, feeding the bottomless emotional pit with whatever the media, conspiring with our inflamed imaginations, assure us will fill it up, make us feel good, satisfied, happy—right now. We are mad for the consumption of just about everything, whether it be the ever more bizarre array of luxurious goods and pampering services, ever more inventive sexual fantasies and experiences, (not to mention partners), travel to exotic shrines both secular and sacred in quest of life-changing revelations, new techniques of child management, body management, home management, business management, church management,

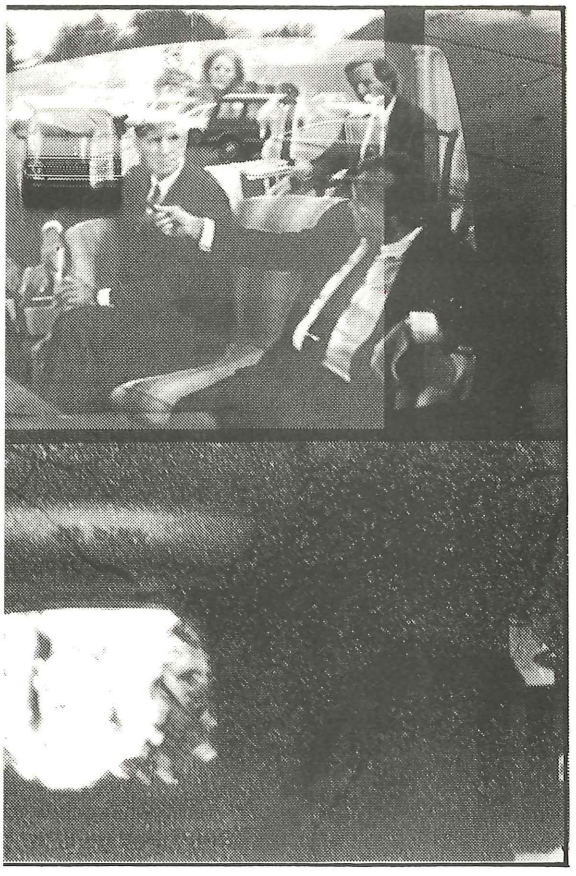
money management, life management. All these and more we devour greedily, thinking to ease the incessant hunger, to relieve the frantic anxiety that accompanies our emptiness. But the hunger is somehow never sated, the belly never full for more than a few fleeting moments. And indeed, this is the way it must be, for the kingdom of the belly is also, and most importantly, a complex modern economy whose very vitality, depends on our hunger being infinite, our desire unending.

And now I want to speak more specifically of Christian college students, which is after all, my topic. I believe it is in evangelical college students today that, if we have eyes for them, we see the ravages wrought by the historic confrontation of the consumer ethic with the character ethic. These ravages have their external marks, of course, but ever more disturbingly they can be sensed in the hidden confusion, the anxiety, the hunger, and the guilt which mark the inner lives of Christian college students. It is these outer and inner marks, and the response of Christian institutions like families, schools, and churches to them, that I would like to explore with you in the time remaining to me.

What is the most obvious fact that separates contemporary evangelical students from their counterparts of, say, 1950? I think many of us would agree it is their success as consumers. Students today dwarf, in the sheer weight of their luggage, the college students of a generation ago. Increasingly, they drive to school in their cars, laden with fancy toys, awash in cosmetics, prepared to fill closets with whatever clothing fashion dictates. They bring with them huge libraries—not of books, of course, but of cassette tapes and records, and some bring televisions for their rooms. They have a precious acquaintance with credit cards and are accustomed to spending money. Many have traveled extensively, and think nothing of flying to an exotic vacation spot or just flying home for a long weekend. Often they seem to have mysterious sources of money, not associated with any obvious form of work. Those who are not wealthy enough to possess these accoutrements of happiness, very often envy those who are, and count themselves somehow less as persons for the comparison. They hope, in due time, to remedy their want.

They also come to us as persons thoroughly possessed by, and generally uncritical of, the modern media. Untold hours of their lives have passed as they watched television. Quite a few, I am told, attend TV soap operas somewhat more faithfully than church. Many of them peruse the glossy fashion and lifestyle magazines and contemplate the images of the beautiful people. They show a familiarity with the goings on among celebrities, even those they don't particularly admire. They have lived their lives within the medium popular music, as a fish lives in water. They somehow naked without it. They find it natu and unremarkable to conduct their lives w music plugged into their ears. If you suggest th might be something odd about this, unbeliev stares will meet you, and eventually, fervent fenses of the sort one associates with religi apologetics. Today's students have attended cinema since at least elementary school age, h heard language and observed human behavi that were prohibited even to the imagination previous generation. Some bring video casse of their favorite movies to school with them. student told me she had seen a movie called *Big Chill* thirty times, and hoped to see it thi more. Spend an evening with them, as I h occasionally, around a campfire in the mou tains, where the media are physically absent, a the topic invariably turns to: the media. movies are relived. *Leave It To Beaver* segme are nostalgically re-enacted by students who w not yet born when the series first aired. And, course, rock music. Children of Mennonites, the Reformed, of Catholics, of Bapt fundamentalists, all singing as if they had gone a rock music catechism class together, songs fr the '50s, '60s, '70s, '80s, all the words of all verses, all the fancy rhythms, guitar lic grimaces, wails and moans. Hours and hours this.

But these are just the outward marks of toda student population. The inward marks are har to discern, precisely because the consumer soci has made available to them such an array of ou finery. Beneath the finery, what do we fi Perhaps I am treading on thin ice to describe elusive a thing as the inner landscape, but I v tell you how it seems to me. It is my experie that we find, among other things, the extre self-consciousness of the adolescent, raised fever pitch by the siren calls of the media. S dents today, as adolescents always, are scru lously aware of how they appear to others—b the consumer society has so vastly extended possible accountrements and permutations *appearance* that keeping up the *right* a *pearances* before one's peers can become a fu time job. Today's students, it seems to me, busy about the management of dress, grooming and odor, of gesture, of expression, speech, of friendship, of feelings, and for ma of piety. All this management, of course, ta time, and so, many of our students do not qu do justice to the classes they take and the boo they read—the *appearance* of academic succ is, after all, somewhat more important than t mastery of an author's ideas or the cultivation a critical mind. On the whole, I have t



ression that students today are somewhat less able of reading and understanding a difficult k than those of a generation ago, but perhaps re capable of speaking smoothly and confitly about a book they have not really read—ware that to the practiced ear they are giving nselves away. I suspect this is because to ak smoothly and confidently is a consequence ears of managing appearances, giving the imssion of substance where there is often none.

the same token, students today seem newhat more angry and defensive when they confronted with their lack of substance, seem capable of hearing criticism with an open id. Their egos seem very fragile, which makes arder to teach them anything. They seem to e a stake in *appearing* already to know what want to teach them. Criticism, or the implicaı that they might not know something, eatens to topple them into the void that, one ses, comprises the core of their being.

his void, I think, is at the center of each of us. it seems to yawn so much bigger at the center oday's students, made all the more stunning the disparity between it and the outward imssion of substance. I am convinced this disity is, at least in part, the consequence of the dia barrage which *cultivates* our anxiety, our se that we are not enough, our emotional and stential hunger. I am tempted to say that this dia-deepened hunger is the most elemental reality of the secret lives of today's students. It comes in all sorts of packages, combined with the particular ingredients of each person's constitution, temperament, biography. It is well-hidden, in some, beneath a fairly effective family or religious socialization; in others, it constitutes an open wound, for any to see who get to know the person well, perhaps so intrusive that it hinders effective functioning in the world. I suspect it is this hunger which prevents so many of today's students from sitting still at a desk, with a book, for more than a few minutes at a time; this hunger, growling up from the depths of their being whenever they are left alone, or in silence, that feeds the demand for constant sensory stimulation; this hunger that is at the bottom of their thirst for new friends, new intimacies, and yet which results so often in disappointing and exploitive relationships with their peers; this hunger which fuels the excessive alcohol consumption and party-going among students today; and this hunger which comprises the existential meaning of the alarming rates of bulimia in today's student population.

I have been speaking, of course, about the general student population. But there are increasingly, on our campuses, students who have been more deeply wounded, in ways that we cannot analyze as simply the fruit of 30,000 TV commercials or the daily companionship of rock music. Almost invariably, these more troubled students are trying to play the consumerist game, are trying to manage appearances like everyone else, but without the kinds of resources that come from an intact, supportive family. I do not doubt that even at Calvin, students from broken homes make up a rising percentage of the campus population. Perhaps they are a minority, but they are a significant minority, and increasingly they bring their special problems to the attention of the college as a whole. Often, they come from homes where parents in pursuit of the consumerist mirage, in quest for wealth, fame, and happiness, or the *appearance* of wealth, fame and happiness, have not loved their children very well. When we first talk with these students, they tell us how perfect their parents are, what wonderful love was shared in their home. Familial loyalty is, of course, normal, but is reinforced by the unspoken pacts by which so many troubled familes keep their secrets from the outside world, and also by the consumerist concern with maintaining appearances. But once they begin to trust us, all too often they tell a different story: of parents trapped by their own insatiable yearnings, who unwittingly handled their children as if they were consumer items, for their own pleasure—children they came to resent as demanding more than they gave; of parents who

"loved" them so long as they did not demand the kind of personal involvement that might complicate a lifestyle of corporate climbing and personal freedom, of absent, anxiously overworked, uncommunicative fathers and lonely, emotionally-starved mothers who bequeathed to their children the oral cravings, the capacity only for shallow relationships, the longing for quick intimacy, the violent swings of self-esteem, and the deep rage that mark both the narcissistic parent and child. Our students speak to us, often, of a trust between generations that has been broken: broken by divorce, by cold estrangement, by violence and sexual abuse in the home, by strange combinations of funseeking and cheap moralizing, by day-care desertion and the rest of the symptoms mirroring the unraveling and the suffering of the contemporary family—the contemporary evangelical family, too, as many of us here today must know from personal experience. The symptoms of our college students—not all of our students, certainly, but an increasing number of them—speak of a psychological battering by a society which conspires to inflame appetite and sell goods rather than nurture human beings. Those symptoms are familiar to college counseling departments: bulimia and anorexia, boredom and inertia, suicidal urges and depression, compulsive drug and alcohol abuse, obsessions with bodily appearance,

We hear from [the media] one predominant but all too little noticed, message: You are not enough.

profligate and almost panicked, but generally unfulfilling, sexual activity, anger and helplessness and emptiness—all indications that, in becoming consumers, they are being consumed.

The violence done by the consumer society to the human spirit is nowhere more evident, in my opinion, than in the lives of the most sensitive of our Christian college students. It is as if the words of Yahweh to the people of Israel, recorded in Deuteronomy, were being fulfilled in the very different—though perhaps not so different—circumstances of our day:

> *Because you did not serve the Lord your God with joyfulness and gladness of heart, by reason of the abundance of all things, therefore you shall serve your enemies whom the Lord will send against you, i hunger and thirst, in nakedness, and in wa of all things; and he will put a yoke of iro upon your neck, until he has destroye you. . . . And you shall eat the offspring your own body, the flesh of your sons an daughters, whom the Lord your God h given you, in the siege and in the distre with which your enemies shall distre you. . .will grudge to the husband of h bosom. . .her children whom she bear because she will eat them secretly, for wa of all things in the siege. . .with which yo enemy shall distress you in your towns. . .* (28:47-48, 56-57).

Surely we are a nation which, amidst plenty, f in want of all things. Surely, in hunger and th we are eating our children.

There is another biblical image which com ments this picture of consumption run wild. It speaks of a town—or better, a city. Through the Bible, as Jacques Ellul has pointed out, ci appear as symbols of human culture, pl where humanity orders it affairs. Since hum attempt to order their own affairs independen God, their sort of order turns out to be a disor a "city of chaos," in the words of Isaiah. T place of freedom becomes a place of slav Their choice for life in independence of God comes, in actuality, a choice for death. Babylo the premier symbol of the reign of death chaos in the human city. In Babylon was fo "the blood. . .of all who have been slain on ea (18:24).

What city was like the great city?" ask th who mourn Babylon's passing in the 18th cha of Revelation (18:18). Perhaps every city i some respect like the great city, since, as it s "all nations have drunk the wine of her imp passion, and the kings of the earth h committed fornication with her, and merchants of the earth have grown rich with wealth of her wantonness" (18:3). Has there b a nation more wealthy, more wanton, than own, more like this city "clothed in fine linen purple and scarlet, bedecked with gold, w jewels, and with pearls?" (18:16). And can we hear a reminder of our own plight in the fact th among the items bought and sold in this gr city—scented wood, ivory, . . .bronze, ir marble" and other such fine commodities—finds listed last, but most pointedly, the bod and souls of humans? (18:11-12). It may help understand the dynamics of our own socie which trafficks so effectively in human souls, hear that, in the chapter, Babylon's power deceive is described as sorcery (18:23).

Babylon is also, in the Bible, the place

)tivity for God's people. Understanding them-
/es as captives, the people of God refuse to fall
:y to her sorcery, although the price of their
:dience to God is the blood of the prophets and
saints (18:24). Babylon revels in her wealth
l her wantonness, declares herself a queen,
;ks in her own glory and thinks herself shielded
m loss and death. In words strangely applica-
to the promises of the consumer society, she
:lares herself eternally happy: "mourning I
ıll never see," is her boast (18:7). In contrast,
people of God sit down and weep by the
ters of Babylon. The merriment of the city, her
:tensions, her promises, do not ring true to the
)tives. The Babylonian captors require mirth.
is is the city of fun—have fun with us, they say.
t the people of God have only tears. They wait,
sadness but in hope, for their Deliverer. They
it for the salvation of the world by the one who
l burn the "city of chaos" with fire, bringing
edom to those in its thrall, preparing a better
y, where "death shall be no more, neither shall
re be mourning nor crying nor pain any
)re. . ." (Rev. 21:4).

have been speaking about Christian college
dents and their life in the city of Babylon, the
y of chaos and of mirth. And, as captives,
haps they should be weeping. But we do not
en find them, or any of us, weeping. Occa-
nally—in the more obviously wounded—there
moments of weeping, when the inner chaos of
ir lives, the reality of their captivity, breaks
ough, in confidential conversation, perhaps in
presence of a caring counselor or teacher. But
en all this moment yields is shame—shame
ıt they are mourning when everyone else is
iling, shame that they have allowed reality to
:ak through appearance—and often enough
:y try by any means to put their inner chaos out
their minds and join the fun-seekers in the
rsuit of the good life. To mourn is not to be
pular, and not to be popular hurts more than
:ping one's suffering silent. There are many
)re of these walking around among us than we
ow.

But there are also the walking wounded who do
t seem to even know they are wounded. Who
: these students? They are the ones who are
ıying the game so well, and are so reinforced in
:ir playing of this game by the world around
:m, that the inner chaos and the hunger that
/ell in each human soul, particularly in the
nsumerist soul, have been kept well below the
/el of consciousness. These students have been
:cessfully specialized by the consumer society.
ıey know how to look, to act, to speak. They
ve the money to be fashionable and do the
;hionable things. They receive the admiring
ınces of their friends, the right friends, whose

congratulation of them is really self-congratula-
tion. They are spending their adolescent years be-
coming exactly the sort of happy consumer hero
the media applauds, yet all the while they believe
they are becoming unique individuals, that they
are achieving the separate identity which will one
day mark them as adults. The media clearly helps

I have the impression that students today are somewhat less capable of reading and understanding a difficult book than those of a generation ago, but perhaps more capable of speaking smoothly and confidently about a book they have not really read—unaware that to the practiced ear they are giving themselves away.

them label their conformity as individuality, and
thus contributes to their false resolution of an im-
portant developmental task—a resolution which
will come back to haunt them, I believe, after the
giddy consumerist binge that characterizes so
many successful young adults in our society
gradually winds down, and they find in their '30s
and '40s that they are strangers to themselves.

But these "happy" students are not sheltered
from the truth of their lives, from their capacity
amidst plenty, merely by their success at playing
the games of consumerism. They are—many of
them at least—also sheltered by their success at
playing the game of Christianity. Because we are
here at Calvin College, we can probably assume
that most of the students we know have been
taught specifically to play the game of Dutch Re-
formed Christianity. I hope that I can speak
about this version of Christianity just a bit,
without losing your goodwill. I assure you that I
speak as a friend, not an enemy. I have admired
the Dutch Reformed subculture throughout
perhaps fifteen years of intermittent contact—
contact particularly embodied in my relation-
ship with the Calvin students who have come to
study with us at the Oregon Extension, and in a
bit of reading in the history of theology of the
Dutch Reformed community in America. It
seems obvious to me that this community under-
stood very early in the game that the modern
world posed a threat to its youth, and thus to the
preparation of its community. They responded
by strengthening social institutions—families,
schools, churches which conveyed to young
people, with remarkable intellectual vigor, the
doctrinal foundation of their faith and the right
and proper manner in which this faith is to be
lived out in the world. The Dutch Reformed com-

munity, more than most American immigrant communities, had its act together at the dawn of the consumer culture, and devised very effective ways of *keeping* its act together. And I would say that many of the Dutch Reformed students whom I have known do indeed "have their acts together" in quite pleasing ways.

To a teacher like myself, this is a wonderful thing. The best of the Calvin College students I have known seem to have caught the Reformed respect for ideas. They may not allow themselves to ask the most "radical" and "useless" kinds of questions, but they do ask questions and are willing to study hard to seek answers. The next best of them may not be very interested in ideas, but they do what they're told—they read books, take notes if you ask them to, come to class on time, write papers with complete sentences and intelligent transitions, and make the task of educating them relatively trouble-free. The worst of them—and now I am only reflecting the rumors I've heard—are in college to have as much fun as possible while they do what they've been told they must do: go to Calvin, marry Dutch and get a degree that qualifies them for some kind of useful job. Even in that group, aside from the most stubborn rebels, you find students respectful of authority, students who do not throw in front of their teachers quite so many of the roadblocks one meets in college teaching these days.

As compared with students in general, and even with evangelical students in general, Calvin College students manifest some very pleasing traits. But, as always, there is more to the story. Over the years, I have been interested to hear the reactions of other evangelical students to the students from Calvin College whom they meet. Calvin students, they say, are friendly and seem very mature. They seem like the kind of person you'd want to get to know. But as time goes by, they say, often another quality emerges, which they find confusing. Beneath a surface friendliness, there seems to be a kind of reserve. You can't really talk honestly with them, they say, or get very personal. They notice a one-dimensionality in many Calvin students. Do Calvin students have feelings? Do they ever struggle with self-doubt? Do they hurt? Are they wounded? Well, of course, since they're humans, but you wouldn't exactly know it. They seem closed to these deeper levels within themselves. It's not so easy to make real friends of them. It's not easy to weep with them.

This quality, in many Dutch Reformed students, I think, is the flip side of the fact that they so often seem to "have their acts together." The Dutch Reformed community in America has walled its students fairly successfully against the most disintegrating moral effects of the consum society. It has made them a bit more financial prudent than most Americans these days. It h seen to the inculcation of the character ideal, what Weber called the "protestant ethic." But may well be that these same walls, carefully co structed of family, school and church, have nece sarily walled young people off from themselve and from even an awareness of the hunger ar chaos that—I would suggest—do inde characterize their inner beings. After all, even t walls of the Dutch Reformed subculture have n been thick enough, in most familes, to have ke the consumerist media out. I would surmis although I don't know how to measure this, th the inner beings of today's Dutch Reform youth are in truth considerably more chaotic ar

yearning than those of their counterparts of generation or two ago. The surface orderliness suspect, has hidden the truth of their inner bein from many Dutch Reformed youth. They do n often *act out* their chaos, but neither do th often even *sense* their chaos. If they do, they fe confused and fearful at the hint that they are n truly what they appear to be. Such inner glimps are usually accompanied by guilt, and spur variety of conscious and unconscious strateg to resolve the dissonance: renewed moral dis pline, devotional fervor, church involvemer some variety of asceticism, or just plain r pression, which it appears to me the Dutch R formed community, like most evangelical co munities, is very good at.

What I am suggesting is that the Dutch ormed community has evolved a very effec- style of denial. The Calvin students I have ed to have generally come from very warm, portive families, families that are not yet dis- grating at nearly the pace of the average erican or even evangelical family. I sense nething *solid* in the Calvin students I know— nething that I often do not sense in the children divorced or otherwise disordered families. ere a void yawns in so many college students ay, there seems a place to stand, however ky—as it must be in adolescence—in many vin students. I do not chalk up this particular lity to the walls of denial, but to the most pre- us gift two parents can give a child—uncon- onal love and support, in the context of a deep st in God and in God's unconditional love and port. In evangelical students generally, I find only reluctantly admitted, suspicion, distrust, l often hatred of God—in large part, because he more revivalistic and Arminianized evan- ical mainstream, God's love has not been seen unconditional but as wholly dependent on er emotional states and outer behaviors. This trust of God does not seem so apparent in tch Reformed youth. Most Dutch Reformed ith tell me their parents are strict, but giving, and they say they feel trusted and sup- rted by them. But they also say that in the nily, a heavy emphasis was placed in maintain- *appearances,* on putting on your best face in blic, on being nice rather than truthful. They ak of how often negative feelings were not per- tted expression—Christian people don't feel t way, don't talk like that. Some Christian

e College is in fact the offspring of th worlds—the consumer world of pearances and the Christian world appearances.

formed adolescents go along, trying their best extinguish whatever inner chaos they feel; ers feel resentful, but confused and guilty out their resentment. In both cases, alongside ir deep love and respect for their parents, there ows up an invisible wall between them and their rents. And a wall goes up inside as well, shelter- them from the inner chaos of an adolescent istence. They grow distant from themselves, rful of their real lives. They become experts at management of appearances. They do not become expert at *speaking the truth in love.*

So it is an interesting paradox that, in protecting itself from the consumer culture, the Dutch Reformed subculture institutionalized an emphasis on the maintenance of appearances and the accompanying psychological denials that are also inherent in the consumer culture itself. The paradox deepens when one considers the evangelical college—perhaps even Calvin College. When the evangelical student goes off to an evangelical college, he or she is not leaving behind the realm in which appearances count for everything. The college is in fact the offspring of both worlds—the consumer world of appearances and the Christian world of appearances. College is, and must be these days, a consumer item, selling itself competitively in the educational marketplace. Calvin's privileged status as a CRC college modifies this somewhat, but does not prevent it from having to attract students by means of enticing promotional material. This material's claims are not quite so inflated as those of many colleges I have seen, but still rely on full-color photos of uniformly vibrant, happy, smiling students having fun on the Calvin campus. These images inform entering students of how they are to be, and I believe contribute to making the campus a place where the truth cannot be told. Nowhere is it hinted in its promotional literature that beneath these pleasing appearances there is a reality on the Calvin College campus that is somewhat more mournful, a reality that might appropriately be described as *suffering* or *captivity.* This distorted self-promotion is necessary, of course, for who would come to a college that described its faculty and students somewhat more biblically—say, as poor Lazarus, full of sores, being licked by the dogs? How much more pleasing and effective to depict ourselves as the rich man, clothed in purple and fine linen? (Luke 16:19-20). Who would attend a college advertised for the lame, the blind and the halt, for the captives in mourning, instead of for the happy and the whole?

And of course the images of happiness, wholeness, success that give allure to our promotional materials often pervade the educational climate as well. You may judge whether this is so at Calvin. These images are subtly present in the well-articulated liberal arts ideology offering inflated promises of intellectual wholeness, often in Christian garb (as in "the integration of faith and learning,") encouraging the brightest students to imagine that perhaps by thinking they can escape the limits, the brokenness, the futility of the human condition. We defend various occupational tracks as "vocations," places of Christian achievement and freedom so long as they are mixed with the proper dose of Christian morals—

when perhaps we should be presenting them honestly as the locale, so often in our society, of grinding boredom, of daily disappointment, of captivity and spiritual defeat, of a rigid technical efficiency instead of love, as indeed they must be if they are to play their part in the economic mechanism which is bigger than any of us. These false academic heroisms flow, I think, from the need to offer college education as a consumer commodity, with its implied promise to parents that a Calvin degree will contribute to intellectual, social, vocational wholeness, and not to a recognition of our captivity in Babylon, of the mournfulness we feel in the presence of consumerist mirth.

And, of course, to dreams of *eduational* wholeness we add visions of *Christian* wholeness. Too often, the Christian college blithely and, I think, uncritically reinforces the "character ideal" which its students bring with them from their childhood experience. Chapel speakers are offered as examples of Christian heroism. In chapel and classroom one receives prescriptions for orderly living, encouragements to practice the familiar austerities, to read the Bible as a hedge against moral disaster, to pray and attend church as a way of keeping your act together. College is your last chance to get your act together under kindly instruction, and many a student is urged to have unrealistic expectations on that score. Books like *Celebration of Discipline* or *Ordering Your Private World* make extravagant claims, offering programs for spiritual heroism, entailing perhaps Christian scholarship or devotional fervor, or doctrinal purity, or moral goodness, or selfless Christian service, or voluntary poverty, or social activism, or ethics in business. Each of these programs attracts disciples, encouraging them to appear to be what they are not. Each feeds the hungry, but with food that does not satisfy because it does not tell the truth about us. And in our classes, too often, we faculty members parade our own Christian or scholarly heroism as an accomplished fact, hesitating to speak the truth of our own lives, our own families, our own fears, ashamed to mourn our own captivity. We are perhaps rightly concerned that we be "role models," but greatly mistaken, I think, as to what roles to model.

The city of Babylon, the consumer city of our own time, boasts of its immunity to mourning. Yet, Jesus blessed those who mourn, promising them not success, not heroism, not even an ordered inner life, but comfort. The Psalmist, writing as a Babylonian captive, speaks of the mourning of the people of God, not of their celebration of discipline. Isn't it odd that in our time, the Christian community adds its own false promises to those of the consumer society? That the appearance of spirituality joins the appe ance of happiness and success to alienate us fr our own inner disorder? That as Christians can no more admit to failure, to anger and sa ness and fear, to our inner despair, than call those smiling beautiful people beckoning to from all those slick commercials? Isn't it odd th though we are captives in the city of chaos, we f so little permission to speak the truth of our o

Years of American evangelical se justification have domesticated t Cross, drained it of its meaning, of i shocking witness to our captivity, of i liberating witness to the One who with us *in our captivity.*

lives to one another, to mourn our own captivit

I would hazard a guess that unless these wa of denial are broken down, in evangelicalism a in the Dutch Reformed community, the comi generations of Christian people in America w suffer very serious consequences. Before t media, or perhaps in the media's infancy, su cultural walls may well have been effective structuring the soul to some degree and minimi ing the inner chaos which is ours as Adam race—although I would argue that the charact ideal has always borne fruit in silent sufferi and, alternatively, manifest pride. But toda with the media technically advanced, cunnin and ubiquitous, the character ideal more a more falsifies the underlying realities of our live I do not doubt that the city of chaos will increa ingly put its marks on our lives. This means t divorce rate will be on the rise, even in the Dut Reformed community, as will the incidence emotional disturbance, child abuse, mid-li crisis, marital infidelity, and adolescents who a out their despair. The growing disparity betwe pretensions to inner order and the reality of t inner chaos will put a very great strain on t Dutch Reformed community, as on eve remaining community—on its theology, its ins tutions, and the spirits of its people. It will bad need a way of easing some of those strains finding in its Christian tradition a permission break through the denials and tell the truth abo itself.

I am not a theologian, but I am convinced th our most urgent need, as American evangelical is for a fresh confrontation with the Word of G in Jesus Christ, and for a theological rethinki in light of that Word. That Word, and its biblic

ıesses, speak truthfully, and profoundly, to present situation. The Bible knows well that ıans are hungry. "Some wandered in desert tes," the Psalmist writes, "finding no way to a to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty, their soul ted within them." And what did they do? Did / flash the photogenic smile, did they look to liberating arts, perhaps to an attractive ɔlogy of Christian discipleship, spirituality, ɔism? Did they head for higher ground, the ɔutive suites of the corporate towers, roles of lership in the consumer society? The text says : "then they *cried* to the Lord in their *trouble,* he delivered them from their *distress;* he led n by a straight way, till they reached a city to ll in. . . . For *he* satisfies him who is thirsty, l the hungry *he* fills with good things" (Ps. :4-7, 9). Will we ever find *this* satisfaction, *this* ness, if we do not admit the hunger and thirst, sadness, the despair, the brokenness behind glossy smiles. Are we willing to wait for *that* , not made with human hands, a city we can ɔw only today only in hope, a city whose zens are set apart not by their moral goodness happy appearance but by their compassion, ir mourning, and their witness to the one who nds with them in their mourning?

The lord of which the Psalmist speaks, who fills hungry, is Jesus. And we should know, ıough with the disciples we forget, that the / of this Jesus is the way of the Cross. The ɔss, at the center of our faith and of God's re- ıtion to us, is today a shibboleth, a magical ket, a badge of honor, a sales pitch, a weapon. ırs of American evangelical self-justification e domesticated the Cross, drained it of its ıning, of its shocking witness to our captivity, ts liberating witness to the One who is *with us* our captivity. Particularly now, with evan- sm feeling its political oats, with our self- sfaction that even secular scholars are talking ɔut religion as a kind of social glue and moral unding, with in other words a new triumph- m beckoning to what used to be an embattled ngelical minority, a theology of the cross will easily find a hearing among evangelicals. As it ıow honored in our faith and practice, the ɔss offers little resistance to the consumer iety, little hope in an age of captivity to the ncipalities and the powers.

But it could! The Spirit of God could, in mercy, n the foolishness and the weakness of that ɔss into the power of God for us. *Then* we uld have new eyes for our world, for the wers which dominate us in futile but harmful iance of the victory of Jesus Christ, for the ıials that we have woven into the fabric of our titutions, for our own suffering and the suffer-

ing of those around us. The thick darkness which surrounds us might, for a moment, be dissipated, and our society's essence laid bare, for ourselves and our students, in light of the Cross. Our age is riven with such deep dissonances. The so-called "Enlightenment" has bequeathed us the rational expectations that human thought will perfect our world, that ideologies can explain and resolve every human problem, that science and technology can eliminate violence, sickness, death, that social control and human happiness can be married. And what is the reality, which even in our colleges, dedicated to truth, we generally dare not face? That in our world we witness the most stunning human chaos, the most brutal betrayals of ideology, the prostitution of science and technology, extremes of human powerlessness and misery. The staggering dissonance between Enlightenment pretensions and worldly reality constitutes a society living on the brink of despair. Only be believing its own propaganda, by incessantly averting its eyes from the truth and placing its hope in newly-devised illusions, does our society keep its citizens marching resolutely ahead.

The Cross stands as a challenge to that propaganda and false mirth, a threat to the sacred darkness where the powers of death are lurking.

In the Cross we see the highest human pretensions displayed as the deepest ignorance, the most brutal violence, the most abject captivity. Good people, the enlightened, the religious, the free—the evangelicals of Jesus' day, surely—in their rage for order and power and rightness, in their frantic affirmation of life, killed the God who sustained them and called to them and suffered with them from the very foundation of the world. Is it so surprising that we turn from reading the latest self-help books to inflict pain on our spouses, our children, our parents; that colleges with the highest ideals subject their students to the unnoticed violence of appearances; that churches become places of well-meaning lies and self-congratulation instead of places where confession can be heard and comfort offered? Surely the Cross is the revelation not of our freedom, but of our unwitting enslavement, a blind enslavement in which we truly do not know what we are doing. If we were to confess our captivity, before the Cross, we might, by the grace of God, part company if only for a moment with those Jewish evangelicals in John 8 who, despite a history of enslavement to virtually every power in the ancient world, could protest, "We are descendants of Abraham, and have never been in bondage to anyone" (vs. 33). Would it not be natural, then, to name those powers, whether they be technology, or money, or the state, or the educational enterprise, or the myths of the consumer society? Would not the naming of these powers, and the understanding of how they have their way with us, become the obvious content of academic courses in many departments of the college that calls itself christian? And would we not further, standing before that Cross, admit that it is those very principalities and powers which, in Paul's words, crucified the Lord of glory, and that in that crucifixion we too, as serving those powers, are deeply implicated? Might this confusion, shared with our students in concrete situations, offer those students the opportunity to speak the same truth of themselves? Surely in such an encounter, the thick wall of appearances would for once be breached. A moment of truth might eventuate in a momen healing.

When our students are permitted to speak the truth about themselves. . . then perhaps they will hear the wonderful news of the Holy One of Israel, the gospel of Jesus Christ, in a way that liberates and comforts.

That moment of healing, if it came, would a occur before the Cross. Because in this Cros revealed the texture of Christ's healing, a text foreign to the evangelical versions of the Ch tian life. It is a texture rooted in a mourning t is not ended but is comforted, in a lostness t continues to confess its lostness even as it v nesses to being found, in a disobedience not placed by moral perfection but rather gran forgiveness, anew, each day. It is on the Cr where we put him, that Jesus said th mysterious words: "Father, forgive them, for t do not know what they are doing." If we h those words rightly, we might not draw so ma lines between ourselves and the so-called secu world, but would be freer to admit what tenor of the liberal arts and our determi denials, even our subcultural walls so often ter us to forget: that we are among those who do know what we are doing, but that, thanks be God, he does know what he is doing, and that faith*less*ness will not defeat his faith*ful*ness. may, in gratitude, actually wish to serve this G whose steadfast love, whose compassion, wh longsuffering we so often obscure beh evangelical ideologies.

And in this spirit we may hear Christ's inv tion to join him in his suffering. Would this give us permission to speak the truth to another about our own suffering, the rag nature of our personal lives, our face-saving l our hidden tears, our exhaustion and hunger, invite others—yes, even our students—to spe finally, the truth about theirs? In the spirit of confession, our campus might be a place of co passion and of comfort, albeit openly of tears. be sure, the word of this Cross, spoken aloud consumer culture and a consumer college, wo generate opposition, perhaps persecution, wh in light of the Cross, we might be free to embr as the righteous judgment of God (II Thess. 5). We might then, finally, hear without emb rassment the word of our Lord, "in this world will have tribulation." But we would certai also hear his comfort and his promise, "Be good cheer, I have overcome the world" (16:33). We might actually find ourselves waiti students and faculty, parents and children, arr arm, for that day when "God himself will be v men; he will wipe away every tear from their e and death shall be no more, neither shall there mourning or crying nor pain anymore for former things have passed away" (Rev. 21:3 Waiting, with tears perhaps, but with the joy t smiles through tears, we might find oursel pointing away from the liberal arts, from vo tional success, from schemes for personal p

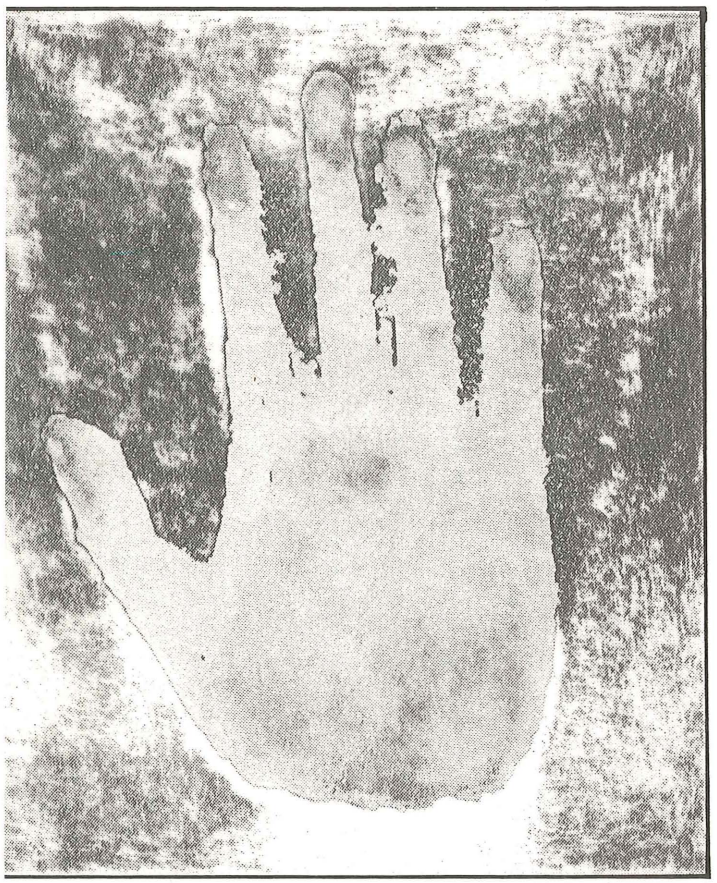
l psychic health, from leadership principles l eulogies to excellence, even away from our :itution and its well-scrubbed faculty and stu- ıts, and toward the Savior, who indeed is our ɔe—a hope that is not seen, as Paul writes, but :hose with ears to hear, our *only* hope.

ı college which hears again the gospel of the ɜs might well become a confessing college. In h a college, the painful truth might actually be rd, the heart revealed, compassion found. en our students are permitted to speak the aw- truth about themselves, truth which may cer- ıly be slow in coming even in the most com- sionate environment, then perhaps they will r the wonderful news of the Holy One of ıel, the gospel of Jesus Christ, in a way that :rates and comforts. I believe firmly that this l have educational effects far beyond those of · most creative schemes for the integration of h and learning. It will incite in our students :stions that come from the heart, questions on ich the academic disciplines will have much to . It will also incite a most productive anger in dents who have so long honored the realm of ɔearances, and who are so earnestly in the rket for heroic models to emulate, that they l at first feel betrayed by the truth. But a ıfessing faculty will resist the consumerist ɔeal of the quick fix, will be patient with anger, :n while finding ways to speak the truth in love. e confessing college will thus be a place of tur- ɔil and conflict, of despair and disillusionment, en of the dashing of the understandable but staken hopes of parent, church, even student. t it will be a place of serious personal engage- nt and encounter. The students who graduate m this sort of college will not be neatly- apped packages presented to the consumer :iety, but spirited (and sometimes dispirited) ugglers at some place along the journey to faith unbelief, and the confessing college may have wait many years (though always in hope) for any sign that its students did indeed come to know the suffering Savior of whom, we confess, we are unworthy servants (Luke 17:10). But as they leave our campus, aware less of their whole- ness than of their crippled limbs, some of our stu- dents might go out into the secular arena con- fessing that they too are captives. What a basis this would give them for standing with their neighbors of whatever community, for making common cause with those neighbors, for taking those neighbors' side in the battle against the powers, for speaking a good word for the Savior into the darkness of consumerism, for offering comfort without condescension, for showing compassion. Such students might just, by God's grace, contribute somewhat less willingly to the strong tower of denial that is American evangeli- calism, to the network of illusions that supports the consumer society. It could even be that they will offer that society the only word which promises hope, in an exceedingly dark and hungry age: the word of him who says:

> *Lo, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Hearken diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in fatness. Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live...* (Isaiah 55:1-3).

Douglas Frank, PhD is a graduate of Wheaton College and presently teaches at the Oregon Extension, part of Calvin's interdisciplinary program. *Our thanks to June Hamersma and the January Series committee. This lecture first was given in the series.*

Brian Sch



THE HEAT OF YOU

1. In the cold, at night
I move my foot to find you,
steal your heat with my *sole,*
sleep in ease, glad
for that heat of you,
heat which in summer
I turn from
toward the coolness of the sheet.

2. Smoke from your just-lit cigarette
lingers here,
with the heat of you,
heat that starts in the thighs,
flushes over belly and breast.

3. Building the deck, your heat escapes,
runs in rivulets down your back,
drips from your temples.
I speak, you don't look up,
but mumble, keep on pounding.
I step back, into the shade
and watch the heat of you
drop in dark stains on the raw wood.

—Sherri Korhorn

STORMING

I've been alone before
in this big house.
But tonight that old maple out back
is thrashing like a madman,
beating the sky in a primitive frenzy.
So loud. I can barely hear
the sharp ping of rain on the window.

—Sherri Korhorn

Good Feelings

by James Arkema

Garry, my brother, was nine. He looked thin. When he took off his shirt at night I could see that his flesh stretched across his slight arms and chest, holding him together like an elastic bag. He had a hazy visage. Small, colorless hairs covered his face, birthmarks on his temple and cheek faded into his yellowish-tan skin, he had shiny blond hair, his brown eyes overflowed their lids. He couldn't keep his teeth white, and his yellow, half-smile matched his skin.

* * *

At eleven, I already had muscles. The summer previous my father had been hospitalized and I had taken care of the family garden. It was medium-sized, but the produce, put up in Ball jars and in the freezer, helped our family through the winter. My father's small salary had to provide for three girls and two boys. I sweated through that summer and my mother and sisters were kept busy from late summer to fall snapping the beans, stripping the corn from the cobs, canning tomatoes, and making jellies. After that, when my parents went away and left my sister in charge, even though I was the second youngest I would tell the neighborhood kids, "I'm the man of the house today."

* * *

Since I can remember our family has spent a couple of summer weeks at Terrace Lake. The people in charge organize games for the children. One time that summer the leaders hid a dollar bill on the grounds. The kids were supposed to scramble out after it. I was wild. A dollar was good spending money—I could buy candy or save it until I could buy a toy. I poked under buildings and in tree stumps and places I was sure no one else looked. I wanted the dollar.

After more than half an hour of desperate searching, we all gathered back around the adult who had hid the dollar. No one had found it. The man led us to the place—it was spindled, sticking half out of a defunct water pipe underneath a cabin. I hated the way the man walked to it, like it was obvious, and I hated the children who crowded around the pipe and the man, push for the best view and bursting out in a sopra chorus that Gosh-that-is-the-best-hiding-pl and I'd've-never-guessed-that-it'd-be-here. I quiet. I had looked at that spot at least th times, only I somehow hadn't seen it.

We played the game again.

I didn't find it. Garry did.

I had been sure I would find it. I closed my e on the tears boiling there, shutting out Garry a his wake of admirers headed toward my pare tent. I followed far behind, languidly at first, t breaking into a trot that jostled the tears over lashes and down my face. "Split it with me," I s when I reached them, pushing my way throu my parents and sisters and other children. I tr to grab it from him. "I'm your brother, y should split it with me."

Later he carefully slipped it between the pa of his Bible.

* * *

The year before, Garry had played his violi our cousin's wedding reception. He concentra his out-of-focus face on the music page balan on the thin chromed stand before him. He had our aunts and uncles and grandparents talkin sat by my mother's parents, eating from china, listening. "That little guy sure can pl huh?"—my grandfather is tall and lively, but skin has collapsed and his neck is too narrow his voice so he squeaks when he talks. I looke my knife and half-cut steak rather than at all relatives around the table smiling and nodd their heads at my grandfather and the music. C of my uncles and a small cousin knelt in front Garry and flashed his picture with their instan tics.

* * *

"I don't wanna practice my drums," complained to my mother that afternoon. "I hungry. I wanna snack."

"Wait till supper," she said.

"Pass the bologna," I said at supper. "No, y already have cheese, you don't need two things

r sandwich," my mother replied. "Pass the ›gna," I repeated to Garry. My mother didn't anything. Garry reached for the meat plate passed it to me. I made two sandwiches, one ı meat and one with cheese. I mashed saltines my soup, turning it into pudding, and ate the nks until there was just a thin broth at the :om. This I drank, lifting the bowl. My her said "Mind your manners."

started tapping on my brother's foot under table. He wasn't eating. He sat hunched over ı his hands wedged between his knees, staring he cold chicken soup. Garry moved his foot I followed, tapping harder. He scowled and ed back, but I clamped down on it with a . I liked it when he scowled because it wiped misty look from his face. He looked more ıan and physical. I could punch and kick a y but I couldn't punch mist. My arm would go ıt through Garry and he would stand quietly, king down like I wasn't there.

You're gonna get fat, stupid, the way you eat," id to mock Garry's small appetite. He was still ng there when everyone else had finished. My her was clearing the table. I was putting food › the refrigerator. "I don't feel good," he said ny parents. "I don't feeeeeeel goooooood," I ned, holding my belly and rolling my eyes to ceiling. "Sarcasm and ridicule! Sarcasm and cule!" my father said to me angrily.

* * *

he ushers knew where we wanted to sit. As we sed down the aisle other church-goers turned watched; they turned only their heads, as if ir bodies were stuck, and they watched nkly. The usher held a sheaf of bulletins rolled › a baton. He offered them to our family when stopped at our row in the center section fway up. The pew was marked "Reserved." father was the minister.

My mother arranged us in the pew with her se and gloves. She smiled at the half-turned ds, giving a sharp nod and sucking in a small ath through her nose. She usually remem- ed to sit between Garry and me. Garry liked ing snug against the pew end, next to the aisle. mother would sit next to him, my sisters and I her other side. Tonight, Garry and I sat ether—Garry to my left, my mother to the ıt, and my sisters between her and the end of pew. Taller adults surrounded us, though by fting around I could keep a view of the front. A ıily with three high-school boys filled the other f of the pew.

We waited. Then it was time to sing. Three-hundred people faced forward, holding books in pairs or alone. Young couples held the books low so their children could see. The men all had dark-hued suit jackets. Some had tweeds. Their wives wore fitted skirts with jackets or cardigans. The organ notes reached up into the high-ceilinged room.

I found the page as we stood to sing. Garry and I shared the hymnal. I felt strong as I reached across with my right arm to hold the book. I steadied it by spreading out my fingers underneath and pressing down with my thumb on the pages. I turned slightly toward Garry and looked down at his hair and ear and narrow blue suit. I couldn't see his face. He stood straight forward, staring only at the song. He held the book between his thumb and clenched right fist, his thin arm bent between us. He seemed to be ignoring me. I pushed the hymnal further toward the front, but he didn't notice—his arm extended with mine like it had no muscles, only a pivot. I pushed more, extending my arm its full length. The hymnal was almost out of his reach and dangerously close to the dark suit in front of us. Without lifting his stare from the song he took a small step forward. I looked around to see if anyone was watching.

The booming organ and long singing excited me. My lungs felt full of air—I couldn't breathe out fast enough to clear them—and my face felt hot. I tilted my chin close to my neck like an opera singer, enjoying my joke but pretending not to notice.

Garry's arm felt like a loose pivot. I pulled the book slowly toward us, in beat with the organ. I pulled until it was against our bodies. Garry's elbow stuck out awkwardly behind him—its angle collapsed on itself. Garry held on to the book in the same spot. I sang louder through a crooked smile that deformed my words. I lifted the book, scraping our shirt fronts, popping across the buttons, up to our chins. I couldn't focus on the words so I sang nonsense syllables. Garry stopped singing.

I started to push the book down and I felt Garry stiffen. I pushed harder. Garry couldn't stop me. He went loose again. "Do, re, me, fa, sol, la, ti, do," I sang over and over. The book was shut on our thumbs down by our knees.

I looked at Garry's ear again. He stood quietly with his hand hung down and his eyes shut. I poked him with my free left hand. "Wake up," I whispered into his ear. I grinned again so that when he looked he could see how much fun I was

having. But he didn't turn. Tears squeezed between his lids, gathering large on his lashes and dropping straight to the carpet. He let go of the book and lifted his hand to wipe his eyes.

I stopped grinning and breathing. My stomach curled on itself. If Garry makes a scene because I bugged him, I'll catch a spanking, I thought. I wanted to calm him down. "Baby!" I whispered, "Don't cry." He shuddered his shoulders and fought the tears with his face but only cried more. He wiped his eyes and tried to step past me, but I stood in his way. "No!" I said desperately. He didn't look at me. He cried. I stepped back and he walked past, and past my mother and sisters, and into the aisle, and out of the church.

* * *

"Your brother has pneumonia and a collapsed lung. He will be in the hospital for a while," my father explained. Garry hadn't felt good that morning, and my parents had taken him to the doctor. My sisters and I got the news when we came home from school. My mother and father looked worn but relieved that he was in the hospital where the nurses and doctors could help him.

That Garry had just disappeared, that I hadn't seen him go, made me uneasy. It was as if he'd died. I didn't feel sad, just guilty. I thought I might have bugged him too much. That was what my father bellowed when he found out about the evening church service. "You're a bully! Don't you understand that Garry needs concern, not ridicule? If he is sick, don't tease him, be nic him." Then he had spanked me.

We visited Garry in the hospital. He was s into the middle of the bed, on his back. He loc happy. He moved his head around and smile us. His arms sprouted IV tubes and wires.

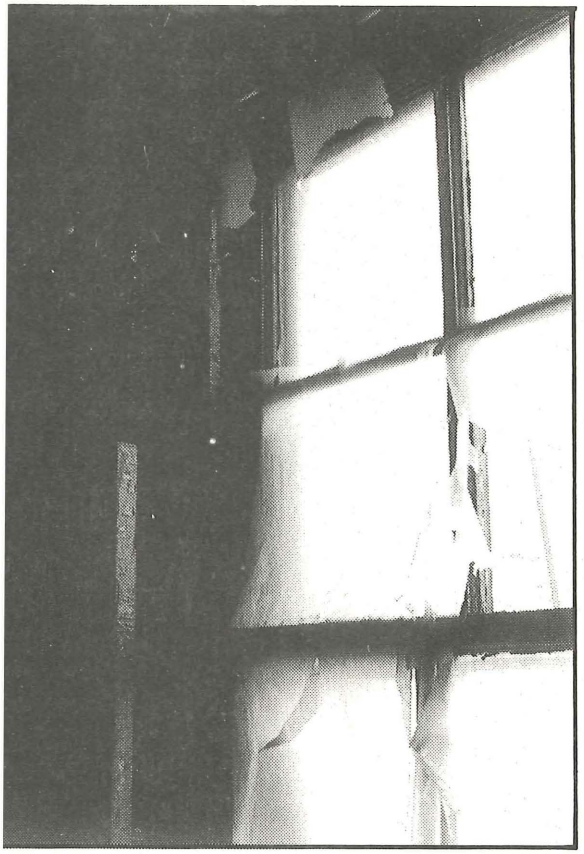
It was a two-bed room, with a privacy sc around each bed. Garry had his own TV swing arm. His bed-side table kept close to dozens of cards from concerned church peo Some had fallen, the rest threatened to crowd an aqua-blue plastic cup and water pitcher. eating table was pushed to the wall, ready, li servant.

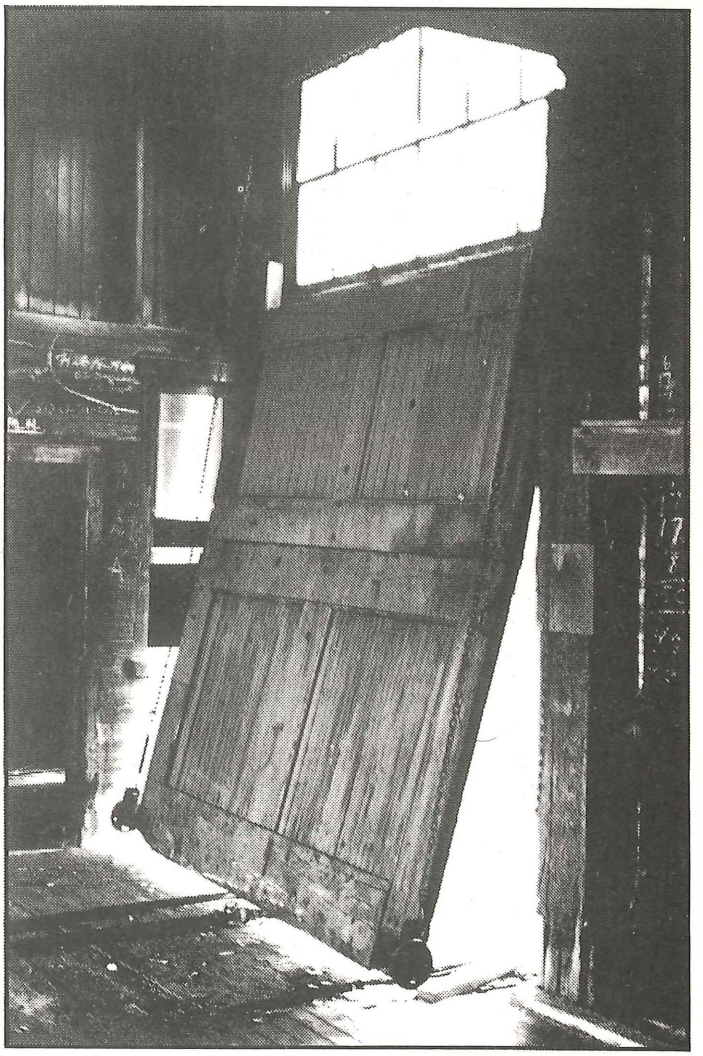
He told stories. "I almost passed out when t tried to take my blood," Garry said. "T couldn't find the vein and kept on stabbing m couldn't take it." He said that he had been get a lot of money in the cards.

My mother started putting on her coat and father said, "Well. . . ." We looked around for coats. "Well, Garry, we hope you feel better, you know that we love you." My father said it he was making an announcement in churc had my coat on. It was too hot. My face burne followed everyone else out, passing by Gar bed last. I bent toward him and whined "D you feeeeeeel goooooood? How do you thir feel? I'm doing all your chores?

He stopped moving. He sunk deeper into bed. He closed his eyes like I wasn't there, like had fainted from blood loss. I walked out.

Jane Mary Do

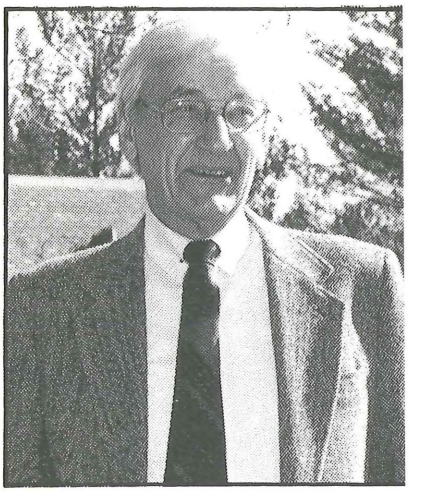




Krister Evenhouse

Dr. William Spoelhof:

Young Turk to Elder Statesman.



The following is an interview with Dr. William Spoelhof: president of Calvin College, 1951-1976. Unfortunately large and interesting portions of the interview have been deleted, due to space constraints. The full transcript is available in Heritage Hall.

—Dirk Mouw

***Dialogue:* Where were you born and where were you educated?**

Spoelhof: I was born in Paterson, New Jersey. I was born in 1909 which makes me seventy-eight years of age. I graduated from the local Christian school, Riverside Christian School, and went on to Eastern Academy, which is now Eastern Christian High School, and in 1927, came to Calvin College. I took the four-year general college course, with the intent of becoming a lawyer, and therefore I satisfied all of the pre-law requirements. But since the Depression turned out to be a rather severe one, I had to exercise some options and therefore took a number of education courses; I took "practice teaching," which is a term that now isn't supposed to be used in the Education department—it's "teacher training." I took practice teaching for three weeks and then received a life certificate. I went out teaching in Kalamazoo. I taught history and geography and civics and Bible and English and literature in the ninth and tenth grades, and also seventh and eighth. I switched to Oakdale Christian School, and then in two years, went to the University of Michigan, in the Doctoral Degree program. I received my Masters degree from the University of Michigan in 1937, and then I was a teaching fellow at the University. My doctoral studies were interrupted by World War II, I went into the OSS, which was a large para-military service. I chose to enlist in the Navy and was sent abroad to England, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands, doing intelligence work. I gathered a lot of material for my dissertation, and re-wrote the thing completely when I got back to the United States. So I finished it in 1946, and was appointed Associate Professor of History at Calvin College that year.

***Dialogue:* Is Calvin the only place you taught History?**

Spoelhof: I also taught at the University of Michigan, and that was freshman History—"Western Civilization." I taught that for four years. I had also taught at Calvin before. I had helped out when I was teaching at Oakdale. During my noon hours, instead of eating lunch, I taught one course in History.

Once when I was at the University of Michigan—this was before the war—I was teaching on a Monday and Friday at the University of Michigan, working on my doctoral dissertation, and Dr. Hoekstra, the only History professor at Calvin became ill with cancer; they asked me if I would teach his courses and I taught twelve hours on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday—all different courses. So those were two part-time attempts at Calvin College.

***Dialogue:* And then you stopped teaching in '50. . .?**

Spoelhof: In '51. I was Associate Professor of History from '46 to '51, and went into the Presidency as Associate Professor of History.

***Dialogue:* Why did you give up History? You have called History your "first love."**

Spoelhof: Yeah, it was. And why did I give it up? I have asked myself that question many times myself. Well, in the first place, I didn't think I v giving up History. The fact is thought only in terms of a sh term presidency. I thought if I last it, I'll give it a three-year shot be fair to myself and to everyo else, to see how it goes. And dur those three years I became so volved in administration, so volved in the growth of the in tution, and there was so much wo to be done that it just continued until I ran through t appointments into what we th called an indefinite appointme that is, I wouldn't have to stand re-election again: it just went on a on.

***Dialogue:* In a short piece you wr for *Dialogue* in 1974 you said th you were never inaugurated President, just introduced, a came with little advance thoug into the office, or preparation for What did you mean by that?**

Spoelhof: Well, let me deal with t inauguration first: it never occurre My beginning was absolute natural; it was just like any other d at Calvin College. It happened at t Convocation was the very first thi after registration was complete and instead of having chap services at the chapel on Frank Street, we had our chapel services Hoeksema's Church [the Fi Protestant Reformed Church]. A we also notified the public advance that it would be the openi day at Calvin College and Seminar

public was invited. They dn't get in anyway because there : more students who attended ı there was room for the students the public.

was introduced by the Dean of College. The president of the rd of Trustees gave the opening ver, which was a customary g. And the Dean of the ege—a wonderful, cultured on, Dean Ryskamp—gave kind ı ambiguous introduction which could take a half a dozen ways only reason I mention that is be-ıe I had a friend who happened want to be President, he was ent, a Canadian). But there was attempt at special guests. My ily wasn't even invited. My wife n't even there. My children en't there. My father, who was l and lived in town, was not e. No, it wasn't my fault. I didn't ıg them there, because I regarded s just a normal thing. So no ıguration. But Dr. William lius, professor of Classical guages had an announcement rd printed and sent to neighbor-colleges introducing me as the ' President of Calvin College. ıt was it.

Iow, the second part of the stion. I had no long-term aspira-ıs to be President of Calvin lege. The thought didn't enter mind at all when I came to vin, I was committed to ching. It was my job. I never lied administration; I did, how-r, have some administrative ex-ience. For example, in the war I ; head of the Low Countries desk England, which prepared for the ding of those in that office to the ıtinent. Also, when I came out of ice, I got a job at the University Michigan for one year, as deputy ctor of the military attache ning program for army officers n Latin America. I had to run the re program. It was really a fine : well-paid and all. And then I be-ıe a teacher at Calvin College, I became president of the Calvin ımni Association for at least a)-year term, if not for two two-r terms. So I had a little bit of administrative experience, but not *educational* administration. That was the least of my concerns, the least of my work. So, obviously, I had no grandiose goals or schemes.

When I got home from my inauguration, a friend of mine who was a general practitioner, and now is deceased, Clarence Deboer, sent my wife a bouquet of roses, and he sent me a gallon jar of aspirin with a prescription on it that said "If you get in trouble with your kids take one every hour. If you get in trouble with your wife take two every hour. If you get in trouble with the faculty take three every hour. If you get in trouble with the Board of Trustees or Synod, swallow the whole bottle." And that story actually made the AP wire. Because back in those days, even when colleges were small, colleges were associated with problems. We had the sainted old president of the Board of Trustees, and when I complained to him about the headaches a college President has to endure, the answers to problems he has to juggle, he just turned around and said, "Look, if the job were without problems we wouldn't need a President." That shut me up in no time flat.

Dialogue: **So I assume it was rather sudden, the vacancy of the Presidency?**

Spoelhof: Yes it was. President Schultze had a stroke, and he was very ill in bed, and so eventually, during the last month of the college year he sent in his resignation, and we needed a new President. He sent a letter to the faculty I believe, (I wouldn't know, because it was about the only faculty meeting I ever skipped, so I was not there when this exciting news that Schultze had resigned as President was read). Immediately they appointed a rather large committee to consider nominations—not a selection committee (the word "search committee" didn't arise until modern times in this whole process; it was "candidates" for the position). I was on the committee, and we drew up a gross list; a lot of us were on the gross list, some of us tried to avoid it and get off it—immediately the rule was established that if some, or even one, tries to get off it, then all of the others who were named have to do the same thing. So, in fairness to everybody we stayed on.

We recommended Dr. Henry Stob to the faculty, who was a personal friend, and my choice for the Presidency. Well, about a month before one of the last Executive Committee meetings, they decided that they ought to have more candidates, so they interviewed a few more people, that is, the executive Committee and the Board. They asked me if I would be interviewed for the job, so I was interviewed. They asked me my concept of the Presidency and I mentioned to them my administrative concepts of how a college ought to be run, and just what I would do if we had any administrative problems. And so they put my name on a duo, and the faculty was asked to react to it, and this was a great surprise to them. The faculty came back with the recommendation, that if Spoelhof was to be considered that this person and that person and that person should also be considered. But the Board of Trustees eventually brought to Synod a nomination of two people—Stob and myself—and a closed session, Synod added a third person who was head of the National Union of Christian Schools, and eventually became a Professor of Education at Calvin College. Speeches were made, and the vote was taken and nobody had a majority, so it was determined to decide between the two highest, and the vote was taken again and I was appointed—to my surprise, and I suspect to the faculty's surprise too. I had been at Calvin for five years, I was not really one of the old founding fathers—most of them were still there. My former professors were still there: people I revered, that I didn't dare call by their first names. So, obviously people asked, "who is this young fellow, this brash young maverick, young Turk"—I'm sure that will create a laugh in the minds of most people to think that I would ever be considered, or that I would consider

myself one of the young "Turks" of the day.

It *was* a difficult year—to make that adjustment—but this is a Christian college. After the initial reaction, things settled down, and I can speak of absolutely beautiful cooperation, particularly from Dean Ryskamp in administration... a few of them I didn't get along with, but that happens in any institution.

In the year when I was appointed to Calvin College it was, shall I say, a quick attempt for new faculty to get all those veterans taught. I think there were five people from my graduating class in 1931 who were appointed to the staff, and most of those did not have PhD degrees, but got them later on. They were my colleagues, and now. . . .

Dialogue: **Somebody asked me, when I told him that I was going to do an interview with you, "what does he do now?" So, what *do* you do now? What have you done since you retired?**

Spoelhof: I retired in 1976, and 1976 was also the centennial year of Calvin College, befitting a celebration of course, for which we had earlier appointed a committee. I informed the committee that I would not be around for the centennial celebration because I was stepping out of the presidency as of the Board meeting of 1976, and Diekema would be taking over. Diekema had been appointed by the Synod of 1975. He came in once in a while and sat in on Board meetings, but he never shared an office with me; there was no overlap like that. He's not a believer in that, and I'm not a believer in that either. So when I retired, in 1976, I was bound and determined to get out of the area, and not be around when a new President and a new administration started, so it could start cleaner. The inauguration of a new President was going to be a real inauguration, and that day belonged to him, and not to someone who had been in office for twenty-five years.

So I worked on getting a position in the United States government, some diplomatic service, and I was able to do that because I got to Washington, D.C. rather frequently both because of the American Association of Colleges for which I had served on a committee (curriculum planning) but also because I had an eight-year tenure on Presidential appointment by Johnson and another by Nixon to the Legislative, Judicial, and Executive Salary Commission. And so using these points of contact, I was appointed by the United States Information Agency to two positions, both of them short term. One of them was to be the public member of a three-man inspection team to go to South Africa to inspect the office and programs of the United States Information Agency—educational, cultural, artistic—to see whether there were any problems or whether we were in any way obstructing or assisting selling the American Way—in the good sense, cultural—to the Republic of South Africa. At the same time the same kind of inspection was made of Lesoto and Botswana. Leaving that after four weeks in South Africa, I took on the second job, and that was to be part of a cultural exchange program of the United States Information Agency. I would go into educational centers and be part of educational panels or give speeches on religion or education in America; I set myself up in Utrecht, the Netherlands. All of the requests for my services came through the Hague, and they relayed them to me and I went to such places as Hanover, Dusseldorf, Cologne, Heidelberg, Bath, London, and a couple of other places. That took me all the way to May and I came back at the end of the semester.

The fact is that when we moved out of the campus house, I was attending my last Board meeting—I did not even see the moving van moving our stuff, my wife took care of the whole thing. I came home, stuff was in boxes all over the place, we left it that way over a weekend, the following Tuesday my wife and I were on a plane to New York, from New York to Rio de Janiero, from Rio de Janiero to Johannesburg, and we were gone. When I came back, I had no plans, but I found t office so I made use of it. I go bid—and a lot of people are alw volunteering your services for y when you retire, you're so busy- Classis in Canada had had gr difficulty in repairing a breach in church at Woodstock, which h been split in a dispute over minster—both personal and theo gical issues. Just about everybo had, tried a hand in it, and so w they wanted was to have an arbi which I became. And that took one whole year, travelling back a forth. Following this, and as consequence, I became very il became crippled. I was in wheelchair for more than a yea gradually rebounded—t

I'm sure that will creat laugh in the minds of m people to think that I wo ever be considered. . . on the young "Turks" of day.

crutches, two canes, leg bra driving aids on a car—so that n while I am still apparently impai I've been doing a lot of work for church, both on its national and local level.

The biggest assignment was to a member of the five-member rev of the mission and WC organizations. I am now on Synodical review of what we h done. That was a four-year alm full-time job. But in the meantim also worked for the sch sometimes, on a volunteer basis: chairman of the chapel Special G Campaign. That means travellin bit and it also means writing a lo letters.

Dialogue: **What was the last g book or article that you read?**

elhof: You always have to be ful of those adjectives: "good t," good for what? What is your sure of quality in this regard? recently I read Timmerman's *Through a Glass Lightly,* I ider it a good book, but I don't w if that would fit under the defi- n of what's the last good book I I have read Garrison Keillor's *Lake Wobegon Days;* I con- that a good book, I enjoyed it ensely. *Cold Sassy Tree* is a tively beautiful little thing, but nk what you might mean by d book" that which is in some either directly or indirectly ed to your own special interest, I think in that regard, the last l book I read, is *The Spy her,* by Peter Wright. Peter ght was for many years the ty director of the fifth division ie British military intelligence, he openly advertises his book as ndid autobiography of British ary intelligence. This is a very iled book and a valuable rical record. And it's largely a t about the changing methods thering intelligence and the ad- es that the British have made, how other nations either try to grate with it or catch up with it teal it. In that sense it's most guing. But it likewise puts a lot her very interesting questions in pective. I was ripsnorting mad n the Soviets had the gall to l bugs in the very foundation walls of the new embassy, while rding to this book, the British doing it to France long ago. I ght, imagine Israelis spying on United States; England was g that openly long ago. It's no der that Thatcher was so angry she forbade the publication of book in England because it dis- ed so many intimate details and any delicate relationships that it considered to be very gerous, if not just downright arrassing to the British. I heard voice over the radio or over the the other day; she was still ing her spleen against Peter ght's book. It's not an easy book to read because it's loaded with data, but it's a *good* one.

I'm reading an old book, too. Henry Ippel just called it to my attention, it's a personal biography—life in England between World War I and World War II—beginning at the beginning of World War I: A Testament of Youth by Vera Briton.

Dialogue: **When was it most exciting to be President of Calvin College?**

Spoelhof: You mean after the initial shock? And the sense of relief at the end? "Exciting," do you mean "exciting" by way of never-ending busy-ness or "exciting" by way of a professional point of view? Now let me give you several of them.

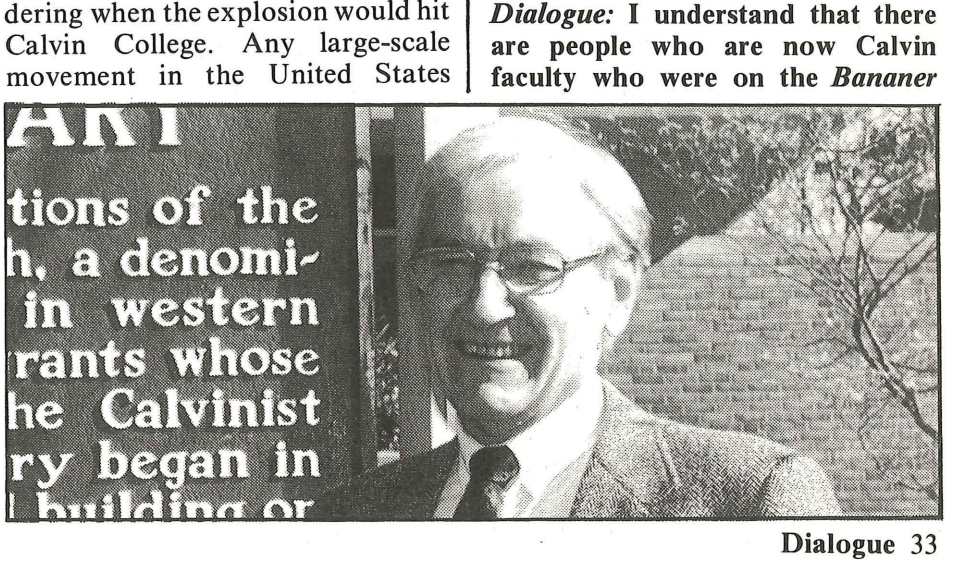
The period that was the most exciting to me was the development in the faculty of the new curriculum, the 4-1-4, which we did by study committee and by faculty decision. In my twenty-five years of conducting faculty meetings, those were the most exciting faculty meetings we ever had. There was *real* educational policy discussed. On the very crucial issues the faculty decided that we needed a two-thirds vote, and on one of the four that had to be accepted by two-thirds vote, it passed by *one* additional vote. So it *was* really exciting.

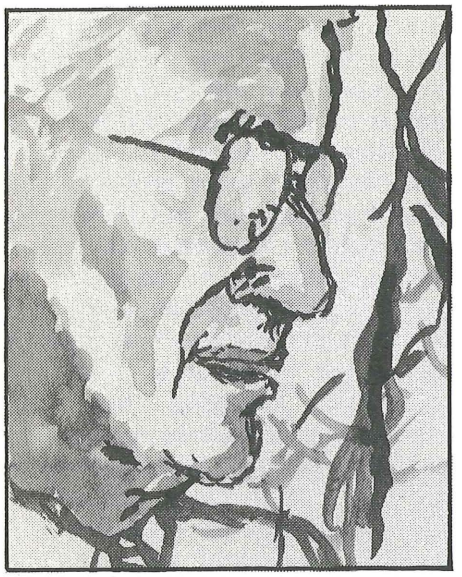
In the other point of view, the sixties times were about the most exciting. Every night you would go home to a news story in the paper about what was going on at this university or that, or this college or that, wondering when the explosion would hit Calvin College. Any large-scale movement in the United States somehow or another affects culture and art and music and dress—things that appeal to students: they have an impact on all colleges, I don't care who they are. And so the confrontations wouldn't even give you the benefit of a doubt, but they'd say "you're not better than any other college, and you're supposed to be"—Those were exciting days. The very fact that the students exerted themselves, had ideas, that was sometimes annoying but also exhilarating because we taught them to think critically. They sure were carrying it out! There was a time when people carried slogans or messages on the back of their academic robes, even some faculty members. At graduation, one student, now a judge, wore a Mickey Mouse cap with a twirler (I haven't forgotten his name either).

Dialogue: **So you would say that the sixties, the time of the *Bananer,* were some of the most traumatic times of your Presidency?**

Spoelhof: They were the toughest times that I spent as President. You might say, "such a little issue" but the *Bananer* was not just the *Bananer.* If you could isolate it, you could laugh about it, but you can't isolate it, you have to put it in the age in which it fell, you've got to put it into the mass psychology of the moment, the student mood and attitude of the times. The *Bananer* was much bigger than the *Bananer;* this was just the centerpiece of something which put it into a much bigger matrix.

Dialogue: **I understand that there are people who are now Calvin faculty who were on the *Bananer***





staff.

Spoelhof: Sure. We have faculty members who were officially reprimanded for that and for things which appeared in *Chimes,* and not just ordinary faculty members either, some are members with a great deal of influence, great friends of mine. The fact is, that that group very frequently became, in their more mellow years, great leaders in the institution and in the Church.

Dialogue: **What have been the highlights since your presidency in the Calvin community?**

Spoelhof: I haven't given it much thought, but surely the highlights would include the vast expansion of the institution, being rated number-one in achievement: our last North Central Association review was an *extremely* excellent one, loaded with compliments; we've once again been accredited by N. Cate under the educational accrediting association which had upon one occasion dropped us; we have become a recognized and accredited school in engineering; the continued accreditation of the Chemical Association; the achievements of individual professors, even big universities and major institutions and prestigious places drawing very able people away from us is, in a sense, an achievement. But along with that it's also expansion in the matter of public acclaim. I know you people in *Dialogue* and *Chimes* kid us around here about the *US News and World Report,* and the Fisk study, but we're happy and it shows something: it's very worthwhile. Calvin's name is much better well-known than it was a while ago. And also an expansion in action, with increased minority acceptance of both students and staff.

Dialogue: **In your *Dialogue* essay you identified four periods in the history of Calvin during your tenure as president:**

1951-1957 Introspection and Identification

1957-1964 Explosion and Expansion

1964-1971 Disillusion and Discovery

1971-1975 Plateau and Preparation

What are the most significant landmarks identified with each of these?

Spoelhof: The first period was my introduction to the presidency finding out who and what we were, and therefore introspection and identification as to: "what is the mission of the college," "what is the purpose of the institution," finding itself in curriculum elaboration. That was the introspection and identification.

As to the second period, you can guess what that was all about. The explosion and expansion was the tidal wave of students which swamped us and a tidal wave of information, which practically did us in, and which necessitated vast changes and additions to the curriculum itself. The enormous increase in faculty—it was practically a full-time job just finding good enough people to staff the vacancies. That was the explosion.

Disillusion and discovery was the sixties and early seventies. Disillusion you can well imagine, was an administrative sort of mood that one got into because it was tiring and demanded a constant concentration. But the discovery, too, of students and what education meant to the individual students, and I think we discovered in the student body a brand new spirit: they were more direct, more honest. They were more honest in their aberrations—if that can be, if that's an incongruity—they were m honest in the expression of t commitments too, of their religi faith, they were also honest in t communication of their doubts. think we discovered the real stuc in those days.

In '71 to '75, that was the c clusion of my administrat Seventy and '76 were about the m tranquil years I put in: Sudd there was a cessation of hostilit campuses and the period of confi tation was supplanted by coop tion. Before that there were tempts on the part of students to *us* what to do, but after '71 to particularly '74, '75, and part of students actually came back asked us our advice. And that good.

Dialogue: **What would you call period which we are in now?**

Spoelhof: I think I answered earlier when I talked about the h lights in the Calvin community s I retired.

Dialogue: **Expansion a Excellence?**

Spoelhof: I'll buy that for moment. But whenever you alliteration as you do in these c gories, you have to give the auth lot of room in which to maneuv those words. They're not precise in their meaning.

Dialogue: **You said in y *Dialogue* essay that we bear scars" of the counter-culture c sion of the "protest era," 1974-1 What are these scars?**

Spoelhof: Some of the scars are scars of the suspicion of the col and of its student body and the s which resulted from the genera gap, the breakdown of respect authority because some of it c be pretty calloused. One of our prominent students sent me a upon his graduation, which w very honest letter as far as th concerned, for which he apologized, about ten years afte was out of college. That's an il tration, he realized that there n have been scars on this institut every institution has them, we

ing those scars today too. ntly, for example, a public ad- sement in a newspaper about is being taught at Calvin ege.

***ogue:* You also said that the teau period" was one of pre- tion. What were we preparing nd how well were we prepared?**

elhof: In that period we had a ber of schemes for the develop- t of the college. The very first ational policy committee we had was on whether we should olish a university. We discussed we could accomplish the ersity ideal without the work the expense of vast campus de- pment, and so we were talking it the institute which eventually lted in the Calvin Center for stian Scholarship. In my very report to the Board of Trustees I tioned some unfinished ness that I was sorry that I had been able to finish, one of those s being the Center, but I did lay the linements of that particular cture, so President Diekema ed it up and with the faculty de- ped the center. So too this whole ter of the Calvin Calvinism ter [the Meeter Center]—we always talking about making ter use of Heritage Hall with its accumulation of Calvin erials, but not until it was nized as it is now with a rate governing board did it me effective, so in that sense paration."

***logue:* You've seen many genera- s, or as they are frequently tified "decades" of students, at vin. Do things really change as h as people say they do?**

elhof: Well, maybe you're king of that old French proverb more things change, the more remain the same." Yes and no, one of those academic ques- s. . . . I said a while ago, that e affected by all the major cul- l and religious and political- nomic influences which bear on nation and on other institutions, that sense yea: students are lents of the age. And in addition hat, there have been the changes in the student bodies, for example, the larger number of evangelical students attending Calvin College. So there are changes. If there were not we would become a stagnant and anachronistic institution. Life is quite different because the problems are quite different, and the student questions are quite different, and also the professors in classrooms cannot and should no longer take for granted that everyone in their hearing is Christian Reformed, and knows the "in" phrases and the "in" words of the Christian Reformed Church, so we have to be aware of those changes.

***Dialogue:* What do you think of the present mood of the students at Calvin?**

Spoelhof: I can't really answer that because I'm not that familiar with the student body. I do read *Chimes* but not consistently (by the way, I now read *Chimes* when it comes out, I used to wait until Saturday mornings to read *Chimes,* so that if I would have to blow my top I would at least not be in an office). So I don't keep in touch with the student body but generally speaking a number of students stop in to see me here. I don't know how they regard me, but they're terrifically friendly, much more friendly than they used to be, and they must be friendly to strangers because they don't know at all who I am, but they'll speak, we'll exchange conversation. Occasionally I'll ask their names and they ask what my name is, but there's no recognition there.

When I came back from the assignment for the United States Information Agency in Europe, I had to borrow a couple of college envelopes to send out official thank-you's for things related to the college, so I went to the desk and I said to the woman at the desk, who was a student, "do you have a few envelopes for me with the college address on them?" She said, "Yes, here they are." I said, "by the way, if you don't mind I think maybe I'll be here every once in a while to ask for a bit of stationery." She said, "Do you work here?" I said, "No, but I used to." And a new person working in the library, when I tried to take out a book, asked me for my identification.

***Dialogue:* How do you perceive Calvin to be progressing or regressing on issues such as sexism and questions about the role of women? Race relations?**

Spoelhof: This will be a very superficial answer because I don't attend faculty meetings, and I'm in no committee in which these things are discussed, so it's really a matter of talking casually with people and observing, but I think we have made tremendous strides regarding the professional status of women although as far back as I can remember we did appoint women to professorships and we *always* paid them on the same basis as a man. But there weren't any in administrative offices other than the Dean of Woman; there are now.

The same holds true for a serious attempt coming a part of administrative policy, endorsed by the faculty and the Board of Trustees, of getting minority representation in jobs, in teaching in administration. In such areas, I think we've made tremendous advances.

***Dialogue:* Is Calvin as Christian as it used to be?**

Spoelhof: That's a tough one.

***Dialogue:* Leo Peters doesn't think so.**

Spoelhof: But Leo Peters had many a progenitor in that. There have been people saying that Calvin isn't as Christian as it used to be all the way down, as long as I was President in the college. I recall getting a letter from one constituent who got an alumni letter with my picture on it, and put a cross right across the face, which said, "You are without Christ."

I would say that we are attempting to broaden our range of eepresentation to a broader evangelical circle. That does not make it less Christian. I think that Calvin College is as Christian—I hate to say "as" Christian—continues to be Christian and strives to increase its expression of Christianity. And you do that with all of the failings of human nature, and

while there are many evidences in behavior and speech and products which might dispute this fact, the quintessence of a college is progress in Christian life, and I think it is much more expressive today than when I was a student at Calvin College. When I was a student all of these things were assumed, but to express one's pious thoughts at all made us feel as if that was too "Sunday schoolish" and pietistic, and we'd be embarrassed even amongst ourselves. But it isn't that way any more. We've opened up enrollment, and faculty members are not as Christian Reformed in the sense that all the people and all of the people associated with the faculty or the students are in the Christian Reformed mode and from the Christian Reformed tradition. But they are Christian, and they do subscribe to the Reformed faith. The word "Christian" is a much more broad and extensive word, and includes many more people than the words "Christian Reformed." That is not disparaging "Christian Reformed," but it is saying that you don't have to be only Christian Reformed to be Christian—but that's no great pronouncement, that's saying the obvious.

Opening up faculty appointments is always a matter of discussion among us. It has great advantages and it has some disadvantages, and one of its great advantages happens to be that it's both a challenge to the new faculty member and a challenge to the rest of the staff to justify what has gone on before. We learn from each other, and therefore, we get a new perspective, and an enlargement of our appreciation: that is a very valuable thing. On the other hand, we lose a cohesive quality, and a unity of purpose, which makes for a certain unified direction of a college, because there are certain mores and certain practices which are strictly Christian Reformed, and not necessarily creedal based on Biblical principles such as attitudes toward Christian education and such matters which grow out of tradition. These are not justified by tradition alone, but nevertheless grow out of it. And that could be, at least a suffuciently serious situation to give it some pause, to give it some consideration.

Dialogue: **Are you surprised by the current debate about Creation.**

Spoelhof: No, I was not surprised that there would be a reaction to that. This has happened before—not to this extent—but it has happened before at the college. Even before my administration, just before I became President, John DeVries, one of the most popular chemistry professors we've ever had here, a very fine Christian gentleman, wrote a book *Beyond Adam,* in which he called into question the traditional interpretation of the age of the earth. We've had it before in the sociology department, and any time we teach anthropology or geology, some little statement in a book by a professor raises the issue. So it was not a matter of surprise.

Dialogue: **Is Calvin getting more conservative?**

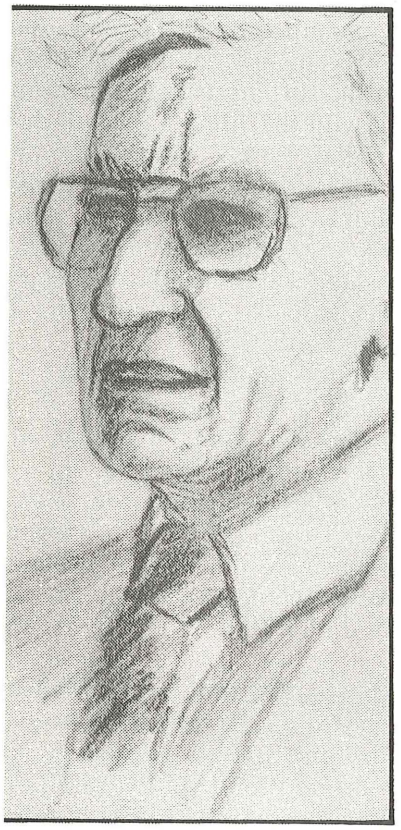
Spolehof: It's one of those words I don't like—"conservative" and "liberal"—because you can't put any content to them at all. Look, "conservative" is a very good word, as long as you don't confuse "preserve" with "conserve." I deem the word "conserve" to mean that you're keeping that which is applicable and continuing to be vital to the situation, rather than "preserving" it just in an isolated body of truth in a jar somewhere. So from that point of view, there is always a forward motion in conservatism. In that sense, Calvin still is a conservative Christian college.

Dialogue: **What do you think of the new chapel and the controversy surrounding it?**

Spoelhof: I'm enthusiastically for the new chapel, because I think a chapel has a very definite place at a Christian liberal arts college. It has always been part of the tradition of Calvin College. We've always had our chapel as an architectural piece, right from the beginning. We had it on the old campus. We had it here only in a temporary situation in the Fine Arts auditorium, w is a performance building, and building for worship. Now, it i that there's a lot to the argu that you don't need a chap worship God, that's true—you need a church building either, b way—and you don't need a church building like a lot o churches are, but nevertheles continue to build churches. sense, you could say that the c is our church. And in a certain the physical education buildi our church when we transfe chapel services there, as we did they had an evangelist for two and held our chapel services t But there is a very special place chapel at a Christian liberal college, because the essence of lege—the very word "college" academic community, stresses *community* aspect of it, and as as you stress the community a of the religion which you must fess in the classroom situation, i to be brought to expression al the chapel services in a sp location which is given to worship, because architec always expresses a statement, therefore this chapel provid statement within which we exercise the necessary worsh aspect of our Christian commu So I think it's very important.

It was written, by the way, int long range plan at Calvin Col which was the *first thing whic had adopted before we starte build our first building here!* that very first plan still shows exact location of that chapel where it is, and the reason for th not that visible beca architectural statements ar always apparent, when they're apparent they become kind of s and useless and maybe simplist but you'll notice, from Bu Street, which is the main entran our campus, there are roadways, one coming and going, and you notice that t roads as they come into cam don't point directly at any build That was very deliberate, bec we built the College Center t

o on a principle that inistration should not be arate from the teaching sroom, nor from art, or anything hence we put the Gezon atre into it, hence we put an art artment in it, hence we put an ibition hall in it, hence we put chology in it, which is a science, ce we put political science and liberal arts in it likewise: it's an ollege expression, microcosmic hat the college is all about. Over his side, you have the intellec- heart of a college: the Library— , very important. And over here



have the chapel, a bit in front of when you're approaching it; it braces all three. You're aware of ee building masses, and this is a ple way, the simplest way we had expressing the integration of faith h learning. That isn't just "made now, on the spot, that is written o our long range plan. I've never rd it expressed publically, ugh.

And furthermore, the students, en they criticize the place—they the great big hole being dug, and y said "of all the places, to have a apel squeezed in here." Well, that's the very place we wanted a chapel. Sure, we did a little addition to Hiemenga Hall, and that did make for a slight change in location because the chapel was going to be forward, now it's pushed back a little bit. Furthermore, everything you see there now, covered by steel decking and concrete, all of that is for the underground chambers, for the mechanical room for all these three buildings, or the Gezon Theatre: it's going to be for a scene shop, or for a Lab Theatre, or for official records storage, or for mechanics. It's going to be covered by a plaza-like construction, with trees and benches and whatnot, which will be a center of student gathering going in and out of chapel, at the heart of the campus.

As far as the argumentation which I have heard, which I think is unacceptable—"look at how far they are from the dormitories"—you can't have every single building right smack next to your room! Am I right? So I'm enthusiastic about the chapel. I wish we had had it long ago. But, there was a question whether we should build a chapel first or not, and we decided that the Fine Arts Center would be first, and we could use, *temporarily,* the Fine Arts Center. But you'll agree, it's not a place of worship. It can be, but it's not worshipful.

Dialogue: **How big do you think Calvin should allow itself to get?**

Spoelhof: I don't think we ought to play the numbers game at Calvin, trying to stretch it beyond what its intended purpose is, and its intended purpose is, largely, a Christian liberal arts college, and also that it is of service, first of all, to the Christian Reformed Church which owns it, and in the second place to the Christian world outside of it. That already places limitations on the number; furthermore, all the colleges which are similar to Calvin College, which are in existence today put a limitations on it. I would think that this campus was built for slightly over four thousand, and we're at that point now. It could safely grow, but not just for the sake of growing, it has to be a planned growth, adjusted to the current needs, and by current needs I mean changes in curriculum, new kinds of offerings. We should not go out and actively seek large enrollments, and then quickly build buildings to accommodate them.

Illustrations: Ron Kok
Photographs: Todd Gibson

Clem

by William R. Cornell

The men rolled in here about a quarter to seven, same as they always do. I get here early. I done that for the last twenty years. It helps to stay ahead of the guys. All foremen should come to work a half hour earlier than their guys I figure. I was standin' just inside the little garage. We've got three garages in all, the little one is for the tubs an' small dozers that need work, an the big ones are for the heavy equipment: graders, scapers, cranes an' the like. Anyhow, so the men roll in and park out along the driveway there and come up one by one draggin their lunchpails and gallon milk jugs filled with water an' frozen in their freezers overnight, an' they stand behind me and talk while we wait for Andy to get around to our crew. First Andy gives the other crews their jobs, that way the trucks and heavy machinery get moving first. So he's sending George out to move a bulldozer and Denny has to go get sand and we're all just waiting. Yesterday we finished up on the highway and the men are grumblin some cause that's the end of the gravy job, no more federal pay.

So they're grumblin an Andy finally gets around to us.

"Weirs, why don't youse head out to Forty-third and Atteling. Henry's out there putting in a sanitary line an' some chambers. Better take a pump, an some waders. How many guys do you have this morning?"

"Well, it really don't look like Jack is gonna make it, so it's me, John, Kent, Dean, Barry, and Marvin. . .that'd be seven."

"If you get done around three or so, give me a call on the radio. You'll either be headin out toward Red River or the new market on Northfield."

Andy talks some more about different jobs we'll be having the rest of the week, but I'm not really listening. He talks real slow and his voice isn't real interestin to listen to, but to tell the truth, I'm a little teed because our crew isn't cut out for pipe work. Too much hanging around waiting for the crane to dig the next part of the hole. The best day is when we get five or so small jobs because at the end of the day you feel you've got a fair amount done and you still some travel time. It's hard to sort out the ti cards though.

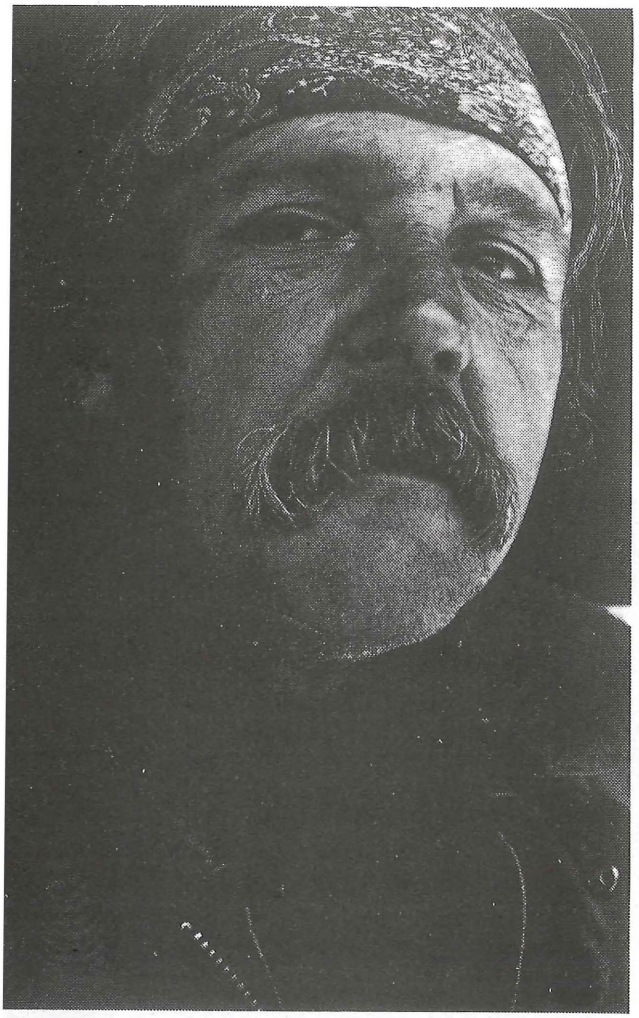
Some people have said that what happens la that day was my fault. Well, I ain't sayin perfect, but I think I done all I could. All askin is that you hear what I have to say and t think about it.

Anyhow, we all head out to the job. We t three trucks, the one-ton to pull the trailer w the bobcat, my pickup with all the tools, and cement truck. By cement truck I don't mean big trucks with the turning barrel, this is an Ford five-speed with the dump pulled off and placed with a water tank, and a couple compartments for the bags of redi-mix cemen sandbox for mortar sand, and a mixer moun on the back. I go to the equipment room and to getting the waders and some pipe wrenches a I chuck it all in the back of my truck and lik said, we head out to the job.

Now you have to understand that Henry never been an easy guy to get along with. H Andy's cousin and he could have been in office easy but he said he wanted to run a p crew. He knows what he's doing, don't get wrong, but I don't think he gives a hang w happens to the men. So I wasn't particula looking forward to the day.

The morning didn't go so bad. Henry was ready for us yet so we worked clean-up u coffee time. After coffee time we worked fo while, then we heard on the radio that Andy h to check a job in Pine Springs, so since we kn he wouldn't be around for a while I eased up the men. Don't get me wrong, I usually ride pretty hard, but the fact is, no matter how ha you work, there'll always be more to do, and way this company works, if we don't have time, Andy gets somebody else to do it for Andy knows how hard we work.

As we're finishing up lunch, Henry walks o and says it's time to git to work and I know t well we still have another ten minutes, but Henry so I get the guys ready to lay the pipe. Jo has to run the crane because Henry's operat Jame Parker was transferred to Don Revenc crew. Jame is a big black feller and Henry alwa had it in for him. Doesn't make much sense to because I always figure if a man can work, it do make no difference what he looks like. Anyho



e was digging a trench in sand and he hit this
of clay that tore up the ditch pretty good.
ry seen that and he wouldn't let Jame use the
e to smooth it out. He wanted the guys to fix
' hand, maybe so's they would be angry with
e or somethin. Well, Jame goes down in the
to help em out, and Henry says that Jame is
beyin his foreman and he fires Jame right on
spot. Of course, Jame drives right in to the
and Andy hires him back on the spot, but it
say something about the way Henry is.
expect that was partly the reason why the
dent happened. Henry makes John nervous,
besides, John isn't nearly as good as Jame
a big crane. I seen Jame one time, on a bet,
a dime off a concrete block without tipping
block and I mean to tell you that ain't no easy
g to do with a five-foot bucket on the end of
of them big caterpillar power hoes. Anyhow,
n's runnin the show and for one thing, he
t as good as Jame, not nowhere near as good,
an for another, he's used to workin cleanup crew so he doesn't know the right hand signals for pipe-work.

So I put Dean and Marvin and Barry in the hole and I keep Kent up as top-man. He's gotta go fetch tools and cut plastic pipe to the right lengths and that's good for Kent because he doesn't really like to work hard anyhow. The rest of my guys put in a good hard day because it makes quitting time come faster, but Kent will do about anything to get out of a job. Besides, Dean and Marvin and Barry get along pretty well with Sandy and Bones. Sandy and Bones are from Henry's crew and they've been doing pipe-work for three years or so and Dean and Marvin and Barry know enough to stay out of the way and help when they can. Mostly I stay by the radio.

So they set the first three sections of the manhole in pretty fast, but then the factory across the road changes shifts and the girls go to their cars to leave and since it's a hot day they're all wearing shorts and miniskirts and they look pretty good. The guys scramble up the ladder on the inside of the concrete sections to stand on the top of the manhole and have a look and I let 'em and I watch too.

They all whistle low and Dean says the one in the blue tank top is his with her brown hair and eyes and baby what a body. Marvin says Dean already has a girlfriend so he shouldn't get to have anybody. And Dean says what she don't know ain't gonna hurt her, ya know? And Barry says shut up you guys I get the one in the yellow. And Marvin says she's a cow and Barry shoves him down the hole. Barry's just staring and he whistles and she turns and flips her hair and smiles and he's glowing like he just won the lottery. They're laughing and joshing and I know they're having a good day because the smiles on their faces are bigger than I've seen since Andy bought us all chicken and then Henry starts to yell.

The thing is, sure he has five more years than I do and he is related but they're my guys. I'm responsible for keepin em in line and it must be I'm doing a decent job because Andy told me himself that we got one of the better crews in the company. He starts yelling about get back to work and I get kind of mad. Henry's hard to understand because he mumbles even when he shouts so at first my guys can't figure out what he is hollerin about so they keep messin around, then he really starts yellin and my guys figure it out and they go back to work. I go and talk to him and say leave off my men. He mumbles some

more and goes back to the other end of the job and we finish this one up and move to the next where Sandy and Bones are waiting. So here's where the trouble starts.

Kent hooks up the chains to the last concrete section and John grabs it with the crane. Sandy and Bones stand ready inside and my guys are outside to guide it and everybody's waiting and John swings it over and starts it down and the chain that holds the 12′ diameter section snaps.

Bones loses his foothold and drops 15′ to the bottom of the manhole. He scrapes his back and sprains his foot. My guys fall clear on the outside. Sandy gets pinched, his whole body pinched between the section that was in and the one that swung free. It tears his body at the middle and he screams for a second.

I seen lots of guys get hurt. I seen Stanley Hulburt tear into a buried three-phase electric cable with his front loader and I couldn't see through the sparks when it happened but I seen the bucket melted afterward and I seen him too, his body black as the loader seat he was sitting on when his body caught, so it wasn't as hard for me to see what happened to Sandy.

The guys have some trouble. Dean, Barry, Marvin, and Bones just stare with their mouths open but Kent starts to yell as loud as he can. He ain't yellin anything in particular, just short noises, but I can see how his face is all twisted up and his jaw is set tight. I run first to talk on the radio to see if we could get an ambulance, though I knew it wouldn't do any good and I see Henry comin and I figured good, he'll take care of Kent.

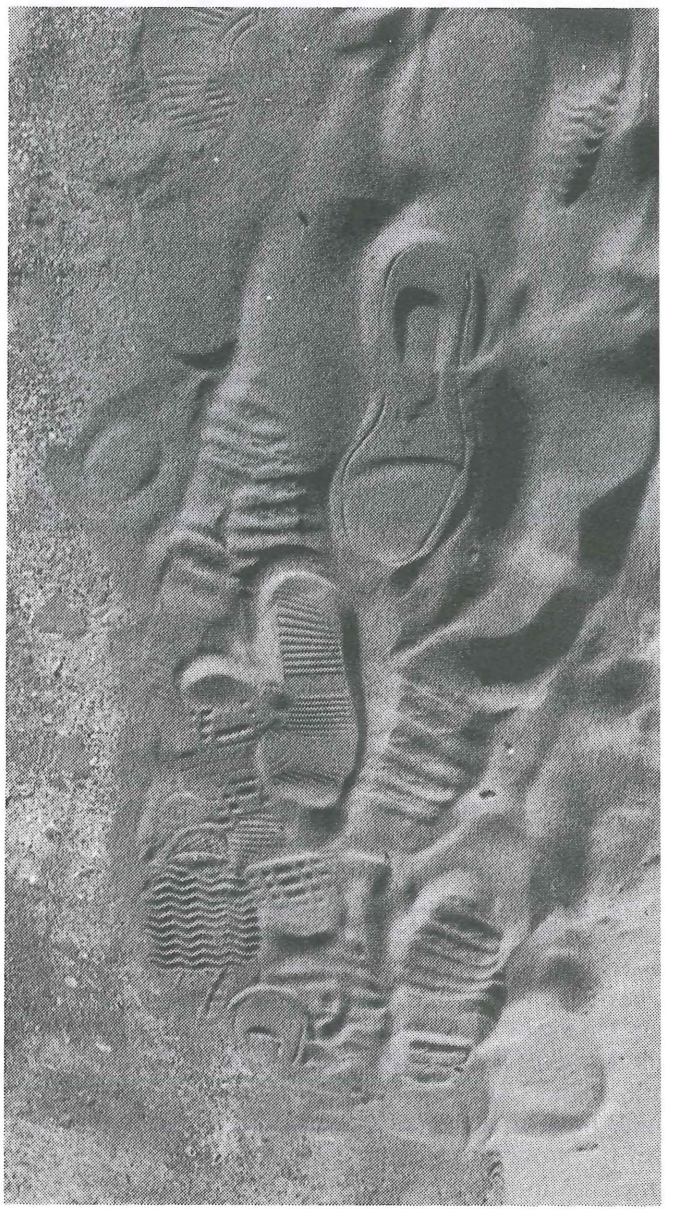
I watched and Henry walked over to Kent but instead of straightening him out, Henry starts screaming back. He's sayin how Kent ought to be ashamed and he ain't doin his part and Kent's face looked scared as can be and angry and bright red. Then Henry starts yelling over and over that Kent is a baby. Again and again and I'm thinkin he doesn't even know what he's saying anymore and they're both crazy, so I drop the radio and run over. As I'm running it occurs to me that it looks kinda funny really, on account of Henry is a small little guy and Kent is taller but he's all talk and he whines like a baby.

Henry stops with the stuff about Kent being a baby and starts saying that Kent caused the accident. He says, look at it that's what you did. You're a slough-off and you have to learn. Kent whispers no. Henry keeps yelling with his face all red that it's all Kent's fault and Kent says no. Henry is yelling his whole self into the air Kent screams louder.

NO.

So I go a little crazy too and I grab Henry pull him down into the dirt and I sit on him I hit him in the face and I yell shut up shut up his eyes are still crazy and he acts like he c hear me for nothin.

So Kent is lying there with his face in the and he just keeps sobbing. My guys are up and they're picking up the tools like I ta them.



KYRIE II

:ked up with bishops to be,
ıss I'll be one, too.
ɜ old and have answers.
ıd jargon for a just war.

Crazy Jane, playful, poetess
ɔreacher-slayer,
for me:

when I'm finally latinate and insane,
ıg sought asylum in a missile silo,
stand by, blessing the bombs
ıey zip over the water's face
undo the Spirit's brooding,
send a woman;

by her kiss
t's missing in this Missio
might come clear;
place the body on my tongue.
ny systematics may yet be
ɔne. So my sermons yet be song.

—Tom VanMilligen

The wind is a scythe, tonight, the ice
holds bootprints of someone
that barely got away. The earth is
cold. She hugs her children tight.

Black men wander the street like wolves.
they avoid the ribbons of ice
that once were sidewalks. I don't. I am white
I try to fade into the white of the snow.

Hunched over, fur-hooded, as if I know
where I'm going, I go; looking for a yellow house, walking fast.
Once I slipped at the corner of Wealthy and Lake.
An ache in my rear reminds me of the fall.

After knocking on strange doors a block away
I find the house. Chris says "Come in,
warm up, stay for a while. The computer, though,
is down and the job has fallen through."

Sitting on stained carpet, Milwaukee's Best beside us,
we banter Kierkegaard, Ellul, and Barth.
We weigh the merits of blanketing doorways
in February. I stay twenty minutes.

Then spark the darkness, late
on a Sunday night nearing the year 2000.
Outside the stoplights are frozen red; the cold breaks open
great distances of sound. The lake rolls over in its bed
with a crack.

—Mike Rubingh

Meditation

I chose to attend Calvin College for two reasons: I believe in Jesus Christ as my Savior, and Calvin has the best academic standards in West Michigan. There are a number of things I have learned as my second semester comes to a close.

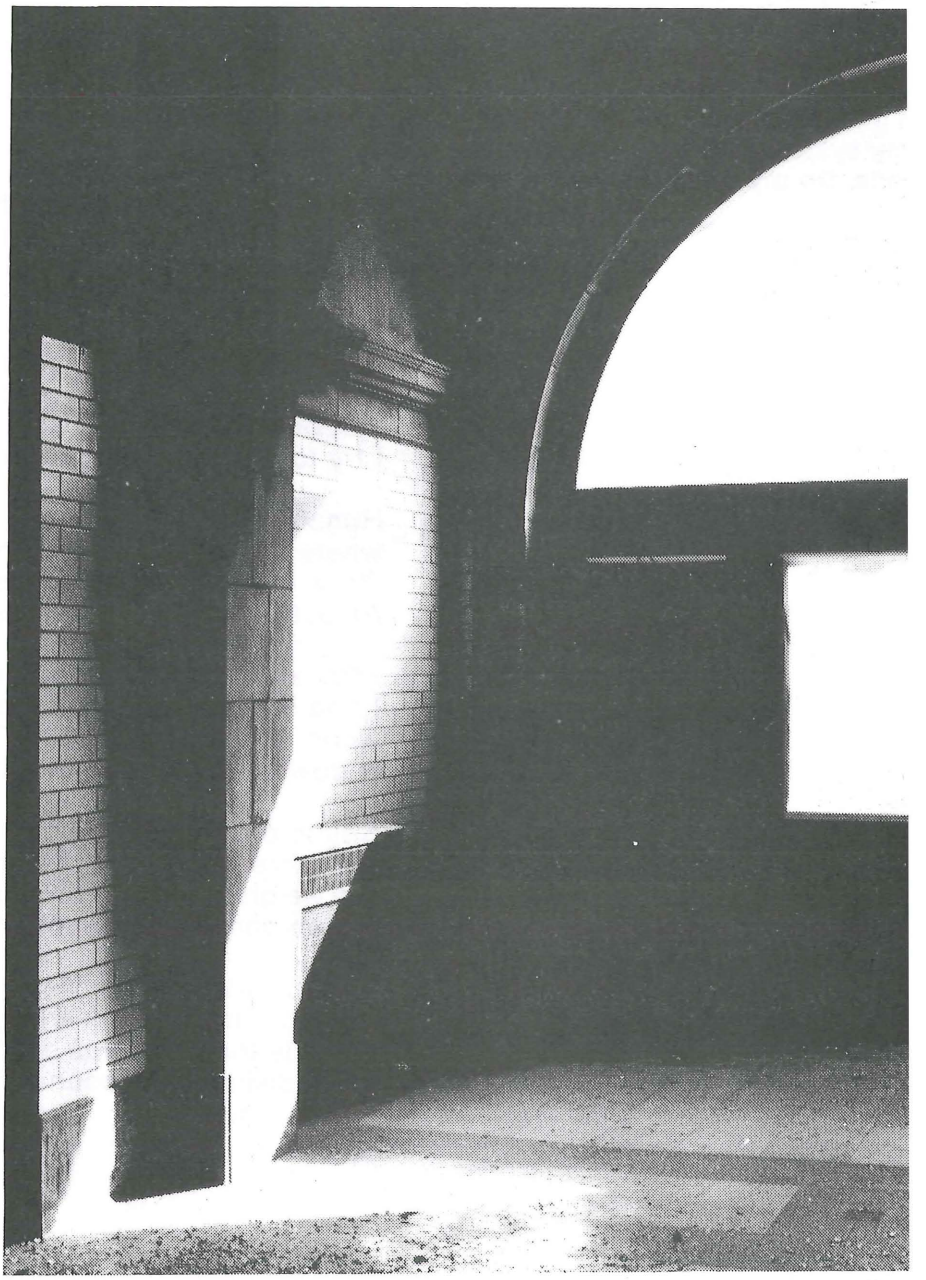
At Calvin I have learned more about my Catholic faith in two semesters than I have learned in 20 years of Sundays. I learned the books of the Bible, and their timeless relevance. I learned that I cannot reconcile the murderous brutality of some Old Testament zealots with my belief that God would not condone such things. I was taught this by my first semester Religion instructor. When I questioned him about the conflict he responded with an anology: "What must an orange grower do when part of his crop becomes blighted? He must destroy the part of the crop which is blighted in order to save the remainder." I was deeply upset when I considered the application of such reasoning to our contemporary world.

At Calvin I learned that one cannot tell a Christian by his face. I learned this when I overheard a woman, who had just left a Calvin lecture, say: "You could tell by his face that he was not a Christian." One can tell by someone's face whether he is black or white, or an orange, but you cannot tell whether he is a Christian.

At Calvin I learned never to employ the words "non-Christian," or "un-Christian" when describing people. In the same way I do not use the words "non-white," or "un-Hindu" when describing people. I learned this by participating in conversations with fellow students and instructors in which these words were used. I know now that I must use the words "brother" and "sister" when I describe people of any persuasion.

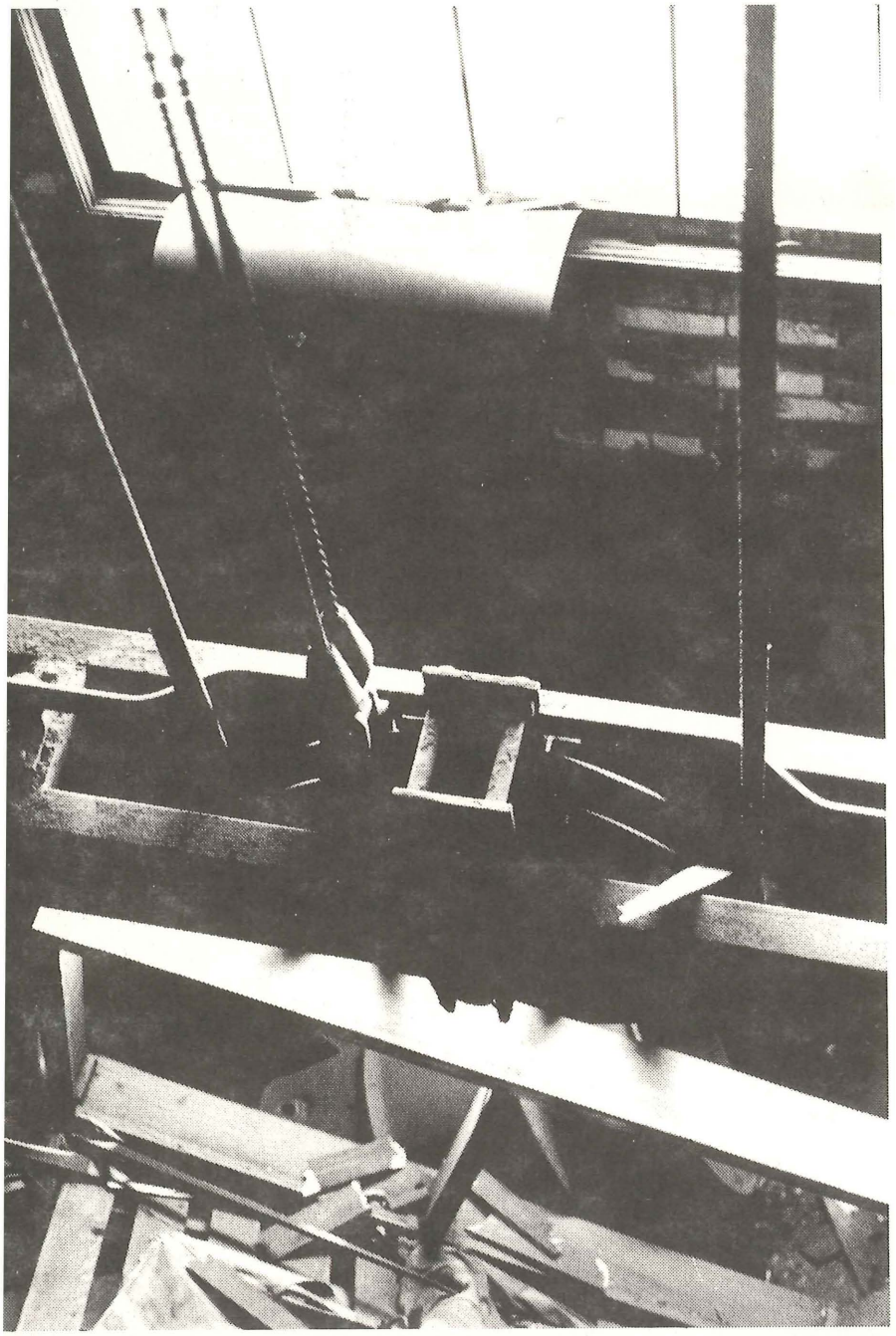
At Calvin I learned that we are all God's children. I was taught this by my literature instructor when he referred to a character in a "Christian Novel" as "not a Christian, but he had potential, he was worth saving." It was at that moment that I realized that all people are "worth saving." In other words, they are worthy of love.

At Calvin I learned that Christianity does not have a monopoly morality. Man's highest moral p cepts existed long before Chris learned this by reading about ot religions in Calvin's library. Th are laws that transcend and out all civilizations. These are laws s as the *Golden One,* which is ' unto your neighbor as you wo have him do unto you." Only Ch tians recognize Christ as the fruit of these laws.



Calvin I learned that it is not ıty to convert those of other . Rather, it is my duty to honor igious responses that are borne mpathy for mankind. I was t this by Pat Robertson when oke at a political rally on the us of Calvin. In his speech he ı to convert the world to Chris- y. I understand at that time ıny act of aggression directed :d our fellow man brings the world closer to death and, moreover, that any act of kindness, however small, brings the world closer to peace.

At Calvin I learned that all divisions within the Christian Church are deplorable in the eyes of God, and that the divisions are more political than theological. At Calvin I learned that the direction of the Church must not be guided by liberals or conservatives. The direction of the Church must be guided by one question: How will the next step we take benefit the dispossessed of the world? Any step taken not guided by this question is a step away from God.



At Calvin I learned that those people who condemn men like Professor VanTill do so out of fear and mistrust. I learned this by reading the work of Professor VanTill, and others, and witnessing their faith and courage.

At Calvin I learned that if our school is to maintain its integrity as a Christian Liberal Arts Institution, it will do so only with a vision of a world in which there is justice for all men regardless of their religion. It will not be maintained by exclusion.

At Calvin I learned that a college administration must permit freedom of speech. Furthermore, the power of censorship in the hands of one will result in corruption. Students must not fear punishment and exile for writing and speaking their views with dignity and conviction. I learned this from conversations with students who write for *Dialogue* and *Chimes*.

Finally, at Calvin I learned that the power of love, in other words, the power of God, is the highest power in the universe. Therefore, the sole method by which we will stop the world from destruction is by imitation of the life of Christ. This is non-violent, non-cooperation with evil.

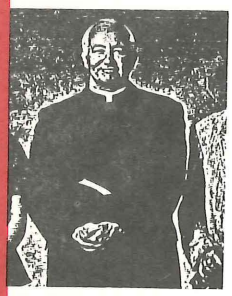
In conclusion, at Calvin I learned that there is no decisive test whereby we can determine the spiritual standing of our school. That truth rests deep within the hearts of all the members of the Calvin community. However, I do have a suggestion for improving that standing. January 19 is the national holiday in recognition of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. I propose an ongoing interim on the teachings and life of Dr. King. It would be a step in the right direction, because the most important thing I learned at Calvin is that his dream *is* our dream.

—Louis A. Villaire

Epilogue

After twenty years of expanding the horizons of perception and questioning the questions of questions, **Tom Bryant** finally snapped. He succumbed to a nice pink house in the suburbs, a nice Christian wife, a nice white picket fence, two and a third really really nice kids,a wood-panelled station wagon, and a complete collection of Lawrence Welk (on CD, of course). Says Tom:"This is really, really, nifty. Security is just swell."

Dirk Mouw, tired of being misunderstood by a world of people that use metal forks in teflon pans, sought a simpler life in the Australian Outback. While there, he completed a 12-volume history of Dutch Philosophy on a cliff-face.

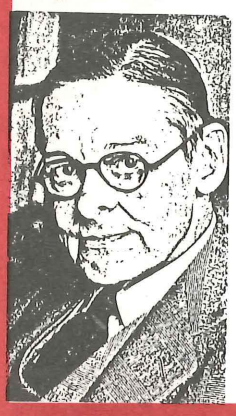


The Very Good Father **Timothy J. VanNoord** founded the Look Good, Feel Good, Be Good Church of Easy Living. After a violent struggle with the CRC over his ordaining of women as ministers, he now plans to ordain apes.

Mike Rubingh has been principal tubist with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra for ten years. His literary aspirations as former editor of dialogue culminated in his song "Kiss my brass, newtnose" for the heavy metal tuba trio "warthogs INXTAC."

Amy Walthall received her PhD in Lizard Psychology in 1995, and is shown here with her favorite pet lizard, Caliban. She has written the highly acclaimed: Cold-Blooded Passion: The Lizard as Sexual Symbol in Modern Literature.

Natalie Hart received the Cannes award in dance for her choreography of Beckett's Waiting for Godot. At last recall, however, she has given up fame to devote her life to eating Haagen-Daas ice-cream and playing euchre.



Chris Wolterstorff, disgusted with his American liberal arts, humanities-centered education, fled to England, where he found a job as a banker. After trying his hand at writing, he decided to accept a promotion in the bank instead. He now owns a Jaguar and a villa in the Bahamas.

Bill Cornell was brought before the Synod of 1990 and found guilty of comparing Samuel Johnson's Birthday with Good Friday. He was sentenced to spend the next twenty years superglued to a mirror. No comments from Cornell were available.