

CHRIST COLLEGE NEWSLETTER

THE SPILLIKIN

Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, IN 46383
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A Note from the Dean

A year ago we inaugurated this newsletter with an issue devoted primarily to faculty reflections on various aspects of Christ College and its history. All of the columns, you may recall, were written by CC faculty and deans. We were delighted that a number of you responded favorably both to the idea of a newsletter and to the content of the first issue. Many of your letters were in large part personal; thus we have not included them in this issue.

However, we would like *The Spillikin* to be your newsletter, reflecting our belief that CC alums are very significant members of the larger CC community. Consequently, the second issue includes more pieces by and about former students who are now scattered around the world, each of whom carries a little splinter of light (i.e. "spillikin") ensuring that the intellectual fire ignited during the undergraduate years will never be extinguished.

Most of the pieces included in this issue were solicited by the editors. Our problem, however, is that we are insulated by our academic environment and thus may not be attuned to the issues with which you are concerned. This is particularly true of alums who are not presently affiliated with the world of academe. Those of us on the inside need to hear from you on the outside. So please write to us, proposing a piece you would like to write for *The Spillikin*.

The columns in this issue only begin to suggest the varied activities and accomplishments of CC alums, and we are interested in knowing what each of you is doing. This is particularly important to us as we advise and counsel our present students about their futures. We have been somewhat negligent in maintaining contact over the years, but the enclosed Christ College Alumni Survey allows you to bring us up to date and to provide us with useful data for program evaluation. Please return this form to Christ College at your earliest convenience.

In Christ College we think and talk about CC alums frequently, sharing bits of news and gossip or just inquiring about someone's whereabouts. It will be good to receive more accurate and complete information, some of which we can share with you in subsequent newsletters. In the meantime, we hope that you enjoy receiving the second issue of *The Spillikin* and look forward to hearing from you.

Spillikin (spil'i-kin) n. [also spilliken, spilikin] fr. MD spelle-ken, a little pin, fr. spelle, a pin, splinter, + diminutive -ken.

1. A long splinter of wood, bone, ivory, or the like, such as used in some games, as jackstraws.
2. A splinter of wood used to light lamps or candles.

(from Richard Lee's *Dictionary of Obscure Terms*)

Reflections on CC

Eighteen years ago, when I graduated from Valparaiso, CC was but a gleam in the dean's eye. Now there is Mueller hall, a new dean, a regular (and sometimes irregular) faculty, a curriculum, and hundreds of students and alumni. After careful consideration, I have decided that teaching and learning in a building is more fun than teaching and learning in a gleam.

This is not the place to review the details of CC's immaculate conception in the late 60's. Since I had graduated by that time, I can say that I was not a party to that mysterious process. I have been asked to reflect upon my tenure here as the newest member of the CC faculty. I shall try to do that by focussing upon the spirit of this place as I have grown to sense that spirit over the past two years.

I like best CC's combination of academic rigor and communal support. At other universities where I have taught, students and faculty often confused intellectual excellence with bad manners, evincing competitive aggressions that sometimes bordered on savagery. Here, I feel that most everyone wants everyone else to do his or her best. As a result of this basic sense of mutual support, faculty and students take intellectual risks that they might not take in a less secure environment.

I think that this prevailing sense of trust stems from at least two sources. First, the Freshman Production (the most important pedagogical innovation I have seen in fifteen years of college teaching) encourages students to celebrate and depend upon the diverse gifts of their fellows. Second, the college as a whole seems wedded to the view that the human intellect is best cultivated within a context that prizes moral and spiritual values as well as intellectual ones. There is accordingly more good humor and less intellectual arrogance here than at any other place that I have taught.

All of this seems terribly abstract, but it is really quite concrete. This "spirit" manifests itself in the way faculty schedule meetings for the common good rather than for their own convenience, in the willingness of students to study materials that are not familiar to them, in the amount of laughter in the hallways, in the way that faculty have learned to be severely critical of papers without being destructively critical of students, and in the variety of co-curricular activities that students plan and carry forward.

The College's vices are the defects of its virtues. Security can and does sometimes lead to complacency. I do wish that more students were more existentially engaged in the ideas and the materials they study. All of us tend to spread ourselves too thinly across many tasks. We could afford more concentration and less diffusion of effort. And we are, for all of our spirit, a pretty anemic bunch. We should plan an annual track meet--required of all students and faculty of course.

These defects are easily remedied. After eighteen years, CC at least has a tradition. I am quite pleased to be a part of it.

Mark Schwehn

Cows, Honorary Degrees and Auto-Icons

Jeffrey A. Smith graduated from Valpo as a CC Scholar in 1980. Since then he has worked in Chicago as a political analyst, completed his M.A. in English at the University of Chicago, studied film at Chicago, and taught at the University of Illinois-Circle campus. For the past six months he has been in London on a Fulbright Fellowship, completing research on the films of Stanley Kubrick. He sent this typically Smithian piece from abroad.

The Honourable Member of Parliament for Ross, Cromarty and Skye was summoned to stand for election, as it happens, from studies at Indiana U--Bloomington. This had much to do with his invitation to American students to be his guests at the House of Commons. The question before the House on this day happened to be the Common Market. Or, more specifically, its agricultural policies. Or rather, its cows. Well, to be plain, at the moment of our visit the issue was a certain bovine substance in use as a fertilizer on East Anglian farmlands. Cynics may claim that most House discussions are comprised in large measure of this same stuff. I will leave that to more seasoned observers; what struck the Middle American visitor was rather that our Scottish-cum-Bloomingtonian host had landed us in what sounded just like the Indiana Legislature. It made one give heed to the phrase "Mother of Parliaments."

But cattle manure should be seen as only part of the "special relationship," as Mrs. Thatcher might put it, between Great Britain and Northern Indiana. The Prime Minister can attest to this from personal experience. When the distinguished faculty of Oxford snubbed her for an honorary doctorate, it was amid talk of the dangers of "sycophancy," and one can scarcely help recalling a certain Indiana school's pioneering contention on this point. (How would the Oxonians view sycophancy toward a sycophant? Alas, the ruckus over Thatcher drowns out the donnish "Harrumph.")

Now sycophancy is a species of utilitarianism, the philosophy of "the greatest happiness for the greatest number" (or "where's mine," as they put it where I come from). It is the flip side of patronage, that lifeblood of the modern Higher Learning. As a rather unmodern institution, Oxford might be expected to view the whole business askance. It was never a friend to utilitarian calculation, which is why the great Utilitarian, Jeremy Bentham, packed off to London to found a university of his own. And that the great University College thus created might perpetually honor its patron, Mr. Bentham took the unique decision to have himself stuffed. Or, rather, embalmed, Lenin-like, for display in a glass case in the college corridor--in such an attitude "as when engaged in thought in the course of the time employed in writing," or so his will demanded. And thus may one commune with the great man yet today; indeed, it was a further condition of the will that "wherever the faculty shall assemble" for some solemn decision (such as whether to snub the odd Prime Minister or two), the glass case is to be wheeled in and Dr. Bentham permitted to animate the proceedings in body as well as spirit. (The wax face evidently was not in the will, but was necessitated by the unfailing interest of collegiate pranksters in making off with the actual head.)

Perhaps the special relationship will bring this practice to Christ College, which, after all, has a long and rather bare hallway. The question is whether some patron, or professor, will forgo the more mundane honorary degree, and choose instead to become our first permanent Benthamite. No doubt CC's "auto-icon" would wish to be wheeled in "wherever the freshmen shall

assemble," there to repose in such a posture "as when engaged in thought in the course of the time employed in red-penciling student essays." And no doubt the freshmen, when they weren't making off with the head, would grow to appreciate this constant, corporeal, glowering reminder that "in the course of time employed in" is merely a wordy substitute for "while."

Charlotte W. Newcomb Fellowships Awarded to CC Alums

The June 5 issue of *The Chronicle of Higher Education* announced the winners of the prestigious Charlotte W. Newcomb Fellowship, funded by the Woodrow Wilson Foundation and granted to students "whose doctoral dissertations concern some aspect of ethical or religious values." Among the forty eight recipients are two Valpo alums and former CC students, Constance P. Coiner ('70) and Leif E. Vaage ('78). Constance is completing her Ph.D. in literature and history at UCLA and Leif is completing his in religion at Claremont Graduate School.

Since graduating from Valpo, Constance has been teaching and attending graduate school in California. She received her M.A. from UCLA in 1979 and has won a number of fellowships, scholar awards, and distinguished teaching awards. The title of her dissertation is "Pessimism of the Mind, Optimism of the Will: Literature of Resistance," a study of four radical feminist writers.

Leif attended Trinity Seminary in Columbus, Ohio, after graduation where both he and his wife, Becky Unland ('78), received their M.Div. degrees. Becky is an Associate Pastor at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Rowland Heights, California. Leif's dissertation is enigmatically entitled "The Community of Q: The Ethics of an Itinerant Intelligence," an examination of a hypothetical written source used in writing the Gospels of Matthew and Luke and of the presumed nomadic community that produced this Q source (from German *quelle*).

To the Editors:

I must object to slurs in Dr. Olmsted's column [*Spillikin*, Summer 1984] directed at his students of the early 1970's. Dr. Olmsted referred to his current students as "less aggressive, more reliable and (in their written work) more articulate" than those of us who studied with him in his fledgling years at CC.

Sure we couldn't write! And maybe we weren't too reliable. But who showed Dr. Olmsted the way to the Union pool room? Who taught Dr. Olmsted the intricacy of nineball? Who ever asked Minnesota Fats to punch a time clock or articulate in written form his philosophy of pool?

I don't begrudge our avuncular role model knowing in his heart that we were slothful and inarticulate. But I must take offense at his exposing this secret in print. If this fact were to become widely known, what chance would we stand in this cold competitive world against the articulate automatons that Dr. Olmsted currently teaches?

I submit that the truth is no defense for the scurrilous attacks that Dr. Olmsted makes. Surely a sense of fair play demands that those of us who eased Dr. Olmsted into the sinecure he presently holds be shielded from his indiscrete reflections on the past.

Very truly yours,

James R. Looman ('74)

We Are Family

Throughout its years of existence a strong sense of communal concern and familial caring has characterized Christ College. While Christ College students come to Valpo from all over the United States as well as some foreign countries, most of them find a "home" in CC and begin to think of their classmates and the faculty as an extended family. We are family in that symbolic sense, but several literal families have also made history in Christ College. Two such families are the Drewses and Marhenkes.

So far as we know, the Drews family from Greendale, Wisconsin, holds the record for enrolling the most children in Christ College. Over the past fifteen years, five Drewses--Paul, David, James, Bethany, and Jonathan--have been members of the college. Mr. and Mrs. Drews have become familiar faces in Mueller Hall and good friends of the CC faculty. In addition to the five children who have been members of CC, a sixth, Claudia, transferred to Valpo for her junior and senior years and later received an M.A. from the University.

Paul was a member of one of the early classes in CC, arriving on campus in 1969 when the faculty consisted of Ralph Doliner, Dick Lee, Ted Loeppert, Warren Rubel, Audrey Ushenko, and assorted others whom Dean Baepler could pry away from home departments, and graduating in 1973, by which time Don Affeldt, Dick Luecke, and Bill Olmsted had replaced Professors Doliner, Loeppert, and Ushenko. Upon graduation Paul attended the seminary but after several years decided not to enter the ministry. He returned to Milwaukee to assist his father in running the family business. Each fall I expect him to return for Homecoming with a wife, but as of last October, marriage did not yet appear to be imminent.

David graduated from Valpo in 1975, having completed an individualized major in pre-architecture. As Dave's classmates will recall, he began dating Roberta Mahr, also a distinguished member of the class of '75, early in his undergraduate career. They were married shortly after graduation and both attended Harvard where Dave earned an architectural degree in the School of Design and Roberta a degree in Urban Planning. For five years they lived in the Washington D.C. area, David working for an architectural firm and Roberta for the Congressional Budget Office. They have a three-year-old daughter named Elsbeth. Last fall they too moved back to Milwaukee. Roberta is in a training program with the First Wisconsin Bank and David is doing design and planning with an architectural firm.

James followed Dave both to Valpo and in his academic interests. Although Jim majored in Greek as an undergraduate, he moved to California after graduation where he received his degree in architecture from UCLA. Jim began with a small firm designing stores on Rodeo Drive but presently works for a larger firm doing interior design for major stores, mostly for Abercrombie and Fitch. Jim is married and lives in Los Angeles. In a recent letter Jim says, "In looking back, I can say that Valparaiso prepared me superbly [for my Master of Architecture program at UCLA]. For not only had I received a fine foundation in academics, but I had something which few of them had experienced--an education unified by the richness of Christianity. At Valparaiso the most complex and diverse issues of our day were challenged head on--in the shadow of the cross."

The fourth Drews to graduate as a CC Scholar is Bethany, whose degree was awarded this past May. Beth majored in English and was the only student in this year's graduating class to complete the Special Program in the Humanities under the supervision of Warren Rubel. In the fall Beth will be entering graduate school at Penn State University where she will continue her study of English language and literature.

Another aspect of their undergraduate years which Paul, Dave, Jim, and Beth share is their participation in the Overseas Study Program in Reutlingen, Germany.

Jonathan, the last of the Drewses, plans to upstage his older siblings by spending the next academic year in a new exchange program at University of Tübingen in Germany. Jon has just completed his sophomore year and plans to double-major in German and Economics-Computer Analysis, as well as minoring in Mathematics and completing the requirements for the CC Scholar.

It will seem strange next fall not to have a member of the Drews family in Christ College, but it is possible that Mr. and Mrs. Drews may drive down for Orientation from sheer force of habit, and I suspect there will be a gathering of at least part of the clan at Homecoming.

To our knowledge, Peter Marhenke, who just completed his sophomore year at Valpo, is the first second-generation Christ College student. His father, Dr. Ronald Marhenke, was a member of the first class to graduate from the Directed Studies Program at Valpo in 1965. As most of you know, this program was the predecessor to Christ College.

Upon graduation from Valpo Ronald attended graduate school at Purdue University, receiving his Ph.D. in Chemistry in 1970. Since then he has taught chemistry at California State University at Fresno where he currently holds the position of Professor of Organic Chemistry.

Ronald Marhenke married a Valpo grad, Elizabeth McCord, and they have four children--Peter; Rebecca, a junior in high school; Matthew, a seventh-grader; and Jonathan, a fifth-grader. Actually, on his mother's side, Peter is the fourth generation of McCords to attend Valparaiso University.

Peter is majoring in History at Valpo and will spend the fall semester at the Overseas Study Center in Reutlingen, Germany. His sister, Rebecca, has already made initial inquiries about Christ College, suggesting that the Marhenkes may follow the noble tradition of the Drewses.

They said it...

"Pat me on the head; I stuck up for science."
--Sue Wienhorst

"The reason that type of humor is so funny is, as I've said before, because you're perverted."
--Warren Rubel

"It is impossible to be sufficiently cynical about TIME magazine."
--William Olmsted

"Even sinners have a future and saints a past."
--Richard Luecke

"I'm putting that about as obscurely as it can be put."
--Don Affeldt

"Specific information concerning the scheduling of classes for the spring term will appear in due time. Do not panic."
--Richard Baepler

"Welcome to the pathos of adulthood."
--Warren Rubel

"I know a lot of people who wouldn't trade their Vermeer for Christ College--even if all the students were included."
--William Olmsted

(excerpted from *Christ College Quotebook*, '73)

CC in Thailand and Sierra Leone

Over the years a number of CC graduates have volunteered for the Peace Corps. Following are observations by two recent alums who have shared their experiences with us. The first piece is by Heidi Pfeiffer ('81) who worked with the Royal Thai Government for three years as a Water Resources Engineer in Nan, Thailand.

Communication as a Function of Experience

When I graduated from Valparaiso University four years ago, I felt a certain restlessness with the narrowness of my background and my lack of knowledge of the world. I decided that the best way to improve my mind's data base was to live in another culture for a while. I joined the Peace Corps and worked as a water resources engineer for two and a half years in Thailand. The experience was fascinating and enlightening in terms of learning about myself as well as learning about other people. One of the most interesting aspects of my experience was that of communication.

While participating in Christ College classes and activities, I felt that communication was considered of the highest value, that written and spoken words, serving as they do to identify and express man's ideas about his life, should always be revered. But a man's ability to understand another man's world is directly related to their respective experiences. I think this can best be stated through a quote. In his book, *A Guide for the Perplexed*, E. F. Schumacher states,

For every one of us, only those facts and phenomena 'exist' for which we possess *adaequatio*, and as we are not entitled to assume that we are necessarily adequate to everything, at all times, so we are not entitled to insist that something inaccessible to us has no existence at all and is nothing but a phantom of other people's imagination.

One of the meanings of this statement is that through a man's experiences he develops his mind in such a way that he is receptive to certain knowledge. And I believe that the broader a man's experiences the more receptive he will be. With my experience in Thailand I believe even more strongly that a man's ability to understand other people relies heavily on the experiences he himself has gone through.

The Thai people have different cultural rules that are understood, different values as "givens." When I first arrived there, I undoubtedly misread many situations because I did not possess the "adaequatio" required to deal with them. I was incapable of making reasonable judgments because I had no basis for comparison.

For example, if an American were asked to name one aspect of American society which is considered to be fundamental, he might cite equality of men. This is accepted by the majority as important and it is assumed that everybody has a right to it. Yet the Thai society is defined by a vertical rather than a horizontal social scale. Every person has his place on the scale and very definite activities that are connected to that place.

When one Thai person meets another, very soon after the meeting both parties know their relative positions in the social hierarchy. From that time on that knowledge is reflected in the words they use to converse, the positions they sit in, and all other activities.

My point is that until I had experienced that type of social arrangement and seen it working, it would not have existed as an option in my mind. Eventually, I had to adjust my American "givens" to include Thai values.

It is not possible, as Schumacher points out, to be "adequate to everything." However, if a man is aware of the process, he should not only be able to develop his mind to the best of his ability but also to realize that the limit exists beyond which he cannot fit an idea or event into his own experiential background.

For the past two years, Timothy Meinzen ('83) has been working with the Peace Corps in Sierra Leone, the first year as a teacher in a Vocational Secondary School and the second year at Njala University College, "Sierra Leone's equivalent to the University of Illinois." The following are unauthorized excerpts from letters he sent to Mel Piehl.

April 26, 1984

All's not so glum as Africa provides moments of raw beauty and pleasant discoveries. The weather, though hot during midday, is delightfully tropical throughout the year. I'm found most often in sneakers and shorts. Oh but you must get used to sweating profusely. I live in a clay-block-plastered house covered by zinc sheets. I share my roomy home with 3 "adopted" young men: Edward 13, Matthew 17, and Joseph 19, and a Ghanaian teacher who lives in my veranda room. Home is on the edge of a small village called Kwello Junction about 1 mile from the school (you do a lot of walking here). Sierra Leonian society reminds me of a chaotic, sometimes absurd melding of Western and African culture. There are many signs that colonialism has never really ended in this country, i.e., privileged treatment of whites, tendency to hope for free handouts (foreign aid programs may have a big part to play here). But the people themselves--especially the women and children--amaze me in their capacity for and tolerance of physical labor. Demanding stuff like toting buckets of water or bundles of firewood on your head for up to one mile, pounding rice to clean it, fishing, working on the basically subsistence farms, all this while carrying and feeding the baby on your back, and being subservient to an oftentimes sedentary male. For poor farmers life means labor also. All farmwork is done with a big hoe and a sharp machete. Perhaps this capability for labor impresses me most. It's not difficult to understand why their bodies are so muscular. I've tried my hand at their work and I find it taxing. I guess I didn't realize how soft I had it in the States.

August 20, 1984

It's been more than a year now since I've settled here, more than ample time to reflect on the meaning of the "Peace Corps Experience." The soundest conclusion that I can reach is that the personal education you gain is invaluable but your contribution to a nation's development is dubious. Peace Corps lacks the big monied slickness of other foreign aid operations but the experience volunteers gain truly enriches and reroutes your life. This is in my opinion the ultimate value of Peace Corps. Look at this: at 23 I'm a teacher, head of the ag department of my nascent secondary school, project founder, farmer, houseparent to 3 young men, librarian, coordinator for PC training and local first aid dispenser. This isn't bragging, I'm just showing the variety of responsibilities which can come to even greenhorns. One of my colleagues is now becoming the principal of a new school--after only one year of classroom teaching. Certainly Salone is not up to professional standards but you can immerse yourself in situations which might take years to achieve in the States.

But as far as developing Salone goes, I can't point to anything of substance and staying power. Something, call it neglect or apathy, resists development here. Certainly development is wanted, but wanted in much the same fashion a kid wants the latest toy seen on the tube: enjoyed for a few days then shunted aside when it breaks. The landscape is littered with carcasses of heavy machinery and vehicles of development projects. . . .

One of the blessings of Peace Corps service is unhurried pace and moderate expectations. It's as though time is stretched out . . . and eventually, so are you. I haven't exactly become full of sloth but I do get time to read and write or just watch the sky. I like this pace so much I'm afraid it will be difficult to reenter life in the States. And certainly academic life seems to be the apotheosis of the industrious life. I often want to ask my professors, "How do you do it?" Usually I conclude that scholars are made up of different stuff than most mortals.

Living here has thrown some dandy wrenches in my concept of social responsibility. The overwhelming constant and intimate pleas for help quickly reflect the shallowness of one's commitment to humanity. Item: I find it especially difficult to share my plate of rice with the inevitable boy or two who hang around at dinner time. My boys who live with me share without second thought--as if a reflex action. But I find that hard to do particularly when there's no other food available, no leftovers, no sandwich meat. Item: You can see when going to town several small children who have not had any food and are quite hungry but you spend your few leones on groundnuts and beer. It's enough to freak you out. Poverty and hunger stare you in the face here and mock your ideals of charity. The justification many Peace Corps use is that the problem is too big and you have to look after your own happiness first.

Secondly, we get to see the awful waste of aid programs (Care seems to be one of the most efficient). It's all rather discouraging to us pretenders to the high-minded throne. Being socially responsible is a far more complex, far more difficult task than I had imagined.

Ah but what is life without serious challenges?

Summer Reading: Two Recent Books by CC Scholars

For the past seven years Dean Meyer has made available to Christ College seniors a reading list (Meyer's 100) of classic books which every CC graduate should read during the course of his or her lifetime. Some CC alums not only continue to read but are also writing significant books; and although the Dean is not prepared to require any of these CC-authored books at this time, he strongly recommends two recent publications for your edification and pleasure.

COLLEGE REP PROGRAM

The Valparaiso University Alumni Board of Directors has initiated a College Rep Program. Each of the colleges at Valpo has an alumni rep who works with the dean in recruitment, placement, and promotion. The Christ College Rep is Carol Jenks, 660 Lakepointe Road, Grosse Point Park, Michigan 48230. I would encourage any alums who would like to assist Carol and me in any of the areas listed above to contact one of us.

The first is a little book by Gail Ramshaw-Schmidt entitled Letters for God's Name. Gail graduated from Valparaiso University in 1968 with a major in English and minors in theology and music. She completed graduate work at Sarah Lawrence College (M.A.), University of Wisconsin (Ph.D.) and Union Theological Seminary (M.Div.). Currently she is on the faculty of the Manhattan School of Music in New York and is president of the Liturgical Conference. Since the publication of Letters for God's Name, Gail has authored a study guide, God's Food: The Relationship Between Holy Communion and World Hunger, for the Lutheran Church in America, and is completing another book, Sacred Speech: Christ in Liturgical Language.

The review of Dr. Ramshaw-Schmidt's book which follows was written by another CC alum, Joan Lundgren Hunt, who graduated from Valpo in 1973. Joan attended three seminaries (Concordia Seminary, St. Louis; Seminex, St. Louis; and Luther Northwestern, St. Paul), earning an M.Div. from Luther Seminary in 1978. The wife of a music teacher and mother of two daughters, Joan is currently a part-time assistant pastor at two Lutheran churches in Eugene, Oregon, where she resides. She has also been doing graduate work in Rhetoric and Communication at the University of Oregon.

Letters for God's Name

For about six weeks now I have been dipping into the book you sent me, Gail Ramshaw-Schmidt's *Letters for God's Name* (Minneapolis: Seabury, 1984). I have kept it at my bed side, taken it on a retreat, consulted it to spark my imagination for meditation, adapted it for my children, and quoted the resulting incident at least twice in conversation.

The book is an abecedarly of meditations, each ruminating on one or more images of God and concluding, a page or two or three later, with several verses from the Psalms. The first thing I did was look up what my initials might stand for (Jubilee, LORD/Lord, and Health, with a nod to George Herbert). Many of the foci are straightforwardly biblical and liturgical (Advent, Zion). Others are more whimsical, personal, or unusual (Necklace; Oboe; Pinions--of Peacock, Pelican, Phoenix, and Eagle; Queen). Ramshaw-Schmidt plays with these images, teases and coaxes them, trying to elicit fresh contact not merely with words, but with God. "For," she wrote, "even our richest and deepest language of faith--the images of the Psalms, the words of the gospel, the symbols of the liturgy--can only hint at the reality of God, and our prayers become poor and flat unless we are able actually to meet God, again and again, in the burning bush, in the wounds of Christ, at the table of the Lamb."

So this is what happened with my children. In F for Father, Ramshaw-Schmidt reported, "I taught my three-year-old to pray, 'Thank you, God, for being my father; thank you, God, for being my mother. Thank you, God, for being my friend; thank you, God, for being my castle.' For some months she requested the prayer daily, and she always concluded, 'God is not a castle. God is God.' Yes. Nor is God a father: God is God, beyond any and all divine names, and God cracks all names, although we hope, as with crystalline gems, to revere their perfection on our shelf." (p. 21)

Well, I thought, that is a good prayer; let me try it with my children. But when we prayed it, my older daughter snorted and said, "God is not a mother!" Eeks, I thought, where did I go wrong? Then I realized that my older daughter is five-and-a-half, not three, and kindergartners have already been brainwashed by the limited--and limiting--images of God which prevail in Sunday School (especially Sunday School) and church. So have most adults. Maybe Ramshaw-Schmidt's book can inspire many to stretch those limits and discover, or rediscover, a free God.

A second noteworthy book published this spring is *Power, Intimacy, & the Life Story: Personological Inquiries into Identity* by Dan P. McAdams. Dan graduated from Valpo in 1976 with a major in psychology and the designation Christ College Scholar. Upon graduation, Dan received a fellowship at Harvard University, where he earned his M.A. and Ph.D. Having taught briefly at Pepperdine University and St. Olaf College, he is currently Assistant Professor of Psychology at Loyola University in Chicago. He has authored more than a dozen articles in the area of personality and developmental psychology. Dan is married to Rebecca Pallmeyer, a CC classmate.

Reviewing Dan's book is Dr. Forrest Vance, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at VU. Prior to becoming an administrator, Professor Vance devoted most of his life to the field of psychology, teaching, among other places, at the University of Minnesota and the University of Rochester. At Valpo he has done most of his teaching in the Freshman Seminar Program and in the CC Senior Honors Seminar.

Power, Intimacy, & the Life Story

Dan P. McAdams has written a wonderfully stimulating book about the structure, development, and dynamics of personality. It is rooted in a commitment to study the "whole person" that stems from the Harvard tradition of "personological" theory centered in the work of Henry A. Murray, whose 1938 *Explorations in Personality* McAdams rightly identifies as a landmark. For close to five decades Murray, together with his Harvard colleagues, Gordon Allport and Robert White, plus their students and a few brilliant converts like David McClelland (McAdams' mentor) have persistently labored to show that a viable theory of personality requires us to take the whole person as the unit of analysis.

For most American psychologists, this approach has seemed to be hopelessly ambitious and probably muddleheaded as well. Perhaps even more contrary to the spirit of American scientific psychology, the personological approach is not susceptible to simple experimental test. The complexities of the theory guarantee that it will take a long time and a lot of work to know whether or not the ideas involved have substantial validity. Furthermore, there are endless interesting side-issues to explore, so that personological research is constantly diverted into channels that lead away from its central problems. Thus, for example, Murray's Thematic Apperception Test (TAT), invented as a tool for theoretical work, has been most widely used by clinicians as a diagnostic device and this use has generated a vast literature which is essentially irrelevant to Murray's personality theory.

McAdams has made a major contribution by sustaining his attention to the whole person. He has done so by considering narrative structure as a possible explanatory and predictive model for the complicated human behaviors and experiences that constitute the subject matter of the psychological study of personality. He is able to show that an analysis of the components of life stories leads to testable hypotheses concerning the relationships among those components and also relationships between them and an individual's level of maturity and motivational style. This is the major accomplishment embodied in *Power, Intimacy, and the Life Story*.

McAdams presents empirical evidence for the validity of his theory in the form of several correlational and group-difference studies of 90 college students and 50 midlife adults. The data obtained from these studies are consistent with predictions based on McAdams' theory, but it is the theory itself that provides the intellectual excitement in this book. The empirical research proves that the theory is testable, but the groups studied are not sufficiently extensive to provide statistically powerful evaluations of more than a fraction of McAdams' major hypotheses.

The theory itself resolves a vast array of psychological, literary, and philosophical ideas into a coherent structure of surprising simplicity and coherence. McAdams is able to describe the entire theory in four short sentences: "A person's identity (life story) is divided into four major components: *nuclear episodes*, *imagoes*, *ideological setting*, and *generativity script*. Two second-order variables are *thematic lines* and *narrative complexity*. Associated with thematic lines of life stories are power and intimacy motivation--two personality dimensions measured via the TAT. Associated with narrative complexity is ego development--measured via a sentence-completion test."

McAdams provides both a conceptual definition and an empirical assessment procedure for each of the six key ideas emphasized in the quoted sentences. In every instance, the definitions demonstrate an organized assimilation of an extraordinary range of relevant sources. The influence of Erik Erikson is strongly evident throughout, but McAdams has also digested less obvious material from people like David Bakan, James Marcia, and Jane Loevinger among psychologists; and he draws on Northrop Frye, Garbiel Marcel, and Lawrence Elsbree, among others, on the literary and philosophical side. In short, McAdams exercises extraordinary scholarly range and precision so that his theoretical model of personality has the architectural quality of stones carefully selected, hewn, and fitted to maximize both the structural integrity and the functional beauty of the total design.

McAdams' exposition is also well-organized and written with a skilled appreciation for nuances of phrasing and the aptness of particular words. For example, "... *nuclear episode* ..." refers to critical scenes which stand out in bold print in the life story." Only a regular reader of psychological research can fully appreciate the absence of convoluted jargon in such prose. When McAdams says, as most social scientists do, that he intends his book to be "accessible to a wide range of readers, professional and non-professional alike," he means it and has made it so by the clarity of his style and organization.

Power, Intimacy, and the Life Story is a book that will provide a vehicle for enlarging and deepening the dialogue between social scientists and scholars in the humanities about the nature of human personality. It seems to this reviewer that McAdams' articulate and wide-ranging study offers us a priceless opportunity for constructive encounter rather than our usual baffled confrontation across C. P. Snow's "gulf of mutual incomprehension."

one more...

On bedwetting in Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist*:

"Don't take it literally. It's symbolic of something greater, nobler."

--William Olmsted

HOMEcoming

Christ College invites you to attend an Open House in Mueller Hall on Saturday, October 19, at approximately 11:30 a.m. This is a good opportunity to meet CC faculty and alums.