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Report on Spiritual Emphasis Week

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Faculty Responses

Following are faculty responses excerpted from several evaluations.

"... in spite of Block's frame of reference, with which I disagree antithetically, (I feel an affinity) with his insight into something normative for the educative process."

"Perhaps the Christian community has been too quick to pigeonhole this response (that children can and will learn) as a theological neglect of the doctrine of total depravity, and in doing so has missed the far more serious implication..., that of a positivistic pragmatism."

"... the very 'created-ness' of man necessitates his attempts to explore, understand, and operate successfully within God's creation. He does this, however, in response to God--either in obedience to Him or in disobedience. Except for man's redemption in Christ, man because of the Fall cannot of himself respond in obedience to God, but this does not negate his his 'created-ness.' Dr. Block's assumptions demand consideration."

"Presenting mastery-learning techniques as though they were totally objective and empirically tested may be misleading because the fulcrum of mastery learning is the educator's professional but subjective judgment about what constitutes the essentials of what is mastered and in what sequence."

"I believe that a maturational bias on the part of teachers has been and is an excuse for poor teaching techniques as has the over-interpreted IQ score. Emphasis on mastery learning may be a response to this."

"I have real reservations about Block's first assumption, .i.e., every student can learn.... I certainly challenge the second assumption, that all will learn. This is a matter of volition which can't be programmed.... The students who have to take required courses, who go through the motions, jump through the hoops, or what you will, are often content just to get by with a C."

"I feel that my course cannot be distilled into little two-week behavioral units--and there lies my disagreement with mastery learning--its view of education as being skills-oriented, and its view of the child in behavioristic terms."

A gifted scholar and dynamic lecturer, Dr. Block makes a convincing presentation. He makes it perfectly clear that he is a behaviorist in his psychological point of view, and a pragmatist in the application of his methods. This ideological framework does not prevent Block, however, from making some very appropriate and meaningful evaluations of much present-day education. He demonstrates a keen insight into some aspects of the educative process.

REPORT ON SPIRITUAL EMPHASIS WEEK

For many years there has been a "Spiritual Emphasis Week" at Dordt College. This may appear to be a contradiction in terms. Can an institution embrace the Calvinistic World and Life View, which claims that all of life is religion and that in Christ all things cohere, and still call for a week in which the spiritual

is emphasized? Although the faculty and students at Dordt College are striving for and have to some degree attained a Christ-centered education, there is room for a spiritual emphasis week, and it is good for us to have this week. Although we believe that God upholds the universe and that the Bible speaks to us

concerning our various academic disciplines, we can come together as a body and strengthen each other in our convictions. The key word in the phrase is "emphasis." This implies that the spiritual dimension is never absent. By giving special stress to the spiritual, we are attempting to strengthen our awareness of the ever-present spiritual aspect of our academic activity.

The general tone of spiritual emphasis week in the past has been toward personal renewal of our faith in and love for our Savior Lord. This year the emphasis lay in the need for the on-going development of a Christian perspective in our academic disciplines and in our lives. At the spiritual retreat held at the beginning of the school year, Rev. Hulst, the student pastor, challenged faculty and students in a series of addresses entitled "Putting it All Together," in which he said:

"It is the task of the church to proclaim the gospel, the good news that in Christ everything has been put together. . . . That is what Jesus meant when, in Matthew 28, He said not only that we are to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but also that we are to teach them to observe all things whatsoever He has commanded. We are to witness, to bring testimony concerning the Gospel of Jesus Christ not only as it relates to the salvation of souls, but also as it relates to all of life."

With this as background, each club was called upon to study the implications of this glorious truth for its particular area of study and to give it a clear and powerful expression. In conjunction with Key '73 and Evangelism Thrust, these groups were to join in a total witness -- to proclaim and demonstrate that Christ restores and rules over, not only our personal lives, but all aspects of life and learning at the college. Because of the obvious connection between the spiritual retreat and spiritual emphasis week, the week was given the title, "Putting it All Together, Phase II."

Following is a list of participating clubs and the titles of their presentations:

- Phi kappa Sigma (future teachers club)
Education in the Kingdom
- Mission Club
Education's Contribution to the Reception and Sending of the Word
- Biology Club and Physics Club
A Christian Look at the Natural Sciences
- Pre-Seminarian Club
The Task of the Church as Institute
- Opera Guild
Opera in the Christian Community
- Business Club
The Christian in Business
- Political Science Club
A Christian Political Perspective
- Sociology Club
A Biblically-Motivated Sociology
- German Club
A Christian Perspective of Language
- Thalians
Guidelines for the Dramatizing Christian Student
- Cannon (publications)
The Christian's Literary Expression
- Organ Guild
Organ in Christian Worship

The papers which were presented are being prepared for publication and will be available to interested persons. We invite you to read them, to learn with us, and then to participate in any way you are able in this continuing discussion, as we attempt to understand more fully the implications of the fact that Jesus Christ is Lord.

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