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Ozinga Lectures

On January 31 and February 1 of this year, Dr. Thomas Ozinga, Director of College Relations and Professor of Speech Communication at Calvin College, lectured to Dordt students and faculty. The first lecture, entitled "Interpersonal and Mass Communication: Challenges for a Christian Life Style," first delineated what it means to be a person. The audience was then challenged to live in the Spirit—to be "open, vulnerable, and trusting"—in opposition to the prevalent theory of the day, which is to view people as disposable items.

Citing Richard L. Johannesen's work on communication as dialogue, Ozinga said that persons must be viewed as "persons" first and then be loved. From this basis he elaborated the principles of dialogue: presentness—fully concentrating on the other person in an interpersonal communication situation; genuineness—eliminating facades between people, empathic understanding—feeling with the other person; and supportive climate—seeking to understand and encourage the other person. These attitudes ought to prevail in the interpersonal communication of Christians.

Several issues in mass communication were raised to set the tone for the next two lectures. First, since mass media today present a thoroughly secular culture and are operated primarily for profit, we need to ask "How far do we go?" Dr. Ozinga urged that Christians claim mass communi-

cation for Christ and that this must be done both as consumers and as practitioners. Second, whereas print is still important, society does not consider it as important as it once was. Television is now paramount, and it not only mirrors but also shapes our culture. Ozinga deplored the erosion of print. He pointed out that television often demonstrates a view of man incompatible with the Biblical view. Christian witness via mass media has some strong spots, he said, but "often it is marked by charismatic charlatans."

In his lecture on "Ethical Problems in Mass Communication," Ozinga discussed journalism, television, and advertising. In journalism he called attention to three issues: the myth of "objectivity," "scooping" news, and "happy talk" news shows. He argued that "fairness" is often absent, but should always be practiced. Objectivity is impossible. Scooping the news, or trying to be the first to report an event, often hurts the people involved and also frequently leads to inaccuracies. The insensitivity of journalists in some cases—as, for example, their showing the distraught faces of persons involved in deep tragedy—he termed "barbarous." While Ozinga did not mind anchormen's enjoying their work, he argued that "hyping" news (dramatizing the news beyond the facts) to gain audiences weakens and distorts what news ought to be.

Three important problems of televi-

sion were also described: 1) television is basically an entertainment medium, but it is highly persuasive; 2) "modeling" of life styles in programs ought to be positive rather than negative; and 3) manipulation of "jump shots" (e.g., a brief picture of audience reaction to a speaker) by biased editors—presenting events as they would like them to be seen—should be barred as unethical.

Advertising, although not inherently unethical, also raises many questions. Ozinga suggested two criteria for the ethics of advertising: 1) Is the advertisement honest and accurate? 2) Does it present enough information so that the consumer can make a rational choice? Major problems of advertising include giving entertainment rather than information, "puffery" (implying that a product is "bigger," but not indicating "bigger than what"), getting us to *want* more rather than to *be* more, and preying on the fears of society in order to sell products. These problems are further complicated by the assumption of most people that nothing can be done by individuals to correct these problems, which view is known as the "syndrome of well-informed futility."

The final lecture, "Christian Witness via Mass Media: Noble Work or Mere Hucksterism," contained an interesting de-

scription of what Ozinga called "the curse of the religious hucksters"; he noted how these individuals have given Christian witness a bad name by their emotional appeals for money while building financial empires. He said that many Christian radio stations are not doing the best that they can, but, rather, that they demonstrate a world-flight mentality, they use too many paid programs, and they beg for money. In contrast, he lauded KDCR and the Back-to-God Hour for a more realistic approach.

Several answers were posited by Ozinga. For Christian stations, he suggested the following: 1) accept fewer paid programs, 2) use more good music, and 3) encourage Christian drama. For individuals, he urged that they get involved in Christian mass media, that they work in secular media (bringing a positive influence to bear in our culture), and that they use innovative techniques, become discerning consumers, and give money to God-honoring media.

To develop, and particularly to practice, a Christian approach to communication is an extremely difficult matter. Dr. Ozinga's lectures served to make us more aware of the problems and to encourage us to implement solutions.

Charles Veenstra

Recipe for a Moon

On Saturday, February 18, Dordt College was host to the monthly meeting of the Sioux Valley Section of the American Chemical Society. Chemistry professors and students from area colleges and universities attended. The guest lecturer was Dr. Larry Haskin who is Professor of Chemistry and of Earth and Planetary Sciences and a fellow of the McDonnell Center for the Space Sciences at Washington University, St. Louis. Dr. Haskin was formerly a member of the Chemistry Department of the University of Wisconsin and then was chief of the Planetary and

Earth Sciences Division of NASA's Johnson Space Center for three years. He has analyzed lunar samples from all six Apollo and three Luna missions and has used trace-element distributions to study the origins of terrestrial and lunar rocks and minerals and the processes that produced them. The following is a summary of Dr. Haskin's presentation.

He began by explaining that there are three prevalent theories about how Moon came into existence. One theory holds that Moon was once part of Earth, but separated from the mother planet early