
Pro Rege

Volume 4 | Number 1

Article 10

September 1975

Cheers for Spiers

Abraham Bos

Dordt College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/pro_rege



Part of the [Christianity Commons](#), [Higher Education Commons](#), and the [Linguistics Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Bos, Abraham (1975) "Cheers for Spiers," *Pro Rege*: Vol. 4: No. 1, 31.

Available at: https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/pro_rege/vol4/iss1/10

This Incidentally is brought to you for free and open access by the University Publications at Digital Collections @ Dordt. It has been accepted for inclusion in Pro Rege by an authorized administrator of Digital Collections @ Dordt. For more information, please contact ingrid.mulder@dordt.edu.

steinian physics on anthropology today. Pinter's plays, he noted, are all set in one room, isolated from everything else, and silence is a recurring feature of the dialogue.

Dr. Hurrell spoke warmly about his visit to Dordt College and the Consortium. He was particularly impressed with the ideological conviction of the conferees, and

their genuine desire to know more about theatre.

All meetings were taped, and the tapes may be purchased at cost from the Dordt College Media Center.

The New World Theatre Consortium, Conference II (1976), will be held, once again at Dordt College, on April 8, 9, and 10.

Cheers for Speirs

Dr. Randall Speirs lectured to Dordt students and faculty on April 16 and 17. Presently he is a Wycliffe Bible Translator to the Tewa Indians in Espanola, New Mexico. Often he spends his summers as a guest lecturer in linguistics at the University of North Dakota. It was here that Kornelis Boot, from the Dordt Language Department came to know and appreciate him as a teacher and friend. He came to the Dordt campus by invitation of the Language Department, and the Dordt community enjoyed its opportunity to hear this dedicated Christian scholar.

Not only did Dr. Speirs lecture to numerous language classes, he also led chapel, addressed the faculty, held "monolingual" demonstrations, and participated in the first Dordt high school "Language Day" program. His chapel talk was inspiring, and his lectures ("Making sense out of sound," "Linguistics and Learning," and "Translation problems—we've got 'em!") were stimulating. However, the most interesting presentations were the two "monolingual" demonstrations entitled: "If you are going to translate the Bible into Buga-Buga, where in the world do you start?" For these demonstrations we invited an "informant" speaker of a language unknown to, or studied by Speirs. The informant was instructed not to reveal the name of the language he was speaking, to speak only the unknown language in response to questions or gestures by Speirs, and not to look at the blackboard on which Speirs was

trying to record all of the useful language data the informant supplied. Dr. Speirs spoke only in Tewa. After a half hour of gathering data, he attempted to guess the language, to give the meaning to words and sentences, and to begin an analysis of the sound structure, the morphology and the syntax of the language. The one informant, Dr. Thumasathit, spoke the Asian Thai language and the other, Rev. Harold De Groot, the African Tiv language. Dr. Speirs showed the method and problems of linguist-translators to the approval of large audiences. He demonstrated two things about the science of linguistics: that linguistics is interesting, fascinating in fact; and that it is an extremely useful and practical science.

The lecture, "Translation problems—we've got 'em!," which proved to be most interesting to me, was presented to the Greek and Hebrew students. In this lecture Speirs pointed out the problems which confront Bible translators, and the interrelationships of theological presuppositions in translating. He recommends to every reader of the Bible, Translating the Word of God, by John Beekman and John Callow (Zondervan).

The Language Department, plus many students and faculty were pleased to have heard Dr. Speirs, the linguist, the theologian, the translator, the anthropologist, the warm, folksy scholar.

by Abram Bos