Potok confronts core ideas

by Dan Mennega

Chaim Potok, a Jewish author and "non-pulpit" rabbi, has written six novels, including *The Chosen*. On November 14, at the 1989 Dordt College President's Convocation, he addressed the Dordt College student body, faculty, and many visitors, with a dynamic speech few people could have been disappointed with.

It may appear that most students here are fairly content with their way of life and the way of life their families and communities lead. The fact is that someday, if not already, the values and systems of thought that have been established in a person's life will be confronted by outside, foreign, cultural influences. And the results will inevitably change that person's life. This was the focus of Potok's speech entitled "Religious and Secular Humanism: Journeyming Between Worlds."

Potok speaks often of the "small and particular world into which a person is born" which forms a conscience in each of us. According to Potok, chances favor a person coming out of his or her teens "appreciating the lifestyle and system of values of one's small and particular world." As a result, the college-age person is described as "a battleground for a very strange confrontation." This confrontation has been the subject of many of Potok's novels.

The confrontations Potok speaks of can take many shapes and can happen at any time. A student at Dordt may be friends with someone attending a secular university and realize that this friend has developed an entirely different opinion concerning the purpose of life. The new idea is interesting, but areas of it go against the Dordt student's "core," or basic system of values. The result is tension. Or, one may be fascinated by a certain culture's way of life, but will feel his or her conscience (formed by his or her particular world) in tension with the new way.

"What do you do with outside truths?" asks Potok. Should a person give in to his conscience and totally reject new ideas? Potok describes different reactions to these confrontations:

- The new idea is simply too overwhelming for a person to deal with, or really absorb.
- The new idea takes over a person's "core." Potok says that this is often the case if one hasn't thought out the actual reason for his or her present system of thoughts and values, but practices them merely because he or she has learned them in his or her "small and particular community."

- A totally new idea forms, as a result, intrinsically the same, but peripherally different. For example, when early Christianity encountered Rome, its appearance changed dramatically (became an official religion, formed the Christendom), though its beliefs stayed basically the same.

On the college level, a new idea may form while one is studying philosophy, perhaps encounters a strange teaching by Voltaire, finds some truth in it, and incorporates the truth into his life.

There is a constant struggle between Western civilization thinking, an individual's thinking, and the thinking of an individual's small and particular world. Potok's speech makes us aware that we will experience this struggle, and we should be ready to deal with it in an open-minded, yet careful way.

Snowstorm stops students

by Julie Van Donselaar

After a relaxing Thanksgiving vacation, many Dordt students were trying to race back to college. But, they hadn't counted on racing against a snow storm. On November 27, northwest Iowa was plagued with icy roads, strong winds, and drifting snow. Blowing snow greatly reduced visibility and vehicles reduced their speed to 10 mph. At times it seemed like there were more cars in the ditches than were actually on the interstate.

Melynda Slings, Brian Van Zee, and Eric Van Wyk were traveling back to Dordt when the storm hit. Melynda said, "There was zero visibility. We decided that we couldn't go any further." They stopped at a gas station in Sloan, Iowa, where a state trooper took them to a church to spend the night. Eventually, about twenty Dordt students arrived at this church and stayed the night. According to Melynda, "The floor was very hard, but we were safe."

Shari Groen was also stranded because of the terrible road conditions. She and four others were returning to Dordt from vacation in Michigan. When they were twenty-five miles from Sioux City, their car slid and spun around on the ice. Shari said that she and her friends were dropped off at a hotel. There they spent the night watching "The Tonight Show" and eating pizza. The next afternoon, they had quite a bit of trouble getting a ride back to Dordt, but someone finally agreed to pick them up. It was an evening Shari will never forget. She said, "It was an experience to tell your grandchildren." It seemed like almost everyone had problems getting back to Dordt except for those who had returned early. Some students reported that they didn't encounter the storm until they got to Le Mars. It then took them an hour to travel from Le Mars to Sioux Center.

Dordt students were stranded all over the region in motels, churches, and homes. Wherever they were Monday night, they were all thankful for a place to stay. Some students remarked that they didn't want to return to Dordt after Thanksgiving vacation. But, after getting caught in a dangerous storm, they were relieved and very happy to see the campus. God had given them yet another blessing to add to their "To Be Thankful For" list.

Photo by Jeff DeBoer
Thanks--appetizer or essential?

by Teri Nikkel

Early Thursday morning I stumble out of bed in awkward rhythm with my squawking alarm clock. I wonder who came up with the tradition of having a turkey for Christmas. I know the legend of the Pilgrims and Native Americans enjoying the first Thanksgiving together. But I don't know where the squawking of the roosters comes in. Maybe someone associated the rooster's crow with the sound of a turkey gorging down our throats?

I know that there is a close relationship between the two birds. Both are raised for their meat. Both are eaten at the Thanksgiving table. I don't know how turkey became the symbol of Thanksgiving. It may simply be that the turkey is the prime example of this sinful attitude. The actual Thanksgiving takes a sideline to the football game on television and the spread of goodies which line our tables--to the materialism of the age. I suggest that we give ourselves a spiritual inoculation and give God the thanks we too often deny Him. This past Thanksgiving Day, my minister gave a few suggestions as to how we can apply ourselves in giving thanks throughout the year. First, we must focus on our attitudes and look for things to be thankful for, even if we shouldn't have to look far. We have to go against our nature and the temptation to complain. Second, set aside a specific time to give thanks daily. Third, recognize that if you have Christ, you will have everything. Fourth, we must divide and conquer our problems. For example, if you do poorly on a test you've studied hard for, thank God that you've come to realize that you can't rely on yourself for success but that you should depend on Him. And fifth, give thanks in everything.

But no one can say it as well as the words of the Bible: "Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (I Thessalonians 5:18).

As the semester draws to a close with only three weeks of classes left until exams, both students and faculty are starting to look beyond exams to the long awaited Christmas break so that we can all finally relax for a few weeks and prepare for second semester. Right now students are finishing term papers and assignments and faculty are gearing up to prepare exams. However, I feel that there is something a little more important going on right now that both students and faculty seem to take rather lightly.

Just before Thanksgiving, I believe, many faculty members were given student evaluation forms. Upperclassmen and veteran faculty are familiar with the two-sided form which asks a number of simple questions about the class and instructor. Students are asked to rank the class and instructor on a scale of 1 to 5. I think that most students and faculty underestimate the value of these evaluations.

I've found that most faculty members give students about ten to maybe fifteen minutes at the end of a class, usually during dead week, for students to fill out the form. Students usually aren't given any previous warning that the form is coming and many students end up circling 3's and 4's and maybe scratching an "I didn't like the class" or "you're a lousy teacher", if anything, on the back. It seems like a vicious circle; students don't put any effort into these forms, and faculty, noting the lack of response, don't give enough time to fill them out properly and so they don't put any effort into them, and the cycle continues. To top it all off, since it's usually left until dead week, students have a lot of pressure on them, and, having a pretty good idea of how they will do in the class, the comments end up reflecting final grades rather than relatively objective opinions.

I think this is a terrible abuse of a very important system. The faculty work hard to give the students fair evaluations, yet when students are called upon to do the same for their instructors, they aren't given a good opportunity or else they abuse it. I think the faculty would appreciate a thoughtful evaluation as much as students do, but they need the opportunity to do so.

I have already written evaluations for three of my classes this semester. One I had to do in somewhat of a hurry at the end of a class and I didn't have time to finish what I wanted to say. The second I had more time, but I was somewhat frustrated due to an assignment we were working on, and my evaluating reflects that. The last one I was responsible for turning in to the administration, so I took it home and spent about forty-five minutes working on it, trying to praise the instructor's strengths and appropriately criticize the weaknesses. I thought very good about this last one and I gladly turned it in, knowing that it said what I wanted to say.

I think both faculty and students need to take a closer look at the significance of these evaluations and probably enact some changes on how these forms are completed. For one, I think dead week is a bad time to do evaluation. This is an extremely busy and stressful time for both students and faculty and as such, not enough time is put into these forms. Also, students' final grades are often reflected on the evaluations. Why not do them about two-thirds of the way through the semester? By then the students should know what they think of the instructor and the biases of grades will not be as great.

Second, the students more time to complete them. If not class time, let students take them home overnight or for a few days so that they can think about them and give thoughtful answers and opinions. Third, students should put more effort into them. I think this is the one time when you can give an unhindered personal opinion of the abilities of the instructor without any fear of repercussions. Plus, it is as important to the instructor that the students be honest. Would you like it if your instructor said "I didn't like your effort without explanation and gave you a C"? Fourth, maybe the form should be changed. It is very easy to circle a few numbers to give an opinion and it is very neatly quantitative for the administration to count points like a grade. I think it would be more meaningful if the students were told to comment in writing instead of circling numbers. This way, the student would have to think a bit harder to come to a conclusion and it would be easier for the instructor to see which students had put more thought into the comments. I realize that the entire back side of the evaluation form is there for comments, but I wonder how many students actually use it.

Comments are equally important for giving 4's and 5's as well as 1's and 2's. Instructors need to know what worked as well as what didn't work so that they can keep the good and get rid of the bad.

Finally, I think students really need to be told how to fill out one of these forms. Often, the short instruction paragraph, students are rarely told what the form is used for, why it is used, and how to properly use it. Freshmen are given this form by the instructor, who may or may not explain its use, and then are left to figure it out for themselves. Maybe a lecture in Gen Ed 10 should be devoted to the purpose and proper use of these forms.

I think student evaluation forms are too important to let pass by. I know there are both faculty who are concerned about how they teach and students who are concerned about how they are taught, who want to get and give meaningful comments in an effort to get quality education at Dordt College.

Carl Fictorie
Mother and Daughter
Recovering After Transplant

The University of Chicago Medical Center was the setting for a whole new kind of organ transplant. This past Tuesday, Alyssa Smith underwent surgery to receive this nation's first living-donor liver transplant. Her donating mother, Teresa, and her daughter are both on the road to recovery.

The procedure went very smoothly, but did include a few tense moments, especially when Alyssa was taken back in the operating room shortly after her first surgery because of internal bleeding. But shortly after the second episode, Alyssa was awake, active, and moving. Doctors report that the transplant is functioning and they expect nothing but a smooth recovery for both Alyssa and her mother.

Democracy and Czechoslovakia

Democracy just keeps on spreading. In the wake of the unbelievable events in East Germany, Czechoslovakia has also "opened its doors" to the western world.

Friday, November 24, the nation's ruling thirteen-member Politburo resigned and was replaced with a new Politburo.

Tower of Pisa Considering Shutdown

The famous leaning tower of Pisa might be closed soon. This would be for restoration purposes, as advised from top government officials. The Parliament will make the final decision on this proposal from the Council of Public Works. Officials do say that the tower, which attracts thousands of tourists every month, is not in any immediate danger, but future restoration is inevitable.

The problem is that the 162 foot tower, completed in the mid 1300's, is slowly increasing its tilt each year. But professor of topography, Gero Geni, states that it will be another 100 years before it reaches the point at which it would likely fall. Methods of repair and funds are big issues being debated over this Wonder of the World.

State Volleyball

Two Northwest Iowa volleyball teams dominated the state volleyball tournament this year by placing 1st and 2nd in A and AA classes.

Hull Western Christian went undefeated to claim the class AA championship title. In the championship game they defeated a tough Dubuque-Whalen team that had been ranked #1 in Iowa and #19 nationally. Western rallied to win in five games, winning the first two and then losing the next two. They then came back and won the final game by a score of 15-12. Coach Tom Vanden Bosch has lead the Indians to eleven state tournaments and this is the first championship they have won.

Unity Christian also played some fine tournament games. Led by Junior Amy Jeltema they advanced to the final game winning the first game in five matches and the second in four. Unity faced a tough Dike team whose coach was going for her fifth state championship title. Dike turned out to be the stronger and defeated Unity in four games. Unity's young team is sure to make an impressive showing next year.

Laura Vander Zee from Western Christian and Amy Jeltema from Unity both claimed the title of captain of the all-tournament team in each of their classes.
Shahinian fills philosophy opening

by Bill Vander Kooi

John Kok, professor of philosophy, will be taking a leave of absence next semester, but he will continue working in his office in the Dordt Chapel. The reason for his leave is to finish writing a book about a Dutch philosopher by the name of Vollenhoven. This book will be published and serve as Kok's dissertation for a doctorate at the University of Amsterdam.

Dordt's administration has filled the semester opening with professor Gary Shahinian. Born in New Jersey, then marrying a Canadian, he ended up in Fort Edward, Ontario, where he presently lives. He is also completing his Ph.D. and teaches philosophy and religion at Redeemer College in Ontario.

Shahinian is of interesting ethnic background. His grandfather was Armenian and his parents brought him up in the Russian Orthodox tradition. In New Jersey, he attended Bible College and found himself reading his way out of fundamentalism. There he learned of the Reformed tradition, transferred to Calvin, and went on to Calvin Seminary. Shahinian will be a welcomed addition to Dordt faculty and should prove to be an asset to the philosophy department.

Although Kok is on leave of absence, he will still be available to anyone that wishes to talk with him.

Students say...

What was the best part of your Thanksgiving vacation?

Jill Altena
Sophomore
"I fell in love with "Mikey" from Look Who's Talking."

Kevin Wassenaar
Sophomore
"My relatives left."

Laurel Beukelman
Junior
"I double-dated with my boyfriend's parents, their treat."

Craig Eckels
Junior
"Seeing family and old high school friends."

Ed Kruis returns as a veteran of Dordt's drama department.

Dordt grad to direct drama

by Cindy Reddington

January 1990 will bring not only a new year but a new wealth of talent to the halls of Dordt College. Ed Kruis, a former Dordt student, will return to direct She Stoops to Conquer.

Being the first person to graduate from Dordt College with a B.A. in theater, Kruis went on to earn a Master of Fine Arts from Wayne State University. Since that spring Kruis has directed a wide range of plays in various places, from Wild Cats at Calvin to The Mad Woman of Chalot in Lansing, Michigan.

Freelance designing is another strength Kruis has been exercising since his 1979 Wayne State graduation.

Within the past year Kruis has gotten "better in touch" with the actor by participating in plays as an actor himself.

During his stay at Dordt, Kruis will teach General Arts 200 for two three-week sections while directing construction for the set of the five-act play, She Stoops to Conquer.

Written in 1773 by Oliver Goldsmith, combines a strong theme and "a lot of fun" to portray the importance of being true to oneself.

Kruis advises those who are interested in tryouts to read the comedy and become familiar with the thirty roles the play provides.
by Idelette Riffert
"Edenvale School . . . where eagles soar." That's what the letterhead from an elementary school in San Jose, California reads. And to make sure those eagles do soar, the principal of that school, Meril Smith, has initiated a program called "adopt-a-college." The school wrote letters to colleges all around the country seeking a school that each student could adopt.

Because many of Edenvale's students come from families without a history of higher education, this program is intended to discourage dropouts and encourage students to think about the importance of education at an early age. The elementary school holds assemblies at which all the students get a chance to wear their college sweatshirts that the schools provide.

Dordt is one of the many colleges in the program, and its youngest and cutest recruit is Richard Miranda, a seven-year-old first grader at Edenvale. He is the middle child with an older brother, a younger sister, and one more sibling on the way.

Richard's favorite movie is Batman, and he loves to eat pizza and french fries. He also likes to play Nintendo and ride his bike. "I want to be a policeman when I grow up," says Richard, "because I want to help people." Richard's favorite subjects are math and art, but he especially likes school "because I can play with my friends."

"We haven't so much adopted him as he's adopted us," says Jim De Jong, who first received the letter from Edenvale. But De Jong wants to encourage volunteer groups or individuals on campus to write to Richard and let him know about Dordt.

Letters can be addressed to
Richard Miranda
C/o Edenvale School
285 Azucar Ave.
San Jose, CA 95111

The Free Press was originally founded by two Dordt students in 1969. One of them, now Dr. James C. Schaap, is an English professor at Dordt College. Dirk Schouten and Dan Mennega revived The Free Press in 1989, to continue to give students the opportunity to openly express views on various topics which affect students and faculty alike. The coordinators, Schouten and Mennega, are leaving the column open for any student or faculty member who wishes to contribute to its success. Please send your opinions, suggestions, and reactions to

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The Birds

by Janet Poot

The Birds, a 1963 Alfred Hitchcock classic, is a tale of horror brought to a small west coast town, Bodega Bay. The story begins in a San Francisco Pet Shop between a criminal lawyer Mitch Brenner (Rod Taylor), a rich practical joker Melanie Daniels (Jessica Tandy), and a pair of love birds.

The attacks of the birds start out harmless so the towns people do not believe that birds can be violent and murderous. Will the birds actually kill?

The Birds is definitely an action packed film, intense, interesting and suspenseful, keeping you glued to your seat.

The Birds is the last film of the first semester, shown December 15, at 6:30 and 9:00 p.m. Location will be announced at a later date. Don't forget to bring a friend to this one!
Dordt celebrates music

Photo by Jeff DeBoer

A combination of music and story-telling made "Orchestranimals" a big hit.

Choirs usher in Christmas

by Sandra De Jong

A Christmas choral concert will be presented by the Dordt College Chorale and Concert Choir, directed by Dale Grotenhuis, and the Sioux County Brass Quintet in the Chapel on Sunday, December 3, at 2:30 p.m.

The chorale, which will be accompanied by Lynn Mabrey, will perform the black Negro spiritual, "Children, Go Where I Send Thee," the traditional "Gesu Bambino," accompanied by Tania Rosendaal, oboist for the college's concert band and Sioux County Orchestra. They will also perform John Rutter's beautiful setting of "Candlelight Carol."

The concert choir, accompanied by Donna Groenendyk, will perform "Pie Jesu" from Andrew Lloyd Webber's Requiem with soloists Joan Van Holland and Carrie Veenstra. They will also perform the traditional "Deck the Halls."

The evening will finish off with the traditional "Peace, Peace" and lighting of the peace candle.

Orchestra goes on stage

by Sandra De Jong

Dordt's twelve-member Chamber Orchestra will present a concert on Thursday, December 14, at 8:00 p.m. in the Chapel. They will perform music such as "Arietta" by Norman Dello Joio, "Mazurka No. 7" by Chopin, and "Traumeral" by Schumann. Brad Medema and Carmen Klungel will also perform "Concerto in C for Two Violins" by Georg Philipp Telemann.

Along with the Chamber Orchestra, a flute and trombone quartet will also perform. The flute quartet featuring Kim Kooi, Angela Vos, Vonda Dekkers, and Madra Watson, will play "Rondo" written by Kuhlau. The trombone quartet, featuring Steve VanDen Berg, Lyle VanRavenesway, Todd Nanninga, and Scott VanWyk, will perform a number of German Christmas carols such as "Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming."

The evening will finish off with Darren Van't Hul singing English Christmas carols, assisted by Evan Vis on euphonium and Tania Rosendaal on oboe. A free will offering will be taken.

Madrigals offer merriment

by Sandra De Jong

Hear ye, hear ye, ye lords and ladies... tickets are now on sale for the annual Dordt College Christmas Madrigal Dinners.

The banquet, which will be open to the public for two evenings, December 1 and 2, will begin at 7 p.m. in the West Commons dining hall on campus.

The banquets with the theme of Old English Flair, will feature the costumed members of the concert choir as the lords and ladies of the "realm." Guests will feast on roast boar and light the Christmas figgy pudding. Music and jesting will bring in the holiday spirit.

Tickets are $13 for adults and $10 for students. Contact the Dordt College Box Office at 722-6430 weekdays only from 1-5 or 7-9 p.m. Reservations are necessary.

Seniors star in recital

by Sandra De Jong

Two Dordt College seniors, Carrie Veenstra and Carmen Klungel, will present a joint recital on Thursday, December 7, at 8:00 p.m., in the Dordt Chapel.

Carrie Veenstra, who will be performing vocally, is a music education major who has studied with Mrs. Ann Dorr throughout her college career. Upon graduation she hopes to be assisted by Mrs. Karen De Mol and Mrs. Esther DeAgro.

Carmen Klungel will perform on the violin. Klungel, who is a member of the Sioux County Orchestra, as well as the college orchestra, is a social work major and has studied the violin with her instructor, Kathy Broadwell, for two years.

Piano/harpischord accompanists for the evening are Dordt students Lynn Mabrey and Jennifer Van Weelden.

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Men:
by Steve Hoogland

The Dordt College Defenders opened their 89-90 season in Yankton against the Mt. Marty Lancers. Once again the Defenders lost their season opener by two points, 83-81.

In the first half the Defenders led by as much as ten points. The Defenders lost their shooting touch in the opening minutes of the second half as they scored only 11 points in the first ten minutes. Coach Rich Vander Berg says, "We just lost our touch for ten minutes there. They weren't bad shots, but they just weren't falling for us."

Down the stretch the Defenders stayed close, closing the gap and then taking a brief one-point lead with under a minute left to play when Joel Veenstra hit a shot jump shot. Marty came back and took the lead. After a Dordt turnover the Lancers cashed in on a controversial call by the referee with his team's effort "To win two of your first three games on the road is excellent, especially when you have to come back in the second half like we have," he said.

The Lady Defenders opened their season in Marshall, Minnesota, against Southwest State. Jill Bouwsma played an all-around excellent game, scoring 23 points, grabbing 12 rebounds, and handing out 8 assists. The Lady Defenders were down 38-29 at the half, but they capitalized when Southwest State had to switch out of their press defense, which had riddled the Dordt guards in the first half.

Vander Berg said he was disappointed with the Defenders' rebounding since they were beaten on the boards. Dordt made only 8 of 14 free throws, which hurt down the stretch. Then last Tuesday night the Defenders got on the winning track, led by all five starters, in defeating Dakota State 105-76. The final opener by two points, 83-81.

In the second half the Defenders led by 17-21 from the line to claim a 72-66 victory. In addition to Gritters' 26 points, De Vries scored 16, and Luisa Wubben scored 10 along with nine rebounds.

Then last Saturday night the Lady Defenders ran into the Wartburg Lady Knights, a participant in the NCAA Division III playoffs last year. They start five seniors this season and play a tenacious man-to-man defense.

Wartburg and Dordt played a close 1st half, but Wartburg took a 28-26 lead to the locker room. Wartburg went on a big run in the early minutes of the second half. The Lady Defenders were able to close the gap to four, but that is as close as they got, losing 68-56. "We really played much better than the score indicates," Rhoda said, "We were in the game until the end."

Tuesday night Dordt whipped Dana 85-55. That boosted the Lady Defenders' record to 3-1. For the Lady Defenders Gritters scored 19, Vonda Brands and Janet Zylstra each scored 13 and Bouwsma scored 10.

Women:
by Steve Hoogland

The Lady Defenders opened their season by winning two out of their first three games on the road and then winning at home Tuesday night to up their record to 3-1 in the young season. Coach Len Rhoda is pleased with his team's effort "To win two of your first three games on the road is excellent, especially when you have to come back in the second half like we have," he said.

The Lady Defenders opened their season in Marshall, Minnesota, against Southwest State. Jill Bouwsma played an all-around excellent game, scoring 23 points, grabbing 12 rebounds, and handing out 8 assists. The Lady Defenders were down 38-29 at the half, but they capitalized when Southwest State had to switch out of their press defense, which had riddled the Dordt guards in the first half.

Dordt completed an eighteen-point turnaround in the second half and came away with a 65-56 victory.

In addition to Bouwsma's performance, Suzanne De Vries, Vonda Brands, and Luisa Wubben all scored one point.

In the Lady Defenders' second game, against the Sioux Falls Lady Cougars, Rhoda Gritters scored 18 of her 26 points in the second half. Dordt overcame a 32-28 deficit. With five minutes left in the game the Lady Defenders were still down by eight, but the Dordt press forced a number of costly turnovers, which the Lady Defenders quickly turned into points. Key free throw shooting iced the game for the Lady Defenders as they shot 17-21 from the line to claim a 72-66 victory.

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Photo by Angela Eriksen

Greg Vanden Top battles this Lucklow player. The Blades went on to defeat Lucklow 15-5 in pre-Thanksgiving hockey.