The Challenge
by Cliff Christians

There are many books in the libraries of our Christian circles which are looked upon by many of our people rather favorably. These we could classify as religious novels (supposedly). Our church libraries are literally filled with books of this type, e.g. Grace Livingston Hill’s books; and they are enjoyed by many of the people to whom they are accessible.

It is the contention of this author that we as Young Calvinists should indeed be wary of such books — even though they come to us wrapped in a glossy, religious veneer.

I assert this for more than one reason: It is characteristic of these books that having read one, a person has read them all. They all speak of fond lovers, of a sick mother or father, of brave children, of orphans, and of unexpected deaths. The villain must always meet a horrible death, and the hero always comes out on top with everything falling his own way; furthermore this hero overcomes his difficulties without any divine guidance or assistance.

(We hereby speak of these novels in general).

The foremost critics of religious novels despise them because of their intense falseness. There is first of all a falseness about the characterization. It takes only a minutes of prayer, or a careful thought and the hero can overcome any obstacle. The virtuous son who marches off to war soon wins all his buddies to Christ. The second form this dishonesty takes is an unrealistic treatment of evil (more specifically, the results of it in the world). The authors of such novels treat evil as if it were no worse than a bad cold. They all exclude suffering, misery, and privation except for enough to make some form of a story. In the end, the hero throws all evil aside and everything that is wonderful is heaped upon him.

These books are only inviting the cynic’s leer and snicker, for even secular authors are more adept at portraying human nature than religious authors; they can explain the circumstances of life in a far more pleasing, more realistic manner.

Therefore, I maintain that they should be removed from the shelf and forever disdained. There is

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Spotlight on Sports
by Harlan Vanden Einde

The main topic of discussion in the halls of Dordt during the past few weeks has been the various intramural contests. Many of the tournaments are now in full swing, and it will not be too long before we shall discover a champion in each field.

The boys' volleyball tournament has already been completed, and the girls' tournament is now underway. Team number ‘4’, in the boys' division, consisting of J. Gesink, R. De Sligter, J. Schapper, G. Van Stedum, L. Talisma, and M. Alons came out on top with a 5-0 record. The girls' tournaments, as of Monday, March 24, are not far enough advanced to report.

All the games in the first round and some of the second round in ping-pong and shuffleboard are already completed. There have been some very close games, and I'm sure there are still some very exciting games in store.

The girls' badminton tournament has also been started, with a few games already finished. In the very near future, the bowling tournament will also get under way, and as soon as the weather permits, the horseshoe and track events will also begin.

I am sure that everyone is enjoying these tournaments very much, and it will be very interesting to keep up with them and see who comes out on top in each division. We will report all official results in this column.

Professor Sjoerdsma Received Award

Professor Ted Sjoerdsma, instructor in mathematics and physical science, has been awarded a scholarship for a summer's study at Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.

Mr. Sjoerdsma, in this six week summer institute, will be taking subjects in the line of mathematics. He does not yet know what specific subjects he will be able to select.

Mr. Sjoerdsma stated that he was eligible for this award because he is currently employed as a junior college teacher of physical science and mathematics. His plans are to continue in this capacity and to work in future summers toward the master's degree.

When asked how he felt about receiving this award, Professor Sjoerdsma replied, “Oh, it's dandy. I'm very anxious to resume my graduate studies.” Mrs. Sjoerdsma and the two children will accompany their “Dad” to East Lansing.

DORDT CHOIR TO TOUR
(Continued from page 1)

Throughout the tour the choir members will receive lodging in the homes of the people in these areas, and are looking forward to this too as a means of acquainting our people with Dordt College.

We are sorry that Virgil Baker will be unable to accompany the Test of the choir, forty seven voices, on tour. He was compelled to leave school by his father's accident several weeks ago.

One final thought, Choir: not too much luggage. We're staying eight days not months. And remember those toothbrushes, Men.

On Wednesday morning, April 9, two-thirds of the choir will trudge sleepily to classes again. (The other third will roll over and stop their alarms when the seven-o'clock siren sounds.)

THE CHALLENGE
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Hearty agreement with this contention is the February, 1958 issue of the Reformed Journal. Steven Vander Weele there offers numerous other reasons why we should think twice before we classify "religious novels" as good literature.