



CALVIN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
KERUX

Tolkien, The Lord of the Rings, and the Reformed World and Life View *by Mark Quist*

Editor's Note: I have included this article, which is really a paper from the Reformed World and Life View class taught by Prof. Cooper. I like Tolkien. I've read the Lord of the Rings 4 times in the last 11 years, and I look forward to reading it again, hopefully this summer in preparation for the 3rd movie. In light of world events, this paper fits in quite well. Enjoy it.

J.R.R. Tolkien has clearly denied the idea that his fantasy world of Middle Earth, that springs to life in his trilogy *The Lord of the Rings*, is a covert allegory of the Gospel. However, it is undeniable that his Christian faith and worldview inspired and informed his imagination, and thus, his formulation of Middle Earth. *The Lord of the Rings (LOTR)* is filled with Biblical themes, characters, and the gospel message. Certainly, Tolkien's Christian faith shaped the fantasy world of Middle Earth in such a way that it consistently reflects the truths of the

reality in which we live. Good stories have meaning when they point to the greatest story of all. Tolkien has said, "It is not difficult to imagine the peculiar excitement and joy that one would feel if any especially beautiful fairy-story were found to be 'primarily true, its narrative to be history.'" Embedded in the story line and characters are clear glimpses of our world's history, of a beginning, a fall, and redemption and restoration with movement towards an end. The connections between our cosmos and Middle Earth are poignant and powerful.

Tolkien wrote to a friend that LOTR is a "fundamentally religious and Catholic work: unconsciously at first, but consciously in the revision."

Even in the recent films by New Line Cinema under the



(Continued on page 10)

Gratuitous Learning Expanded *by Ruth Boven*

I'm writing in response to, or perhaps as an expansion on, Dan Vos's article on gratuitous learning in the last Kerux. CTS certainly does offer excellent learning opportunities outside the classroom. I am concerned, however, that we too often think about learning and even gratuitous learning, as something that takes place only inside the walls of this seminary. Yes, we are being pre-

pared at CTS to teach, lead and shape the Body of Christ. Yet in order to effectively minister in these ways to the image bearers of God in our churches and in the world, we need to know them. We need to open ourselves up to learning from the eclectic ensemble of individuals God places in our path. Understanding the ways in which our family, friends, church and com-

Inside this issue:

Schedule of Events	2
Leftovers from Dies	2
Unworthy	3
Words are not everything	4
The word of Waray	6
You are invited	7
Family Matters	8
Bolt Attempt to Oust...	9
Tolkien	10-15
Chip Shots	16

("Learning" continued on page 9)

- **Mar 25**—Choir Rehearsal
- **Mar 26**—Bible Knowledge re-test (only for students in final year)
- **Mar 28**—Koinonia; M.A. Projects due; Seminary BOT Executive Committee Meeting
- **Mar 31**—Second Drop/Add Deadline
- **April 2**—Morning Prayers
- **April 4**—Faculty Meeting
- **April 5-13**—Spring Break
- **April 16**—Greek Comp (4pm)
- **April 17**—Special Lecture by Ed Seely, 10:00 am, Seminary Auditorium
- **April 18**—Good Friday, Morning Prayers
- **April 21**—JoyAnna Bodini's birthday
- **April 21-22**—Reading Period (no classes)
- **April 24**—Town Hall Meeting with John Timmer
- **April 25**—Student Senate Meeting

Leftovers from Dies Natalis

My Big Fat Greek First Date (Anonymous)

I met Delta Parsinga at the Square of Stops, and I nu that she was acute one. I asked her out on a date, and I got so nervous, my connecting vowels malfunctioned and I got diæresis. When I got in the active mood and started rough breathing, she got tense, and hit me with a hard gamma nasal. Then she kicked me so hard she left me neuter. She got all accusative, and got on my case about the feminine third person in my life. She threatened to have me aoristed. She said I wasn't masculine enough for her.

Driving home I got so intensive that we had an elision with another auto~ and we both went to the grave. As they lowered our masculine and feminine forms into the earth, Catholics threw stems of roses and circumflexed, while my mother screamed, "Omicron! Omicron!" The relatives consoled her that my soul would be translated to heaven. The newspaper article that told of our personal ending was indefinite, only saying that it was attributive to drinking and driving.

What not to say in an Oral Comp Exam:

1. As Tim LeHaye says...
2. Well, when I was re-baptized...
3. I don't really worry how comps go, I just hope I do good enough to get heaven.
4. Schleiermacher? Is that a sandwich?
5. Before we start, I just want to

say that, pass or fail, I still have Article 7 or 8.

6. What's that trinity? The Father, Son, and Harry Potter?
7. Jesus is nice.
8. "Well, that's your opinion."
9. I'm sure it says that somewhere in the Bible.
10. Oh, that's what oral comps are? You mean I studied all those dentistry manuals for nothing!?!?

You know you are a Calvin seminary if...

1. Dies Natalis is the first time you laughed this year.
2. You laugh at translation problems during your devotions.
3. You're male and you have to stand in line for the bathroom.
4. You have a computer that is mobile and a car that is not.
5. You know the Hebrew alphabet song.
6. You haven't been to chapel in three years.
7. Everything you experience must be a good sermon illustration.
8. You make jokes about infralapsarianism vs. supralapsarianism...and understand them.
9. If #-1-5-2-4* means something to you.
10. Jean Calvin was your favourite Dutchmen until...

Thank you for making Dies Natalis 2003 a fun time that was enjoyed by all. We look forward to seeing you there next year.

“Unworthy” by Dave Gifford and Paul Ryan

By popular demand: Here are the lyrics of the song Dave Gifford and Paul Ryan performed at Dies Natalis about the level of self-esteem the faculty feels is appropriate for students in a Reformed institution of higher learning. The hilarious original version is by folksinger Cheryl Wheeler on her album *Sylvia Motel*, which can be checked out of the public library system for 50 cents.

You're unworthy – and you know you could do better

If you weren't just always thinking of yourselves

You're unworthy – and no matter what you're doing

You should certainly be doing something else

If you're doing stuff for Bierma should be doing stuff for Weima

'Cause today he'll probably make you hand it in

If you're doing stuff for Weima should be doing stuff for Bosma

To waste all that colored paper would most surely be a cardinal sin

You should learn how preach a 3-point sermon

Parse a Greek word into German

Write a treatise against postmodern notions of truth

Tell a hiphil from a hophal

Do more vocab, play less foosball

All the while never neglecting your obligation to catechize the youth

You should decide: Supra? Infra? Oprah? Winfra? Postmill? Premill? Amill? Free will? or God's sovereign control?

You should try to surf the Internet for Martin Luther's Bondage of the Will without alerting CyberPatrol

AND you should know all of Robert's Rules of Order

And our last book of the quarter

Should inspire you to receive the day—without wasting your time

You should thank our committee because there appears to be no significant concern about a prospective candidacy—at least at this time

You should sit with Ron Nydam until you can understand the way you felt way back in your mom

You should fret until you can fluently converse with all the international students in their respective tongues

AND you should save lots more money just by frequenting the pantry and stockpiling all those refried beans

You should have some idea what the phrase neo-Dooyeweerdian epistemology means

You should give benedictions with your hands down

Do your counseling with your pants on

Give three hours a day to epistolary analysis

You could be a successful multi-tasker

Right up there with Mary Brassler

If you'd stop wasting time writing silly songs for Dies Natalis

And you should know how to lead a congregation

How to stop triangulation

How to smile when church gossip about you makes your blood start to boil

You should go practice your evangelism

on a 3-week short-term mission

And build and paint and trudge and tote and toil

You should sweat over doctrines over morals

Over finals, comps and orals

And whether the revolving of the loan formerly known as the revolving loan will ever end

You should brave possibilities for plotting plums of problems

probably blossomed plausibly from

blah blah blah blah blah blah blah blah bottom line is you're unworthy!

Words Are Not Everything by Rev. Richard Sytsma

Scripture: Eccl. 3:1,7; I Peter 3:1-2, 15

The last service I led in Japan I had the privilege of baptizing Mr. Fukuhara, a 70 year old man for whom we had been praying about 6 years. His wife was a very dedicated member of our church, who had been praying for the salvation of her husband many more years. For years she witnessed to him, but got nowhere—until she stopped witnessing to him. When she gave up witnessing to him, almost immediately his attitude changed. He began showing much more interest in the gospel. He started attending church more regularly. Mrs. Fukuhara told me that when she stopped talking about her faith to her husband, she prayed, “God, love my husband through me.” God answered her prayer and her husband was baptized. A few months before we returned to the States, Mr. Fukuhara decided that he wanted to take the step of being baptized, and he asked me to baptize him.

When Mrs. Fukuhara decided not to talk about her faith to her husband, she was following the clear teaching of the Apostle Peter in I Peter 3:1-2:

Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, when they see the purity and reverence of your lives.

Sometimes the absence of words is what wins a man to Jesus. Not words, but a submissive attitude—not words, but behavior that shines with purity and reverence.

Words are not everything. We instinctively nod our heads in

agreement when he hear the words of Ecclesiastes 3:7 “There is a . . . time to be silent and a time to speak.” We understand the truth of the proverb, “Silence is golden.”

Another member of the same church suffered a stroke and as result could no longer walk or talk. He was a man who loved to talk. Once he started to talk, he just could not stop. His wife was always trying to get him to “shut up.” He himself loved to tell the story of the time he visited Grand Rapids. He said, “Ed and Fran Van Baak took me to Fuller Ave. CRC. In that service they asked me to give greetings and I spoke for over an hour.” It was so funny hearing him tell the story, because he said it with such glee. He just glowed with pride that he spoke such a long time in that church. Ed and Fran like to tell that story too, but they put just a little different spin on it.

Imagine what that stroke did to our loquacious friend when he could no longer speak. When he suffered that stroke, I thought he would be devastated. But he was not. He continued to be as cheerful as he always was. In fact, he was the favorite patient of all the nurses when he would go to the hospital for rehabilitation—because he was so cheerful. He always had a smile on his face and found ways to communicate to the other patients and to the nurses. He had learned that words are not everything.

Words are not everything—even in evangelism. This is one of the lessons I learned as a missionary. When Sandy and I went to Japan in 1968, more than anything else I was focused on equipping myself to be an effective communi-

cator of the gospel. I studied the Japanese language hard.

But in various ways I learned that words are not everything. I saw that the most effective missionaries were not necessarily the ones who had the best grasp of the Japanese language. I learned that Japanese watched us much more than listen to us. What we did spoke much more loudly than what we said. Words were not everything.

After the Great Hanshin Earthquake of January 17, 1995, the entire Japanese nation took notice at how the church responded. Many Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples roped off their property. But Christian churches that were still standing opened their doors and invited the earthquake victims to take refuge in their sanctuaries. Kobe Reformed Seminary and Itayado Reformed Church took in a couple hundred refugees. These homeless people camped out in the school and the church for weeks and months until they could find more permanent quarters. The national media reported the story to the whole nation.

The Christians’ actions were a powerful witness to God’s love. Having demonstrated love in action, the Japanese Christians were given a unique opportunity to talk about God’s love. The night of the earthquake the refugees camped out in the seminary joined the professors and seminarians for evening worship. In this service they heard and sang the words of Ps. 46:

God is our refuge and strength,
an ever present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear,

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.

It seemed like these words were written with the people of earthquake stricken Kobe in mind. When the earthquake struck, the mountains on the northern edge of the city quaked, the sea on the city's southern edge surged, and the earth in between gave way.

Having lost their homes, their belongings, and their loved ones—with death and devastation all around them, the people Kobe in that seminary heard the reassuring words, God is our refuge and strength.” The words meant everything to them, just as they have meant so much to so many in the aftermath of Sept. 11. But without the Christians' loving actions, the words would have meant nothing. In fact, if the seminary president had not invited the homeless people in, they never would have had the opportunity to hear those words.

God gave an opportunity and our Christian brothers in Kobe seized it. Just a few verses later in I Peter 3, the same chapter we read earlier, Peter writes,

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.

The teachers and students at Kobe Seminary were prepared to give an answer concerning the hope they had. They were prepared because they knew their Bible and they knew their hymnal. As soon as it happened, they connected the events of the earthquake to Psalm 46. But their preparation also had a deeper dimension. They not only

knew God's word; God's word lived in their hearts so that when the earthquake struck, they reached out in love to their hurting neighbors.

I experienced this same dynamic when I was hospitalized after suffering a heart attack. I had been in the intensive care unit for a few days when a nurse said to me, “You are different from our other patients. Most people are afraid, depressed, and worried about dying. You are so calm.” What a beautiful opportunity to share the reason for the hope I have. I shared my faith with her. I told her about my hope in the resurrection.

The physician who performed the angioplasty procedure took a special interest in me because I was the first foreigner he had operated on. He told me after the surgery, “I was kind of curious to see if your arteries would be any different, but they weren't. They were just as messed up as our Japanese arteries get.” Within the next few months he had to do a couple of repeat angioplasty procedures. So we started to become acquainted. At the end of the final surgery, he wheeled me to another part of the operating room, where he stood over me and put pressure on the incision where he had inserted the catheter. He had to do this for about 30-40 minutes so the incision would close up. I was lying there stark naked. He was applying pressure to my groin. And he said, “I don't know anything about Christianity. Could you summarize for me what it is all about?” So dressed in my birthday suit, I preached the gospel to my doctor.

“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that

you have.”

The biggest part of our being prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks about our hope is what Peter says in the first part of this verse: “But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord.” Follow Christ as Lord and live as God's children—incarnational evangelism, living God's grace and truth so that when we do talk about God's grace and truth, our words ring true.

The verbal witness of the church needs to come alive in the everyday lives of God's people

--in the silent witness of a praying wife

--in the cheerful attitude of a man who has lost the ability to speak

--in the loving hospitality of a seminary toward earthquake victims suddenly made homeless.

We must share God's word. But we must not stop there. My hope is that we will not only share God's word, but share ourselves, our lives, our careers, and our families for the sake of the gospel. May God bless all of us as we work to build his kingdom. As we carry out this task God has given us, let us remember the words of St. Francis: “Preach the gospel continuously, and when necessary, use words.”

Prayer:

Lord, help us all to share your love—through our words, through our actions, and through every part of our lives. By your Spirit enable us to set apart Christ as Lord in our hearts, to always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks us to give a reason for the hope we have.

Greetings friends in Christ,

Thank you for your continued support and prayers. Also, thanks to all who sent me Christmas greetings. I was actually still receiving them in the last couple of weeks.

Ministry

Recently, Ruel and I started a Bible study at a college boarding house downtown. Two of the residents, Billy and Bing, are from our church. There are 13 students living there now, all from Biliran, an Island north of Leyte. They range in age from 16 years to 21. Billy is married to Bing, who is the oldest student in the house. Billy has really done the groundwork for the Bible study, since he lives there and spends evenings with the students. They respect him and were actually altogether and ready for the Bible study on our first meeting.

So, it seems that while the door has not been opened for Bible study with the Aqua Team, the Lord has opened the door at the boarding house. Aldo, one of the students, asked if he could borrow my Tagalog Study Bible to become familiar with the Bible. They also have many questions when we study together, so Billy, myself and Ruel are very encouraged so far. There are also two other Bible studies beginning in our church this week after some evangelism and follow-up to the neighborhoods of two of our church families. A couple from church will start the Bible study with Choly's mom, so several outreach Bible studies have just begun.

Since my internship is also a time of general exposure to missions, I spent some time in Manila two weeks ago with CRC missionary Bob Harris. The purpose of this trip was exposure to another form of missions and meeting some local Philippine CRC pastors. This experience expanded my macro-structure view of missions beyond what I could get in Tacloban alone. Bob challenged me to think about the role of western missionaries in the Philippines in the near future since there is now an established church here. There are many issues to consider, for example: how do we distribute the different gifts of the body in the U.S. church and the Philippine church; along with that, how do we now partner with the Philippine church; and what are the ongoing ramifications of money and resource distribution?

Waray Life and Times

Like most people, I suppose, Filipinos like hu-

mor. However, that does not mean they find everything funny that Americans do. A popular form of humor in the States is sarcasm. Filipinos don't usually understand or appreciate sarcasm very much. This, of course, can be somewhat dangerous for the dry humorist. Once when Edgar was over at our house, he was telling a story about his friend from the "Four Square" Pentecostal movement. My roommate asked Edgar if he was sure it wasn't a "five circle" church. We laughed but Edgar couldn't see the humor in it even after we tried explaining it.

Here, one of the popular forms of humor is playing with sounds of words. I was talking with some of the youth one day after church and suddenly one of them sat up straight and exclaimed, "that lady looks like a baby." This was a moment of hilarity shared by all, except me. I wondered what I had missed, but she had simply selected some words from the conversation and put them together humorously; at least they thought it was funny. Oh well, "Five circle" or "ladies that look like babies," I suppose there isn't much difference, but some cultural subtlety makes one funny and not the other.

Points for Prayer

1. Thank God for the virtual explosion of new outreach Bible studies (five in the last two weeks with possibilities for two or three more in the works), and pray that our Lord uses them to enfold His own into the church.
2. Pray that the couple in our church would be a good match for Bible study with Choly's mom.
3. Thank God that Joann, the deaf girl we hit last month is back home from the hospital after the surgery went well on her femur.
4. Thank God that Jovan has returned to school and seems to have been sufficiently alarmed by his several days in jail for sniffing Rugby glue.
5. Thank God for opening the boarding house for a Bible study. Pray that God would continue to use Billy and Bing there especially as they live with the students. Pray also that the students would be enfolded in the church through this study.
6. We started premarriage counseling with Inting and Roselyn, although we are still waiting to hear the final approval from Roselyn's mother. She lives a few hours from here and does not have a phone; so infrequent visits are the only form of communication.

You Are Invited by Prof. Greidanus

Yes, you are invited to hear your fellow students preach their first sermons. Now that we have our Preaching Chapel on the east side of the new Student Center, we can extend an invitation to one and all to fill the forty seats.

You have the choice of sitting in on one sermon only, or a few, or eight sermons a week for the rest of the spring quarter. Below is the schedule of preachers and the time slots. We promise comfortable seats, lively sermons, and no collection.

Thursday, March 20

1:00 p.m. Ron Smeding—I Peter 1:22-2:3

1:30 p.m. Charles Hong—I Peter 2:4-8

Monday, March 24

1:00 p.m. Karen Norris—I Peter 2:9-12

1:30 p.m. Russ Boersma—I Peter 3:8-12

Tuesday, March 25

1:00 p.m. Mark Van Drunen—I Peter 2:9-12

1:30 p.m. Dan Brown—I Peter 3:8-12

Wednesday, March 26

1:00 p.m. Trevor Payton—I Peter 2:9-12

1:30 p.m. Paul Ryan—I Peter 3:8-12

Thursday, March 27

1:00 p.m. Emily Vanden Heuvel—I Peter 2:9-12

1:30 p.m. Jerry Boyd—I Peter 3:8-12

Monday, March 31

1:00 p.m. Norman Buursma—I Peter 4:7-11

Tuesday, April 1

1:00 p.m. Christian Pedersen—I Peter 4:7-11

1:30 p.m. Nick Blystra—I Peter 5:8-11

Wednesday, April 2

1:00 p.m. Angela Taylor Perry—I Peter 5:8-11

Thursday, April 3

1:00 p.m. Paul Van Stralen—I Peter 5:8-11

Monday, April 14

1:00 p.m. Greg Sinclair – Luke 5:17-26

1:30 p.m. Randy Beumer – Luke 8:26-39

Tuesday, April 15

1:00 p.m. Rob Toornstra – Luke 5:17-26

1:30 p.m. Joel Renkema – Luke 8:26-39

Wednesday, April 16

1:00 p.m. Ken Vanderploeg – Luke 5:17-26

Thursday, April 17

1:00 p.m. Joel Schreurs – Luke 5:17-26

Wednesday, April 23

1:00 p.m. Angela Taylor Perry – Luke 9:28-36

1:30 p.m. Paul Ryan – Luke 19:1-10

Thursday, April 24

1:00 p.m. Emily Vanden Heuvel – Luke 9:28-36

1:30 p.m. Ron Smeding – Luke 19:1-10

Monday, April 28

1:00 p.m. Russ Boersma – Luke 19:1-10

Tuesday, April 29

1:00 p.m. Sidney Ypma – Luke 9:28-36

1:30 p.m. Mark Knetsch – Luke 19:1-10

Wednesday, April 30

1:00 p.m. Trevor Payton – Luke 8:4-15

1:30 p.m. David Westra – Luke 12:13-21

Thursday, May 1

1:00 p.m. David Loew – Luke 8:4-15

1:30 p.m. Charles Hong – Luke 12:13-21

Monday, May 5

1:00 p.m. Norman Buursma – Luke 8:4-15

1:30 p.m. Bryan Berghoef – Luke 12:13-21

Tuesday, May 6

1:00 p.m. Dan Brown – Luke 8:4-15

1:30 p.m. Mark Van Drunen – Luke 12:13-21

Wednesday, May 7

1:00 p.m. Brenda Heyink – Jeremiah 18:1-11

1:30 p.m. D. J. De Klerk – Jeremiah 23:5-8

Thursday, May 8

1:00 p.m. Jerry Boyd – Jeremiah 18:1-11

1:30 p.m. Paul Van Stralen – Jeremiah 23:5-8

Monday, May 12

1:00 p.m. Karen Norris – Jeremiah 18:1-11

1:30 p.m. Bryan Ochsner – Jeremiah 23:5-8

Tuesday, May 13

1:00 p.m. Christian Pedersen – Jeremiah 18:1-11

1:30 p.m. Nick Blystra – Jeremiah 23:5-8

SONG TITLES THAT DESCRIBE YOUR LIFE AT CTS:

1. For graduates “The Strife is O’er”
2. Nobody Knows the Trouble I’ve Seen
3. Killing Me Softly
4. Christian So You Struggle
5. Hard Days Night
6. Life in the Fast Lane
7. I’m Leaving Here a Better Man
8. It’s the End of the World as We Know It

I recently came across this great quote that is so applicable for all of us who just spent much time on papers and exams: "Without play- without that child still alive in all of us- we will always be incomplete. And not only physically, but creatively, intellectually, and spiritually as well." (George Sheehan, world famous cardiologist, best-selling author, and athlete) So it's time to play, and what better place than the Grand Rapids Children's Museum. The museum is a favorite of many children, especially those elementary-school age and younger, but you'll probably find you like it too!

Some exhibits never change at the museum, such as my daughter's favorite-

the bubble making station. Here you can use many different wands to make bubbles of all shapes and sizes, even one that will form a bubble around you while standing inside of it!

Other exhibits are temporary. From now until March 28 the museum is hosting an exhibit about dentistry. Kids have the opportunity to dress up as a dentist, practice cleaning a puppet's teeth, and view real x-rays. Whatever exhibit they currently have, it is always creative and hands-on fun for children.

The museum is open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday from 9:30am-5:00pm, Sundays from noon until 5:00pm. Regular admission is \$4/person

(under 2 is free). Thursday nights are family night and the museum is open from 9:30am-8:00pm with the discounted admission of \$1/person after 5pm.

Directions (from the seminary): Go North on the East Beltline. Turn West onto Fulton. About 4 miles down, the museum is on the corner of Fulton and Sheldon. Parking is free on the street at a meter after 6pm on weekdays, and 25% off with current day museum admission in Ellis lots.

Looking for something to do with your family over Spring Break? Take a day (or two) and head about an hour East to Lansing, Michigan's capitol. There

you will find many kid-friendly things to do. Here are a couple of my favorites:

Impressions 5 Museum

This children's museum is actually all about teaching science by using your five senses. Your kids will have so much fun they'll never know they are learning. My favorite memory of this museum as a child was the Flying Shadow Wall, which freezes a picture of your shadow on a wall.

Hours: Monday-Saturday 10am-5pm

Admission: Adults \$5; Students \$3.50; Children 3 and under free (AAA members receive 10% off admission)

Directions: I-96 East to I 496 East; take the Cedar/Larch St exit; go North on Larch St to Michigan Ave; turn left on Michigan Ave; turn Left on Museum drive. More information: www.impression5.org

Potter Park Zoo

This medium-sized zoo is very well kept and is located on beautiful grounds. If it is a nice day, take a picnic lunch to eat by the river. There is also a very nice playground for your kids!

Hours: 10am-5pm

Admission: Adults \$5; Children 3-15 \$1; Children under 3 free (NOTE: parking costs \$2/car)

Directions: I-496; take the Pennsylvania exit; go South to 1501 S. Pennsylvania Avenue, the entrance is on the East side of the road (I missed it the first time, keep an eye out for it!)

Check out www.Lansing.org for more great ideas and coupons!

Koinonia at Calvin

Fun, Food, & Fellowship

Live Music

And Personal Testimonies of God's Goodness

If you would like to share the goodness of God in your life on one of these nights or

If you play music or sing or write poetry.

Please contact us: Jacci, Ken or Angela

We would like to hear from you.

March 28 or April 25

Calvin Seminary Student Center

Remember Your only admission is a hug

Bolt Attempts to Oust Nyddam Routers News Service

The theology department is in an uproar over Prof. Ron (“Who’s Sane”) Nyddam’s new course, Pastoral Care 704, in which Nyddam presents a theology of marriage. Prof. John Bolt said earlier this week, “We believe Nyddam has hidden theological and psychological weapons of mass instruction that he’s not telling us about, and that he is not afraid to use these on his own students. We’re the only ones who can be trusted to have a dangerous theological arsenal such as this. This tyrant must be stopped.” Other members of the department recently called on the CTS Insecurity Council to send inspectors into Nyddam’s office. Nyddam has complied with the inspectors, agreeing to the clear window policy and

even leaving his door open. Nyddam also handed over a teddy bear and some books on empathy. But Bolt believes there is much more that Nyddam is hiding.

Other departments have criticized the theology department for its unilateral decision to invade Nyddam’s office. The history department has said it will veto any measures taken by Bolt. “We can’t let one department push us smaller departments around,” said one history professor, who wished to remain anonymous, “We have to resist this aggression.” Other members of the Department of Practical Theology have voiced their concern that their offices, too, will be invaded. Prof. Greidanus declared, “The Council has a clear, ten step proce-

sure that must be followed. We mustn’t try to circumvent that process.” But Bolt responded in a press conference this week, “The Insecurity Council has shown itself to be irrelevant. We will invade Nyddam’s territory with or without it.”

Comments have come from outside sources as well. Marcus Borg, from Oregon State University, commented, “I don’t know if the rumors about Nyddam are historically accurate or not. I doubt they go back to Nyddam himself. Nevertheless, I think they are powerfully true metaphors, and they gain their power precisely because they are a product of the seminary community.”

(“Nyddam” continued on page 17)

(“Learning” continued from page 1)

munity members are helped or hindered in their walk with and journey toward God is crucial to ministry.

This week, when I set aside my books for a while, I learned about the intense struggle of a single mom who is trying to support her family by working two jobs, leaving little time for her children. I learned too, from an elderly and ailing woman, about her concern for a shrinking savings account and what that might mean for her care in the future. I became aware this week, when I made myself available to listen, that my daughter was fearful about an approaching ski-day for school and that my (middle school) son is concerned that the story of Jonah might make the Bible seem “unreal”. We subsequently had conversations that sparked learning for us all.

I learned much this week too about self sacrifice and humility, by intentionally watching the way in which my husband quietly and consistently supports, encourages and enriches our family life. I encountered and learned more about Christ in my interactions and relationships this week, and I hope Christ was encountered through me. Had I not taken time for and opened myself up to the people God has placed in my path (which I so often fail to do), I would have missed a lot of learning.

Frederick Buechner, in *The Longing for Home*, speaks about this type of learning which he encounters on what he calls his “homeward search.” He says, “It took me and continues to take me every now and then to people in the thick of one kind of trouble or another who, because they know of my ordina-

tion, seek me out for whatever they think I may have in the way of comfort or healing, and I, who in the old days would have shrunk with fear from any such charged encounter, try to find something wise and hopeful to say to them, only little by little coming to understand that the most precious thing I have to give them is not whatever words I find to say but simply whatever, spoken or unspoken, I have in me of Christ, which is also the most precious thing they have to give me.”

I hope we at CTS will employ an expanded idea of gratuitous learning and seek to learn more about Christ and the world he came to save, also in the neighbor (the next person) that God places in our path.

(Continued from page 1)

direction of Peter Jackson, Tolkien's faith-beliefs are displayed. Peter Jackson has said that though they didn't set out to make a religious movie they understood the role that Tolkien's beliefs played in his life and work. Jackson attempted to stay true to Tolkien's beliefs. But what about the Reformed World and Life View? Can *LOTR* be understood through the lens of creation, fall, redemption, and consummation? This paper will paint a broad stroke in identifying the Reformed Biblical World and Life View categories of creation, fall, redemption, and consummation that can be found in Tolkien's Middle Earth. Although there may be many dissimilarities between *LOTR* and the Reformed World and Life View, the scope of this paper will be limited to glimpses of connection.

Tolkien does not reveal much of a creation story in *The Lord of the Rings*. In order to appreciate the scope of Tolkien's fantasy world from beginning to end, creation to consummation, it would be necessary to include *The Silmarillion*. Here is a brief summary of the creation story of Middle Earth. It all began with Iluvatar, the maker of all things. Iluvatar creates the Ainur, angelic beings, and all things through the singing of a song, a melody with counter-melodies all woven together in harmony. Out of the harmony some disharmony arises. "In the music there were no flaws. But as the theme progressed, it came into the heart of Melkor to interweave matters of his own imagining that were not in accord with the theme

of Iluvatar; for he sought therein to increase the power and glory of the part assigned to himself." This closely parallels the accounting of God, the angelic host, creation of all things, and Satan's rebellion. (Ezekiel 28:13-16, Isaiah 14:13-14, Luke 10:18 speak to the fall of Lucifer.) As time went on, other creatures joined in Melkor's revolt by joining in his song instead of being in tune with Iluvatar. It is a story of creation gone bad, of rebellion and acting out of created harmony and order. It is rebellion against the creator. As Christians we know the reality of an opposing melody. In Scripture we see God in the beginning, a created angelic host, the falling of Satan, and subsequently all who follow after him and his ways.

Tolkien clearly paints a world that recognizes the goodness of long ago in the midst of the present reality - the violation of beauty and goodness through the intrusion of evil. Yet, in *LOTR* there remain fragments of the goodness of creation. It can be found throughout *LOTR* in the songs, poetry, and history embedded in the narrative. It is no fluke that Peter Jackson's interpretation of the goodness of Middle Earth is interwoven throughout the cinematic movie, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, through the main musical theme, *This is My Father's World*. Whenever goodness is depicted on the screen, this melody line bursts through on audio.

Creation can be viewed in hindsight through the songs and historical accounts throughout the trilogy. Gimli, a dwarf, sings in book II, chapter 4, "The world was fair, the mountains tall in Elder

Days before the fall." Many songs are sung throughout the book about the splendor of days long ago. There is a longing and desire in the peoples of Middle Earth for its restoration. The good and wise of Middle Earth know in their hearts that something is wrong. Tales are told about a rebellion in the past that has brought evil into the world and discord where there was once harmony. Another glimpse of good days now gone are heard through the character Galadriel, Lady of Light, an elf-woman who wields a ring of power, a ring of beauty. She senses in her spirit the change in the earth, "The world has changed, I feel it in the water. I feel it in the earth. I smell it in the air. Once that was is lost, for none now live who remember it." An insidious evil is seeking to rule and destroy Middle Earth. Shalom is being invaded. All creatures on Middle Earth are united in solidarity - all are bound to the fate of the ring.

In *The Fellowship of the Ring*, the story line begins in the Shire, the region where Hobbits dwell. It is a pastoral place where days pass by without much intrusion from the world around. But not more than one or two chapters into the story we learn more about this growing darkness, an ancient evil is growing in Middle Earth. *LOTR* picks up the story as the storm clouds for the possession and rule of Middle Earth grows. There is a "cosmic battle" that will take place for control of Middle Earth and its inhabitants. The winner of this war has the rights to Middle Earth. The cosmic war between good and evil is described in marvelous detail in

(Continued on page 11)

(Continued from page 10)

LOTR as the plot unfolds. The battle for goodness over evil is not only an external battle, but an internal one as well. We see in the brothers of Borimir and Farimir (men), Galadriel (Elf-Lord), and other leaders of the people of Middle Earth the temptation to wield the ring of power for their own ends. We see it in the Hobbit ring-bearers of Frodo, Bilbo, and especially in Gollum, who possessed the ring the longest. But the wise know that any attempt to use the ring of power will twist and distort that use for evil. The wise know that the ring has the power only to possess and enslave. Sauron, the dark Lord wishes to enslave and destroy all inhabitants of Middle Earth through the power of the ring, he alone is the Lord of the ring.

The power of the ring functions much like sin. Sauron bends the power of the ring for his purposes. His evil creeps into the heart of Saruman, a powerful wizard, and twists the wizard's power for his purposes. Saruman, attracted to the power of the ring uses his wizardry for the purpose of destroying the goodness of creation. *WORLD* magazine writer Gene Edward Veith describes Saruman's warped abilities as follows. "Saruman... tears down the forests in favor of factories. He is a genetic engineer who breeds mutant orcs, hideous man eating monsters, from his artificial wombs. His war is against the natural world itself." Saruman wreaks havoc on creation by uprooting and burning trees, digging tunnels into the good earth, filling the skies with smoke and pollution,

and even breeding creatures of hate and destruction to destroy the peoples and lands of Middle Earth. This destructive reality becomes clear when Saruman changes his harmonic ways with nature to a destructive stance through his lust for the ring and its power. All of these things parallel the reality of sin and its effects in the earth and in the hearts of humans.

The Ents, shepherders of the trees of Middle Earth, echo the anguish of evil with the destruction of the trees. Tolkien describes the trees of Fangorn as having a "soul." The life that lives within the forest timber is ravaged and pillaged for the evil purposes of Saruman. It is an abomination. The trees even groan at one point as Merry and Pippen witness the butchering of trees on the outskirts of Fangorn Forest.

The ring and its power turn God's good creation into that which is not supposed to be. The twisting of good into evil is especially powerful when the history of Orcs and the Uruk-Hai are described. They were bred from that which was created good, men and elves, twisted for destructive ends. They are creatures of darkness. Only with the cunning wizardry of Saruman were a breed of Uruk-Hai and Orcs created to be able to tolerate the light. Bent to Saruman and Sauron's will, they were able to wreak havoc on creation even during the day.

Yet, even though darkness is growing in Middle Earth, the foundations of creation are hard to destroy. When Saruman was asked by his Orcs what to do with the trees around the tower grounds he says, "Wreck them all down!"

They reply by saying, "It is difficult my Lord, the roots go deep." Another glimpse of the remains of a good creation is seen as Frodo and Sam near the black gate in the heart of the barren wasteland of Mordor. Even in this desolate and dark place in the world they are still able to find hope and joy in the flowers that periodically pop up their heads, defying the evil in the land.

God made the world and called it good. But after the fall of humanity through disobedience, sin has marred the goodness. Goodness has been adulterated. All creation and all humanity is infected with sin and its brokenness. (Romans 8:20-21) Now we live in constant tension - in a world of sin, restored in some ways, but longing to be fully restored. Interestingly, there are places in Middle Earth that evil has not corrupted. Lotherien and Rivendell, the strongholds of the elves, haven't been infected yet. Rivendell was a haven of light in the growing darkness of Middle Earth. And there are mysterious characters who are not affected by the power of the ring, such as Tom Bombadil. Tom rescues the Hobbits from certain death in the clutches of Old Man Willow in the Old Forest. He brings them to his home where they find rest away from the fears of the Old Forest and the plight of the ring. Renewed and refreshed, they are sent on their way to complete their mission.

There seems to be no doubt that Tolkien believed in a great depth of sin. The effects of evil on Middle Earth run deep and are felt by everyone. Gimli the dwarf feels

(Continued on page 12)

(Continued from page 11)

the brokenness of evil's ownership of the great mountain halls of the dwarf kingdom of Moria. Goblins, Orcs, and the insidiously foul presence of the Balrog now inhabit the mines. Borimir's comment upon entering the mines and seeing the decayed bodies of dwarves schrewn on the floor sums it up well, "This isn't a mine, it's a tomb." Where evil is left to fester and control, death soon follows. Sin has a way of changing beauty into ugliness.

In the Reformed World and Life View, not all is lost in sin. Sin has infected every part of creation, including the human heart, but vestiges of God's good world and his image in us remains. There is still God's common grace, upholding the created order and maintaining life and hope for the world and its creatures. The brilliance that remains even in a fallen world is seen in parts of Middle-Earth. And not all of this brilliance is for good. Even Saruman, though his heart is corrupted, is able to carry out his ingenious ways with marvelous deviousness. So it is with the image of God in us. It is badly distorted, but remnants of brilliance remain. Instead of being used for restoration purposes, our "image-like" characteristics can be used powerfully for evil and destruction. Human beings of all time, corrupted by sin, have used the image of God to enslave others and destroy creation. Satan is the master of deception and devilry seeking whom he may destroy and devour. (1 Peter 5:8, Ephesians 6:11-12) As human beings, corrupted by sin and prone to darkness, we easily fall prey to using

our image bearing capabilities for misguided endeavors.

In the battle between good and evil, providence is a key principle in *LOTR*. In *The Hobbit*, the precursor to *LOTR*, Gandalf the wizard says to Bilbo near the end of the book, "You don't really suppose, do you, that all your adventures and escapes were managed by mere luck, just for your sole benefit?" No indeed, the finding of the ring by Bilbo and the subsequent adventures of *LOTR* were orchestrated by another for a greater purpose. In the Mines of Moria, in *The Fellowship of the Ring*, Gandalf says to Frodo, "Even the very wise cannot see all ends. All we have to decide is what to do with the time we have been given. There are other forces at work in the world besides the force of evil. Bilbo was meant to find the ring and so you were meant to have it." Tolkien never says who the grand orchestrator is behind all of the happenings of Middle Earth and the quest of the destruction of the ring. Could it be God?

The interpretation of the ring of power in *LOTR* can mean many different things, but primarily, it could signify sin. The ring seeks only to enslave and destroy. Farimir describes the malice he sees in Gollum as a growing "canker" eating away at his soul. There is truth in this for the description of sin. There is however a difference between Tolkiens Middle Earth embodiment of evil in the power of the ring and the Biblical view of sin. The book of James speaks of sin as springing from each one's own evil desire. "Each one is tempted when by his

own evil desire he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire is conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin when it is full-grown gives birth to death." (James 1:14-15) The difference is of origin. The ring works externally to possess inwardly. Scripture teaches the opposite. However, there is a commonality in the nature of progression of sin. Sin involves the desire to have, to hold, and to possess. All who know about the ring are drawn to its power and desire to use it for their own ends.

The concept of redemption is a mixed topic in *LOTR*. It can be seen in characters and in radical events where good triumphs over evil. But most poignantly it is embodied in the destruction of the ring. The goal of the trilogy is to destroy the ring of power and thus destroy Sauron's power by casting it into the Mountain of Fire, Mount Doom. It is only when the power of the ring is destroyed that redemption of the land and peoples of Middle Earth are free. Once the ring is destroyed the people of Middle Earth are able to begin the restoration process of Middle Earth.

Borimir, after betraying Frodo in an attempt to take the ring from him, gains redemption through giving his life to protect two other hobbits, Merry and Pippen, in a battle soon after. But there are other characters who specifically embody Christ-like characteristics. None of them appear to be great at first glance. One prominent character is Aragorn, or Strider, the heir of Isildur, the once ruling King of Men. He is of Isildur's bloodline and heir to the throne.

(Continued on page 13)

(Continued from page 12)

He is the rightful king. Long ago, Aragorn chose exile rather than dwelling in the city of his kingdom. He is always cloaked in bland clothing and nothing in appearance makes him stand out. Aragorn has an uncanny power over evil and is able to heal others of illness with herbs and his hands. Aragorn suffers under the surface of his character torn between whether he should become king or not, whether he should take on his responsibility. Jesus is one who embodies some of these same characteristics. (Isaiah 53:2-3) Aragorn survives the last great battle and the ring of power is destroyed and he becomes King of Gondor, the white city. Aragorn parallels Jesus. Jesus is the Son of God, of royal blood, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.

Gandalf the Grey, another prominent character, gives up his life for the others in the fellowship when he battles the Balrog, a demon from the ancient world. Only in times of great need did Gandalf display his power. Otherwise, he appeared much more like an old man, aged in years. Gandalf battled the Balrog in the depths of the mountains for days and nights. He was assumed to be dead by the rest of the fellowship. He finally succeeded in defeating the Balrog, passed through fire and shadow, experiencing anguish and fatigue, only to actually die in the end. He passed out of time and existence but was sent back to Middle Earth again, only not as Gandalf the Grey, but as Gandalf the White. Gandalf appears in the storyline again in *The Two Towers*. He mysteriously enters into the story line

at “the turn of the tide.” (Book III, chapter 5) He is now the White Rider who engages the Morgul Lords of Sauron in the battle for Middle Earth. Gandalf parallels Jesus. He gave his life for others, defeated Satan, and came back from the dead “at the turn of the tide.”

And then there is Frodo, a small Hobbit, who wishes the ring had never come to him. When he sees the power of the ring dividing and destroying the people of Middle Earth, he volunteers to take the ring upon himself, even though he doesn't know the way. Frodo is the one on whom the fate of Middle Earth is placed. He is the one who will carry the ring into the heart of Mordor and cast it into Mount Doom. He didn't want to leave the comforts of the Shire, or later in the story, Rivendell. He knew that Middle Earth was doomed if he chose comfort. Frodo knew that this quest would most likely take his life. Frodo parallels Jesus. Jesus knew what would be required of him in order to rescue the world from sin and its destruction. In order for redemption to occur, Jesus' life would be required. (Philippians 2:6-7)

The destruction and distortion of evil upon Middle Earth does not lead to despair. There is always hope. Redemption is found in many unexpected places. Aragorn calls on hope as the threatening onslaught of Saruman's army nears Helm's Deep (Book III, chapter 7). Even Legolas despairs for a moment when surveying the insurmountable odds of victory. When called upon by Aragorn to hope, Legolas confesses that it was wrong for him to despair. There is

always hope.

Sam, Frodo's companion to the end, embodies hope when all else seems lost. In the heart of Mordor with evil thick in the air and his back up against the wall, Sam begins to sing (Book VI, chapter 1). Frodo has just been taken away by some Orcs and is probably dead. In this darkest of hours when hope seems lost, Sam sings softly at first, then more loudly, until hope begins to pulse through his veins again. Even in the darkness of Mordor and the spreading evil over Middle Earth there is hope. Even in the darkness there is faith.

The very fact that Frodo is bringing the ring of power to Mordor itself with the intent to destroy it is something that Sauron never expects. Sauron couldn't conceive or understand that his enemies would decide not to use the ring of power. Jesus, when tempted by Satan to take hold of the world for his own, to use his divine power to rule the world, withheld his power. (Matthew 4:8-10) Equality with God was not something that Jesus grasped for. This temptation is laid before Gandalf by Saruman, to Aragorn, Galadriel, and Farimir by Frodo. Each of them passed the test in refusing to use the ring's power. There is the counter example of destruction for those who grab hold of the power of the ring, Borimir, Gollum, and Saruman. They are in different ways destroyed in their lust for the power of the ring. Gandalf, Aragorn, Frodo, and in reality Jesus, chose a different path – a path of self-sacrifice and powerlessness. Sauron never saw the wisdom of destroying the ring and Satan

(Continued on page 14)

(Continued from page 13)

thought he had won when Christ was nailed to the cross.

The promise of consummation and providence come together in the *Silmarillion* with the words of Iluvatar, creator of all there is, "For he that attempted this (the counter melody of rebellion) shall prove but mine instrument in the devising of things more wonderful, which he himself hath not imagined." At the climax of the book, Gollum takes the ring from Frodo at the brink of Mount Doom. He stumbles in the process falling into Mount Doom. The ring, Sauron, and its power are destroyed. This was not what Sauron or Gollum intended. What Gollum meant for evil, Iluvatar, meant for good. Similarly, Satan did not intend to seal his fate by seeing Jesus killed on the cross. Even Satan, in a providential way, is a tool in the hands of God. (Romans 11:33-36, Romans 8:28) God undermines the intentions of the evil one. (Psalm 37:12-15) There is a greater good in the mind of God to a redeemed creation. Whatever the plans of Gollum or Sauron, or the deception of Satan, everything that opposes God's story will ultimately serve his plot.

In the end, when the battle for Middle Earth is over, Aragorn is hailed as the king who is returning to his city to dwell with the people. An eagle flies by the city of Gondor, singing as it goes, "Sing and be glad, all ye children of the West, for your King shall come again, and he shall dwell among you all the days of your life." Nothing more is desired in the heart of the Psalmist and nothing provides such a picture of com-

plete restoration and peace then the King of Kings coming into his city to dwell with his people. This is consummation language. The people cheer and weep as Lord Aragorn enters the city, "Out of the Great Sea of Middle Earth I am come. In this place will I abide, and my heirs, unto the ending of the world." (Book VI, chapter 5)

The yearning and groaning of creation and the people of the earth for redemption and renewal is a strong theme of Scripture. (Romans 8:18-25) The longing for the return of the King is strong. Christians all over the world long for the renewal of creation, the redemption of their bodies, and the restoration of shalom for all things. When the anointed King of Kings returns to dwell with his people he will say with a loud voice from his throne, "I am making everything new!" No longer will there be any curse. There will be no more night. There will be no more darkness or death, mourning or pain, for the old order of things has passed away. (Revelation 21:4,5; 22:3,5) In Tolkien's climactic ending, the King has returned. For every Christian the King will come again. And when he returns he will come as the "King of Kings and the Lord of Lords."

The best picture of consummation can be seen in Tolkien's trilogy after the climax of the story. It takes place when the Hobbits return after the great battle for Middle Earth has been fought to their homeland the Shire. The power of Sauron has been defeated and his kingdom destroyed. A king has returned to Gondor and is now seated on the throne. As the Hobbits neared their home they find

that some ruffians had moved into town and set up camp. Sharkey, the chief ruffian, has taken over as mayor and brainwashed the people into cowering to his leadership. Many good and beautiful things that had been were now polluted, destroyed or soiled. There was work to do. The Shire needed to be reclaimed. The ruffians ran out of town. The people set free. The pollution cleaned up, order restored. The title of the chapter is, "The Scouring of the Shire." Even though the battle had been won there was work to do! The Hobbits set a plan in motion to do just that.

Sharkey was exposed for the thug he was. Even Saruman appears and mocks the Hobbits, trying to instill fear in them. But Frodo knows the truth. Saruman's powers have been severely limited and the truth is Sauron is defeated and Aragorn is on the throne. There is a new world order – the power has shifted. "Do not believe him!" says Frodo to Saruman. "He has lost all power, save his voice that can still daunt you and deceive you, if you let it." Saruman still has his voice. Gandalf warns of this same deceptive power of Saruman at the gates of Isengard. Long has he had power over orcs, Urak-Hai, and even hobbits. But no longer.

Frodo, Sam, Merry, and Pippin rise up and speak the truth about the reality of Middle Earth, the battle won, and the king on the throne. They succeed in cleansing the Shire of evil. They restore order and beauty to the Shire. "Frodo agreed to serve as deputy mayor for a time, restoring justice and order where tyranny had ruled.

(Continued on page 15)

(Continued from page 14)

Merry and Pippin took the task of hunting out the last of the ruffians.” A wonderful picture of redemption and restoration is seen in the gift of Galadriel, Lady of Light, to Sam - some soil from Lothlorien, the golden wood. Sam goes about the Shire restoring recklessly cut trees and gardening the hillsides back to health by sprinkling Lothlorien soil near the roots of growing things. The Hobbits are seeing the world through redeemed eyes. Salvation has come to the Shire.

The battle has been won through Jesus Christ's death and resurrection. He is now seated at the right hand of God, ruling over all things. We live the reality of his Kingdom now with the fullness of it to come in his return. Then all things will be made new! Until then, we proclaim the truth about victory over evil, sin, and death through Jesus Christ our Lord. We strive to live under his rule and bring shalom to the ends of the earth, to all places and peoples in all circumstances. We are called to be agents of transformation and reconciliation. Frodo and Sam took this seriously. And they were willing to risk their lives for the cause of righteousness.

Interestingly, Tolkien doesn't give an indication that the complete destruction of evil has taken place after the defeat of Sauron. It isn't necessarily a "live happily ever after" story. Evil will rear its head again at another time in another place. The destruction of the ring has broken the power of evil. But there is a need for something else - resurrection and full consummation. This final consumma-

tion is illustrated in the broader works of Tolkien on Middle Earth. There is a final battle at the end of the ages after the Fourth Age of Middle Earth that is the full embodiment of the Christian hope of the end of the world.

In Summary, the theme of "giving life may mean losing it" is clear throughout the trilogy. There is a greater good - the defeat of Sauron and the freeing of the peoples of Middle Earth from the tyranny of evil. Whether it be in the characters of Aragorn, Gimli, or Legolas representing their people in the battle against evil, or Gandalf risking his life for the fellowship in the mines of Moria, or Frodo taking the ring to the brink of Mount Doom, they all embody self-sacrifice for the good of Middle Earth. The Lord of the Rings embodies the truth of giving up comfort, facing death, experiencing sorrow, and confronting hate in the name of truth, justice, and goodness. No one better exemplifies this than Jesus Christ who faced all these things that we might have life. (John 3:16-17) Frodo says at one point, we must be "willing to give them up, lose them, so that others may keep them."

I would not go so far as Charles Colson to say that LOTR is PREPARATIO EVANGELICA, preparation for the gospel. But I would say that it makes for good reading. Reading that is based on the truth of much of our life experiences. Through imagining a Middle Earth such as Tolkien's we see a glimpse of our own earth. We also can capture timeless truths about God, Jesus Christ, and the Christian Faith. We see the

greater story of God himself "coming to earth as a humble human being; a King, like Aragorn, in disguise; a seeming fool, like Frodo and Sam; the greatest storyteller entering his own story." We can see glimpses of the Reformed Biblical World and Life View in the construction of Middle Earth. It may not have been Tolkien's intent to fashion LOTR as an allegory to the gospel. But it is more than just a good fairy tale -- glimpses of creation, fall, redemption, and consummation can be found - as with just about anything in God's world, if looked at through the correct lens ☺.

Bibliography

Kurt Brunner and Jim Ware, *Finding God in The Lord of the Rings*, Tyndale House Publishers, 2001.

Colin Duriez, *The J.R.R. Tolkien Handbook - A Concise Guide to His Life, Writings, and World of Middle Earth*, Baker, 1992.

Charles Colson from *BreakPoint*, Commentary #021218 - 12/18/02, Quote from J.R.R. Tolkien to a friend

J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings*, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1954-55, Reprint 1991.

J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Silmarillion*, Boston Houghton Mifflin Company, 1977, p.16

J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Tolkien Reader*, On Fairy Tales, Ballantine Books, New York, 1966.

WORLD magazine, Tower Power, Gene Edward Veith, January 11, 2003.

Other Sources:

David Day, *A Tolkien Bestiary*, Ballantine Books, 1979.

Mark Eddy Smith, *Tolkien's Ordinary Virtues - Exploring the Spiritual Themes of The Lord of the Rings*, Baker, 2002.



CALVIN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Calvin Theological Seminary
3233 Burton Street SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49546
616.957.6036

www.calvin.edu/seminary/pubs/kerux

Editing/layout
Richard Bodini—rbodini4@calvin.edu
Copy Editors
Brenda Heyink, Cindy Bodini

The *Kerux* is usually published biweekly on Mondays, but tends to become random as the year carries on. It is funded by Student Senate and CTS.

Submissions are due by noon Tuesday the week before publication. Anyone may submit an article, but members of the CTS community are given first priority. Submission does not guarantee publication. Editors reserve the right to edit submissions for content and propriety. Anonymous submissions will not be published.

There is no remuneration for submissions. The views expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the editors, the faculty, the staff, nor the student body. All published material is copyrighted; written permission is required for any reproductions.

"By wisdom the LORD laid the earth's foundations, by understanding He set the heavens in place." Proverbs 3:19

**THE KERUX EDITOR
WANTS YOU TO COM-
MENT ON WHAT YOU
READ, WHAT YOU
THINK, HOW YOU
FEEL!!**

**Please write something for
us and for your fellow stu-
dent body.**

Contact *the Kerux* at:

rbodini4@calvin.edu

Chip Shots from the Rough by Richard Bodini

I've told several people my stance on the women in office issue. I take a solidly CRC position on it. One day I'm all for it. The next I am totally against it. This is both good and bad. I can sit in a preaching class without a problem or I can squirm when a female takes to the pulpit to proclaim God's Word.

I have so very much enjoyed being in class with some of the female students at CTS. I have learned much from them. Each of them has been gifted by God in special and unique ways to enable them to be his servants in ministry. It was an honour to be in a preaching class with one particular female last year. She eloquently and powerfully preached God's Word in such a way that both my heart and my soul were moved. Was she pushing the female issue? Not a chance. She was moving me as a colleague in ministry-training and as a Christian brother to live and act out God's grace-filled Word in my life.

I went to a local CRC to listen to another classmate of mine a few weeks ago. My soul and emotions were moved as she powerfully preached a kingdom sermon. Did I have a problem with a female preaching? No. I have come to see my fellow students first and foremost as servants of God who are learning about their particular calling in ministry. Second, they are male or female. Does this get around the women in office issue? For me it does. It is a privilege to study with gifted women and men at CTS.

Now to the crux of my "soapbox." In recent years there have not been many summer assignment positions available for female students. This year there are five!

Praise the Lord for that! I see that the three female candidates from last year have not received calls. Why have churches not called them? Are there no churches out there that will accept female ministers? There are! I wonder what would happen if those churches were to ask/encourage/support their male pastor to look for a call somewhere else so that a female candidate could move into the vacant position. What would that do for the CRCNA? What would that say to young women who are sensing a call into ministry? What would that do for those who are unsure of women in office? I don't know. But I would love to hear from you on it.

Why do I bring this up? I need to complete a summer assignment to finish up my Field Ed requirements. There is a church I would love to go to, but one of my female classmates wants to go there as well. It is a placement that is open to either males or females. What do I do? Should I apply for it? Do I look somewhere else?

Picking the top three places for a summer assignment is not easy. It takes thought, reflection, prayer, conversation with a spouse and children, weighing desires against what is important for you. Then the Field Ed office looks at it, prays over it, wrestles with it, prays over it, looks some more, and then they figure it out.

The Lord will guide each of us to where He is preparing us to go this summer or for next year. Thanks be to God that He works with both our male and our female students. Thanks that we can learn with such great people at CTS.