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A CHAT WITH ST. PAUL

By Daniel P. Fuller

Paul For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive good or evil, according to what he has done in the body (II Cor. 5:10).

Fuller student But Paul, if that were so, then we'd all be competing with each other, and worst of all, when we get to heaven each one would be comparing, as it were, the battle ribbons he is wearing with the battle ribbons each of the other saints wears. That would make heaven a place of that "boasting" which you said—Romans 3:27—has been completely excluded.

Paul No—that some will receive greater and some lesser rewards in heaven won't mean that heaven will be like the military, where battle ribbons and service records are the cause of such pride or jealousy. For in heaven everyone will know the Lord "from the least of them to the greatest" (Jer. 31:34), and just beholding the face of Christ and being with him will be of "surpassing worth"—a joy so great that all other things, like one's own rewards, will be garbage by comparison (Phil. 3:8).

Fuller student But then why does God even bother assessing our lives here on earth to decide how great or how small are the rewards we should receive? Why doesn't God just grade on a pass/fail basis?

Paul In Romans 9:22-23 I said that God's purpose in the way he conducts redemptive history is to "show forth" and "make known" the full range and all the nuances of his glory. One way that is absolutely essential to realize the purpose for which he created the world is for him to give his people different "rewards" depending on how well they have served him. Were God not to "grade" his people, then his glory in creating the world could not be fully externalized, for no one would ever know just how well a certain Christian had run his race on earth and thus glorified God.

But this doesn't mean we will spend our time in heaven squabbling over how great one Christian is in reference to another. Rather, we will spend our time rejoicing in God, whose wonder and worth have become fully displayed in the way he conducted creation's history, which becomes fully manifest in the way each saint functioned to show forth God's glory. Now, if God were not to have graded each saint, then we could not fully worship him in heaven.
A CHAT WITH ST. PAUL (cont.)

Fuller I certainly wouldn't want that. But, wait a minute—if I really mean that I would not want that, then to be honest I will have to mean that I want nothing so much as that God's glory should be fully displayed in creation. And if so, then I will want to strive to get first place in the race. If all I want is for the Lord alone to be glorified, then I will bend every effort toward that goal. Boasting will be excluded if I seek only God's glory.

Paul That's just the way I felt when I was running my race down there on earth. I told the people at Corinth that I was going "all out" to come in first (1 Cor. 9:24-27). And I'm certainly glad now that I had that attitude, for those people (like Demas) who did not go all out to come in first—well, with them it isn't a matter of rewards. . .

OTHER-SELFNESS

By Carter L. Kerns

As one of the members of the Junior class in the M.Div. program here at Fuller, I have noted a particular "unchristian" characteristic or attitude that some of my fellow classmates unconsciously possess. (I, too, am partly guilty.) That is, selfishness or self-centeredness.

For example, last semester in a class, the professor was willing to offer a review session before the final examination. One day he was endeavoring to determine an acceptable time to have the review. After some discussion, the professor and the majority of the students in the class decided to meet on a certain time and day. Immediately after we had reached the decision, one student said, "Don't hold the review on that day. I have to work and I'll miss it. Change the day." Well, imagine my astonishment and immediate enlightenment. Due to my ignorance and lack of awareness, I did not know that the Fuller community revolved around the wishes and desires of this one student.

There are other examples which I could share with you, but I think I have made my point. Now the question is: Is this selfishness or self-centeredness compatible with the Christian life, especially for
OTHER-SELFNESS (cont.)

those of us who want to enter into the ministry? NO, OF COURSE NOT. Examine the following scriptures from the New Testament and determine for yourself:

"Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor." 1 Cor. 10:24

"And he died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who for their sake died and was raised." II Cor. 5:15

"Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others." Phil. 2:4.

Christians do not live for themselves, but for Christ. Christians look for the good of their neighbors. Selfishness is NOT compatible with our lives as CHRISTIANS.

What is compatible then? Unselfishness or "other-selfness," is what we as Christians and future ministers of God's Word should strive to attain. Again, check the following scriptures in the New Testament:

"We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves; let each of us please his neighbor for his own good, to edify him. For Christ did not please himself; but, as it is written, 'The reproaches of those who reproached thee fell on me.'" Rom. 15:1-3

"For the love of Christ controls us, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. For he died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised." II Cor. 5:14-15

"Do nothing from selfishness or conceit, but in humility count others better than yourself." Phil. 2:3.

I envision being unselfish and a servant of Christ while here at Seminary, in some of the following ways: listening to another's personal problems and offering loving counsel; playing ping-pong with a buddy when he's depressed, even though you know you've got to study; praying for the friend you know is struggling to overcome some sin; sharing a coke and trying to get close to a guy who really grates on your nerves; forgiving a brother when he borrows your notes for the next day's test and fails to return them until it's too late; helping the student who is failing Greek to understand the parsing of verbs;
and trying to make at least one new friend a week. These are just a few illustrations. My suggestions for developing this "unselfishness" quality are: don't think of yourself all the time; picture what is best for the other person before you do the same for yourself; try to see the other guy's point of view; pray for others more than you pray for yourself; attempt to limit the use of "I" in your vocabulary; and Love, Love, Love. The sooner you're filled with the love for others, the sooner you'll forget yourself.

I really feel that it is time that we realize that we are the servants of Christ, not the served. When we get "lost" in others, we serve. Jesus washed feet. What will you do? Strive for that "other-selfness" you need in your ministry. No one expects you to be perfect the first day. Just try. TRY IT, YOU'LL LIKE IT. So will OTHERS.

WHY STUDY BIBLICAL LANGUAGES?

By Edd Breeden

Recently, while teaching a beginning Greek class, I was confronted with the question: "Why study Biblical languages?" Let me begin this way. The Christian experience can be separated into two categories: Emotional and Intellectual; the Emotional being the most important of the two. Now before you decide your agreement with or opposition to that statement, let me explain. There are three ways in which Jesus affects our emotional being. First, we must realize Jesus as a living person and friend (I feel this can only be done experientially and not intellectually). Second, we must realize Jesus as a living God, the LORD and ruler of every moment of life. (If this step is only intellectual to you, then I venture to say that you really don't believe it.) And third, we must realize Jesus in our daily lives as the One who, as Dan Fuller might say, "is doing the work". Simply put, the Emotional side says "get into Jesus".

Yet if one is to be a teacher of Jesus, which I assume is one of our reasons for being here, one must also look at the intellectual side of "Jesus-living". This includes a study of Hebrew history, culture and language; Greek history, culture and language; and a
WHY STUDY BIBLICAL LANGUAGES? (cont.)

thorough study of the English Bible from Genesis to Revelation, in order to rightly interpret the Word of God (remember, as we say in the language classes, there are exceptions to every rule). In other words, for one to completely understand what a Biblical author is saying to him, he must first be able to place himself mentally in the time and situation of the man who first read this book or letter. This requires a knowledge of the history, fears, threats, wealth, politics, state of the average man, his language and so forth before he can effectively put himself into this original situation. It does not require a knowledge of Biblical or Systematic Theology. These should be outgrowths of an individual’s studies in the Word of God (as defined previously) not starting points as they sometimes are.

Up until 1965 (according to the Fuller catalogues in which I did my research) the requirements for the B.D. included a Greek course plus three quarters of Greek exegesis; a Hebrew course plus three quarters of Hebrew exegesis and a three quarter course in the English Bible. Since then we have lost the English Bible course and both "second year" exegesis courses. Rumor has it that Hebrew is on the way out, and it just might be that Greek will follow. Then we would be left with doctrines and methods based on "philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ" (Col. 2:8).

This can be avoided by the individual student who is interested in so doing. I recommend that you study your Greek and Hebrew while you are here, well enough for them to be a useful tool and not just a stumbling block and hindrance. Most of all, though, if you really are convinced that there is NO necessity to learn Greek and Hebrew, the least you can do is read your English Bible completely, over and over, giving you a firm foundation in the Word. This way you will learn Jesus from Jesus himself and not from what other people say about him. Jesus’ words to the Jews of the synagogue, who were well-founded in the "philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition", might well be spoken again to us today:

"You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness to me; yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life."
John 5:39-40

Search the Scriptures, not doctrines, you might find Jesus and have life. (Note: Ἰςά < υμαντικός is a result clause. It would be 'arced' as a M-Ed indicating the relationship between an action and one which is an intended consequence of it.)
FOOTSTEPS IN THE FOG

By Chuck Van Engen

The fog lay heavy and thick making the world seem like a stuffy closet. At a street corner a lone man leaned against a lamp-post. Although no light came from the lamp, yet the man clung to the post as his only orientation in the foggy blackness.

Suddenly a voice came out of the darkness, "Follow me." The man turned and, leaving the dark lamp, followed the sound of footsteps. He could not see but could hear the way and he followed.

On and on he walked. The footsteps fell always ahead, but never so fast he could not keep up. Step by step he followed. Suddenly he was aware he was walking uphill. Ahead a form was slowly taking shape. He continued to walk. The sound of footsteps stopped. He heard the voice again. "If you would follow me, take up your cross." To his right, the man saw a cross lying on the ground. How heavy it looked. The man began to lift it. It weighed almost nothing! The voice came again. "My yoke is easy, my burden light."

The man took up his cross. The sound of footsteps began again. He followed. Up and up he walked, step by step. Soon he passed an empty cross standing upright, its top disappearing in the fog. On and on he walked.

Ahead the fog seemed lighter. The footsteps could still be heard. The fog grew lighter. Now the footsteps were very faint, obscured by the sound of joyful singing. The fog grew brighter. Suddenly it broke. The sun was shining and the man stood face to face with Him!
GRADING GRADES

By Bill McIvor

On March 7th I posted on the Declaration Board a protest of the change in grading procedure. Since then I have been supported; I've also been told that I was dumb. Be that as it may, I've been made aware that many people in our community seem unaware of the change or its potential effects. This article speaks to this apparent knowledge gap.

But before I begin I have something to say. Some of the barbs tossed my way evidence an attitude that grades have nothing to do with what we are doing here. "We are here to prepare ourselves, not to get grades. We are not concerned with grades." We all know the weakness of any grading system. We all know that grades are often inequitable and unreflective of reality. So of course, the feeling that grades are unimportant is true—to a point. The point is how well are you preparing yourself? How will you know? How will anyone else know? Does not your own experience of God's calling you and preparing you also require some exterior affirmation and confirmation from other people, church boards and the Seminary? Regardless of your ecclesiology are you not being called to serve God's People and do not these People have something to say about you and your calling? By what means will they judge you and me? I propose that grades, however inadequate, are one of the necessary standards. That is why they are important. We need some method to help us evaluate ourselves. That is why we need a grading system that is as flexible and meaningful as possible. This, I contend, is what the new grading procedure does not provide.

The Seminary has changed to the following grading system:

- Honors = current "A" and "B+
- Credit = current "B" and "C"
- No Credit = current "F"

In my opinion this change, which goes into effect next year and is not optional (as some have said) has several disadvantages.

1. It eliminates the "B" student by lumping him in an amorphous "passing" category. What does "Credit" mean? It is too vague to be helpful. Most of us sort of know what "B" means from continual use. But continual use is no reason to abandon it.

2. It devalues the "A" student. There is often a rather large difference between a "B+" and a "A". In the new system there will be no way to distinguish this. Such a result along with the "B" problems devalues the whole system.

3. It lessens student motivation. We all know that knowledge and its potential use for us should be our motivation for learning. But let's
face it: we are often not properly motivated. We all have at least 751 demands on our time priorities. Thus we often need the reality of grades to prod us gently along. Most of us can usually pass a course with minimum effort. Minimum effort will be the tendency under the new system whenever the pressure begins to mount.

4. It is punitive vis-a-vis the outside world. Most people that may be interested in our grades understand an A-B-C system. This is true of church boards, pastor nominating committees, insurance companies, graduate schools, professional societies and employers. They do not understand as well some other type of system even when accompanied by careful explanation. Case in point: some years ago my brother graduated from a college that had a grading system very similar to our new one. When he went on to graduate school several years later he found that much of his undergraduate credit was disallowed for the sole reason that he could not evidence a high enough grade average. He had received a number of "Credit" grades. But because the graduate school could not tell whether these were "low"or "high" pass they did not honor them at all. Some similar problems will likely happen here under the new system.

5. It is not specific enough to be helpful to us. The system doesn't have enough niches to give us an adequate assessment of how we are doing. I have talked to several members of the faculty and they seem to feel that most professors will continue to grade us in the same way. Then at the end of the quarter they will take these grades and translate them into the new nomenclature. No one knows whether this will happen but it does seem likely. Thus, the various distinctions of work value that are almost implicit in the work of a course will be lost to us. We will not be able to benefit by them or even be scared by them.

The new system does have one advantage. It avoids the punitive aspect of grading. This is a real gain for such a view of grading has no place here. But this gain is realized at too much loss.

Now lest I am accused of being only negative I offer the following modest proposal. The grading should run A-B-C-No Credit.

A = You are doing excellent work; you understand the issues of the course and have shown creativity and initiative. If the pastoral or a related ministry is your goal then you are well on your way. If graduate school is in the future you are preparing well and competently.

B = You are doing a good job. You evidence understanding and insight. If a pastoral-type ministry is in sight you are affirmed in your competence and preparation. If graduate school is in your plan you may face some problems depending on your field and other work. Have you made enough effort?

C = You have fulfilled the requirements and evidence capability. Are you satisfied with what you have accomplished? Will it meet the needs you have to reach your goals? If you are thinking of graduate school, think harder since this is not adequate.

No Credit = Something (with no specification as to what) has gone wrong. The Seminary cannot return your money but you are welcome to go at it again with no penalty.
GRADING GRADES (cont.)

In addition to this scheme the present option to take a certain number of courses Pass/Fail will be retained. In addition each professor will have the option to give a "Pass" grade in special situations where he feels a person has done passing work but with special circumstances. For example, some persons whose native language is not English have an especially difficult time. In such cases the "Pass" grade will be accompanied by a short written statement on the transcript in which the student's work can be more specifically evaluated. This allows for the special situation and aligns the system with people and not vice versa.

I see this system or a similar one as having a number of advantages.
1. It avoids all of the difficulties of the system just adopted. But it also eliminates the punitive aspect of grading.
2. It provides a scheme that is readily understandable by the outside world.
3. It provides real help and evaluation for students as the emphasis is placed on the student's own sense of needs and goals.
4. It provides enough of a prod to be helpful.

Two things should be mentioned. I've been told that the faculty is not unanimously in favor of the new system (and certainly students are not). Second, we are not bound to the new system. It can be changed. Given these two things I have been asked to use this article to generate comment from students. It may result that a more formal poll will be taken. (NOTE: a poll was taken before the change was adopted. However, many have spoken to me including some professors indicating that they feel this poll was not representative.) But before that possibility I would like to get some indication as to what you feel about the change. Do you support it or would you like to see something else?

To monitor your opinions I have placed a stack of 3x5 cards at the switchboard. Sometime during the next week I would like each of you to take a card and indicate your feelings about the grading change. You may simply say FAVOR (the change) or DO NOT FAVOR. Any comments you have will be welcome. There will also be a box at the switchboard in which you may place the cards. I'll ask each of you to sign the card. I am not at all interested in knowing who has what opinions but only in having some control on the voting process. I don't want one of the persons who called me dumb to stuff the ballot box. So in the interest of truth, take a few minutes to indicate your feelings about the grading change. This may be your one chance to grade the grades.
The Indispensable Man

Sometime when you're feeling important,
Sometime when your ego's in bloom,
Sometime when you take it for granted
You're the best qualified in the room,

Sometime when you feel your going
Would leave an unfiillable hole,
Just follow this simple instruction
And see how it humbles your soul.

Take a bucket and fill it with water,
Put your hand in it up to your wrist,
Take it out and the hole that's remaining
Is a measure of how you'll be missed.

You can splash all you please as you enter,
You can stir up the water galore
But stop and you'll find in a minute
That it looks quite the same as before.

There's a moral in this quaint expression;
Just do the best you can.
Be proud of yourself, but remember
There's no indispensable man.

--Selected

***Editor's Note: The deadline for articles for the next Opinion is April 19 (Thursday).***
A great debate resounds on the Fuller Seminary Campus regarding a new grading system. Many agree that the old model of A, B, C, D, F is outdated, and reinforces competition, unfair comparison between students, and a "reward" system for accomplishments which is not really indicative of the student's performance. Even the word "performance" casts a negative shadow in some minds, implying a judgment on work in which a fair assessment cannot be given. Others feel any grading system is abominable, while the minority, I sense, favors the old grading system.

The new proposal involves an honors, pass, no credit system. This model, however, is inferior for many reasons. First, those straight B students who support the old grading system will now be classified as "pass" students. Some might immediately say, "So what! Grades aren't important anyway." The point is, to these people grades are not only important but serve to motivate them to do the best they can. These people lack motivation to perform at an optimum level when they are only "preparing for the future ministry." They need an immediate positive reinforcement. The B for which they tenaciously labored shows that their toil has not been in vain. But with a pass grade, they will be amassed with everyone from a B to a D; that will denote they are simply "making it" or "getting by."

Second, there are others who rejoice at the new grading system because it enables them to give more time to their particular field of interest without being penalized for devoting less time to another area. Under the old system, a sacrifice in time of one course for another would have yielded a C or D. But now these people can simply let one course slide in favor of another, settling for a "pass" in order to win an "honors" in another. But if this represents the general attitude, then the new proposal breeds worse results than the old. The core courses are designed to instruct us in areas which we will utilize to varying degrees in the future. If we discard one course for another, we are cheating ourselves even if we enjoy one more than another. Enjoyment or interest does not necessarily correspond to value and usefulness. The honors, pass, no-credit system reinforces this attitude towards our education, an attitude which has destructive ramifications. What if you are the only pastor of a church and abhor preaching? Does it mean you can do a poor job, neglecting preaching for another area of the ministry which excites you? Of course not. Sometimes as servants of Christ we must do things we care not to do. But because we are His servants, we will do them, whether it be Hermeneutics II or preaching to a congregation of 75; and we should do the best we can. A better way to alleviate the problem of disinterest in a course would be to offer a greater number of educational options, where we can specialize in an area of our own interest.
THE HIDDEN GRADING SYSTEM (cont.)

Third, if competition serves as an argument against the A, B, C, grading program, then the honors, pass idea offers no solution. Just as many people will be vying for the honors level as were working for an A, especially since the word "pass" implies "average" or a C (although in actuality it isn't).

Fourth, there are some who seek to deprecate the old system of A, B, C by saying, "Grades aren't important to me anyway," Actually this argument can be taken either way. If they mean what they say, the A, B, C method of grading would be just as adequate as any other, since any grading system isn't important.

Fifth, some means of evaluation in education is necessary. I suppose one could argue that at a seminary grades should not exist. In fact some imagine that because we are earnest about preparing for the ministry, grades, deadlines, and pressure are not needed as motivators. But unfortunately this is not true. Even with a pass, fail arrangement, we still receive a general grade. Somehow our work must be evaluated; in some way those who are not qualified to be ministers must be informed. An academic evaluation is one way, among many, of making such a judgment. One could say this is a hard and narrow opinion. But just as you would not want a person, who could not distinguish between the right and left ventricle, operating on your wife's or sister's heart, so also you probably would dislike hearing an incoherent preacher or sending your children to an unqualified youth worker. The seminary is a place where a person can discover whether he belongs in the ministry or not. It is far better to find out now than after 20 years of misery and failure in the Church. But are there better alternatives than either the A, B, C or honors, pass models?

I believe a more adequate arrangement is possible with what I call the "hidden grading system." Under this system we would all be evaluated in every course by the A, B, C, D, F scale. But after each course the grades would be stored in our own file in the registrar's office. We would not see them. We would receive a pass or fail after every quarter. Students acquiring a low pass, however, would be personally contacted by the professor to be informed and possibly warned of his declining performance. At the end of each year we would have the option of seeing our grades. And at this time we could choose between 1) seeing our grades and either keeping them for graduate school or destroying them, and 2) not seeing them ourselves and simply having the registrar destroy them. One might ask: "For those who detest grades, why keep them at all?" Some students, while at Fuller, may change their minds concerning their future. And with the grades kept on file, they may still be used for graduate school.

As the debate on campus continues, I hope a creative solution will appear amidst much dialogue. The honors, pass, no-credit system in my opinion is inappropriate; the old system of A, B, C, D, F remains, a better alternative, but does not suit everyone either. The hidden grading system is advantageous for the largest portion of students. Those who deplore grades will never have to see them. But those who are motivated by earning letter grades, or need them for graduate school, will still be allowed to receive them.