

Table Talk



News and Views of the Student Body of The Lutheran
Theological Seminary at Gettysburg.

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FURTHER THOUGHTS ON CHAPEL

by Carl Franklin

If chapel is to be the heart of our seminary community, it will have to become more meaningful than it has been these past few months. Our daily community worship has disintegrated into a ritual of going through the Matins service. For some this ritual may be meaningful; for me it is not. It is not even worship. It is a half hour shot. The only reason I keep going is the fading hope that one of these days the Word of God might be preached.

In our Lutheran tradition the proclaimed Word has always been at the center of corporate worship. Most of those students who have led chapel these past couple of months have either ceased being Lutheran or at best have become very lazy ones in regard to this tradition. Another essential element in worship is the ability to give of one's self in praising God. It is only in giving in the act of worship that we open ourselves to receive God's grace. If the officiant provides nothing more than a ritual that has grown stale as the vehicle through which we can give ourselves to God, it becomes very hard, if not in many cases impossible, to give; and thus we really have not worshipped. When this happens to me, as it has so often recently, I leave chapel in a frustrated and hostile state of mind. It would have been better for me if I had not gone at all.

Chapel worship should be the center of our personal and communal daily life. In order for this to come about chapel service must be meaningful and relevant. I beg and plead with those who will be leading chapel that they provide in the service the means through which the assembled believers may worship. To me this means the Word is proclaimed, not just read. I realize that the congregation has a responsibility in worship, but the major weakness in our chapel services seems to lay in the officiant.

Added suggestions might be that prayer and thought go into the preparation. Imagination and originality could add much if used with discretion. Also the worship committee might consider students volunteering to lead chapel worship rather than assigning them.

MY CHURCH

My church has but one temple,
Wide as the world is wide,
Set with a million stars,
Where a million hearts abide.

My church has no roof nor walls,
Nor floors save the beautiful sod
For fear, I would seem to limit
The love of the illimitable God.

My church has no creed to bar
A single brother man
But says, "Come thou and worship"
To every one who can.

Unknown

REPORT ON PETE

To clear up various rumors on Pete Small's condition as a result of his accident, the business office has issued the following report.

Pete's leg was pinned beneath the bed of the seminary truck in the garage, when it fell on him while he was cleaning the back of the cab on Friday. Preliminary X-rays show no fractures, but there are bad sprains, aggravated by the fact that he was pinned for a half hour before being found and released. On Monday Pete was still in the hospital for further X-rays, but was resting comfortably, anticipating going home.

CATECHETICS CORNER

This week's items are test answers from a Baltimore catechetics class being taught by one of our former students:

Write the 2nd commandment:
You shouldn't take God's name in vein.

What is meant by "thy will be done"
We pray that God's will be done even though we know it will be done whether or not we pray it will be done, but we pray anyway that it will be done.

What is sin?
Sin is when we let temptation get the best of us.

What is a law?
A law tells us what we can't do. God gave us 12 of them.

How do you know that Jesus rose from the dead?
Because Martin Luther said so when he wrote the Apostles' Creed.

STAFF OF TABLE TALK

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EDITOR'S CORNER

Table Talk will not be published during finals (next week). However, it will definitely be published our first week back. We already have promises of enough articles for a "skeleton" issue, but urge you not to forget the Monday deadline for other articles, i.e., the first day we are back on campus.

R. E. G.

To the Editors,
I have been meaning to write you for quite a while, and this last issue of Table Talk has pushed me over the edge of intention into deed. First, I would like to thank Mr. Schneider for his lucid article and Mrs. Camac for her apt commercial. Being, as a faculty wife, on the periphery of the seminary community, I have depended upon Table Talk to give me a clue to the true atmosphere on this hill. I am appalled--not by what is written, but by what is not written; not by what is included, but by what has been removed.

Mr. Graf is withdrawing his column because, he states, "at least one member of the community ... interpreted a criticism in that column." Mr. Richards withdrew his

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column on chapel services for, if I remember correctly, the same reasons. The list of taboo subjects and attitudes seems to be growing like Topsy! One may not criticize the way a chapel service was conducted--even if that happens to be the training-field for the future job--because such criticism displays a lack of "worship" on the part of the critic; but to count heads at a chapel service seems to be the highest form of worship. To poke, even as timidly as has heretogore been done, into the foibles of the church and its members, seems to be tantamount to heresy. Conformity to..(?)... appears to be the goal.

If I am correct in drawing these conclusions from the sources available, then I am forced to the further conclusion that the preponderance of the student body takes itself and its "call" so seriously that it isn't serious enough. It seems to me that only if you take your call very seriously indeed can you know that God is not dependent on you alone. Only then can you be open enough to let Him work, and to see yourself as the microscopic instrument you are. Only then can you truly learn!

But how can we learn anything? Instead of a good healthy discussion carried on openly, one column after another is withdrawn because of unheard and unseen critics. Why don't the critics use the same forum as the columnists? Perhaps then we would know we were alive and seeking, instead of--would "vegetating" be too unkind a word?

Sincerely,
Ruth C. Gritsch

February 19, 1965

If you print this, would you add that I would love rebuttals?

FEATURE EDITORIAL

One of the multiple aspects of the "call", and perhaps the most necessary, is participation in the society in which one serves. Involvement in the affairs of one's community and active expressions of concern for the immediate contingent of humanity is essential to an effective ministry. It is doubtful that anyone would take issue with this.

We are here engaged in preparation for accepting the responsibility of the gospel ministry. We prepare as a community; around each of us an immediate representation of humanity. And while we profess the highest motivation and intentions, our actual participation in and response to the activities of society as it is manifested locally leaves a great deal to be desired. This lack of participation and response witnesses to 1) not realizing the importance of this aspect of the ministry, 2) procrastination in accepting it as a part of the ministry, or 3) insincerity of purpose in choosing the ministry as one's life vocation.

At the recent WOTS meeting to which husbands were invited, only seven men attended. Our social events have yet to attract half of our brotherhood. The last meeting of the Chancel Players numbered one professor, three professor's wives, one student's wife, and five students (the largest meeting prior to this numbered four). At the recent C. P. presentation around fifty attended, but of these most

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were faculty and guests with the juniors and middlers being able to be counted on one's fingers. One of the more successful activities on campus has been Table Talk; there have been over thirty contributors. Of the thirty, however, five have contributed over half of the paper's material. The situation appears even darker when it is realized that the nuclei of such activities as forums, Chancel Players, and Table Talk are repeatedly the same four or five people.

In a recent general letter, our Student Association officers refer to such facts as have been here presented, and diagnose the problem as being the unwillingness of the community to follow their lead. Obviously, they have offered no leadership. The answer does not lie in "100%" anything.

There are different levels of participation in a society as there are different methods. These should not be dictated, but should be effected out of concern and conviction. They may take the form of responsible leadership, contribution, or constructive or critical response. The important thing is that within this community we have the opportunity to give our participation form.

Thus this is a call to conscientiousness on the part of each member of our immediate society. It is also a plea for understanding and acceptance by the community of its members as they effect their response even when that response may not be universal consensus.

Dick Graf, Jr.

OUR COMMUNITY AND WORSHIP

The recent articles in Table Talk concerning worship in our community and, subsequently chapel attendance, prompt me to make certain observations.

It is, first of all, to be taken for granted without further comment that a seminary is an academic institution. In our own situation this means that we must constantly strive for academic perfection, not only because what we learn here can be "used" somehow in the parish but also because concentrated academic pursuit has its own intrinsic worth apart from any sort of "practical application."

But a seminary is, and must be, more than an academic institution. It is a Christian community of persons who have been called together by Christ and who now share their life in Him. This means that our seminary is not merely a collection of individuals, even a collection of individuals preparing for the Christian ministry.

We are rather a community in Christ, and we are therefore bound to one another in Him. In this community we are no longer individual entities, heading off into our own particular directions. In Christ we share our individual lives, our joys as well as our suffering.

Our ultimate identity as a community in Christ is realized in our common worship. When we gather around the altar we cease to be simply individuals; here we become one in Him. This is especially true when we gather to celebrate His coming into our midst in the Eucharist.

If we withdraw ourselves from this worship, then we place ourselves above the community, for then we make the judgment that we do not need the community or its love and concern. Then we also deny that we have a responsibility to the community.

This does not mean at all that individual worship is to be de-emphasized; it must rather always be highly commended. Perhaps some of us choose to worship individually by reading the Bible while others may take a walk. Whatever the mode of individual worship may be, we

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gather strength through it not only for ourselves but also for the community, especially if we include its needs in our prayers.

But our individual worship can never replace the worship of our community. When that happens we cease to be one in Christ--then we are only a collection of individuals.

When a man comes to this seminary he does not come only to an academic institution; he enters also a Christian community and he becomes a part of it. It is inconceivable that a man who has become a member of a Christian community should refuse to take part in the very source of its life, which is its worship. By boycotting chapel or by refusing to go for any reason at all, the man who has chosen to become a part of the community denies its very existence.

And the argument that one should take part only in worship when one personally "feels" like it is as ridiculous as the argument that one should only study when one "feels" like it. I seldom really "feel" like studying. I study because this is the discipline of my vocation as a student; I worship, not because I am emotionally moved to do so, but rather because worship stands at the center of my vocation as a Christian and of my membership in the Christian community.

Is chapel attendance necessary?

If this is a Christian community it is, because what goes on in the chapel is the center of our life together, not because the rites are ancient or modern or because we sing Gospel hymns or chorales but rather because there our life in Christ is expressed. That doesn't mean that we are not one in Christ elsewhere, but it does mean that there our life together begins.

Hans Goebel

Be Strong!

We are not here to play, to dream, to drift;
We have hard work to do and loads to lift;
Shun not the struggle--face it; 'tis God's gift.

Be Strong!

Say not, "The days are evil. Who's to blame?"
And fold the hands and acquiesce--oh, shame!
Stand up, speak out, and bravely, in God's name.

Maltbie Davenport Babcock