

Table Talk

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

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JUST CURIOUS? OR FAITHFUL!

A Lutheran Seminary should be a religious community, where the members are living spiritual lives. According to Scripture life comes from Christ. Christ is the source and the basis of faith. Faith is the awareness of God being really present for us. "Lo, I am with you always!" "In Him we move and have our being."

Where is this Christ? He is in the Church. He is truly present, wherever two or three are gathered in His Name. Wherever the objective, visible Name or Sign of Christ is confessed, we have the Means of Grace or His Word and Sacraments. "This is My Body which is given for you!" Christ's Body and Blood are the Sacrament. "The Sacrament is the Gospel." (Large Catechism) The Gospel is absolution for the past and the power of God unto salvation. Salvation includes the freedom to act in love and joy. Love is radical obedience to God and service to man.

The old phrase, "at the same time, saint and sinner", holds as good for communities in the Church as for the individual members. As long as the community is committed to Christ, it will be aware of its need for genuine criticism and penitence. For Christianity is truth and love, and truth demands honesty. And honesty can only offer a humiliating answer to God's call, "Adam, where are you?" Everyone of us must know that penitence is the first step of faith.

The purpose of a Seminary or any spiritual community must be to inspire faith. Only after faith can we speak of knowledge. According to St. Augustine, "Faith seeks understanding." And faith without knowledge would surely be dead. But nevertheless knowledge is like any of our works, not to be worshipped.

Is not the problem at Gettysburg the same problem faced everywhere in the world? We do not see God, present and acting in our lives, because we do not have enough faith!

F. E. Nelson

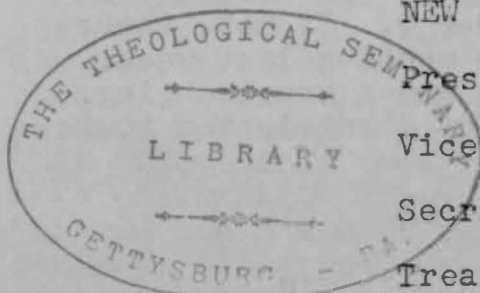
NEW STUDENT ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

President - Fred Eichner

Vice President - Roger Grothen

Secretary - Bill Novak

Treasurer - Kirk Bish



MAR 31 1965

FEATURE EDITORIAL

Perhaps a few comments ought to be made about last Thursday's Student Association Meeting and the election of new officers. There was obviously an air of latent hostility and mistrust even to the point of cries of 'railroading'. I am not here to belabor those points at all, except to say that it was a shame they had to develop. Last Thursday is past though and let's let all the negative feelings pass with it. We do have a new slate of officers, and we do have a new and very important year in which they will lead. Let us begin now making that coming year one of the most successful we have ever had.

It seems that one of the first jobs of the new administration will be to seriously face the problem of the current constitution. It is in need of revision, possibly total rewriting. The new curriculum and the required period of internship will definitely cause some difficulty in voting procedures and in continuity of leadership and committee organization. Should the intern class elect President and Vice-President before they leave? Should elections be changed until September? If so how would the entering Juniors get to know the candidates in order to make a responsible choice? What effect upon the whole working of the Association will be made by the fact that no class will overlap another class for more than one year? There are questions to be faced and study ought to begin now.

There are other areas that need to be looked into as well. Is there a lack of junior involvement as has been claimed? Have the juniors been kept out or have they just chosen to remain out? I believe the juniors will be the only ones truly able to answer and their answer ought to receive careful consideration. What about Association Committees? Do their functions need to be re-studied? Can a committee which visits the county home for one hour a week really be called a Missions Committee? Do we need a retreat committee, or rather what ever happened to it? Is the social committee really meeting the social needs of the married as well as the single students, of the on campus as well as the off campus students? Can a joint student-faculty-community Cultural Committee really function? What about meeting procedure? Do we need an appointed parliamentarian?

There are a lot of questions to be asked and hopefully a lot of questions to be answered. But whose job is it? Frankly I think that is a very foolish question to ask. We elected our officers. They have a responsibility to us because they have been elected, and we have a responsibility to them because we elected them. So often we just ask the questions and then sit back and say it is someone else's task to answer them. Such is not the case. We have the interest, we have the enthusiasm, we have the energy. If not, there would not have been over seventy people at the meeting last week. It is up to us to dig in and get to work now. Times are changing, our ways of meeting the new time also need to be changed, and it is up to us, all of us, to change them.

Reprinted from the newsletter "Communique" of Luther Seminary in Minne-
where Bishop Neill recently visited.

March 22, 1965

NEILL SAYS: AMERICAN SYSTEM FORGETS SEMINARIANS ARE GRADUATES

ST. PAUL, Minn. --"The whole American seminary system seems to overlook the fact that students are already graduates," Bishop Stephen Neill, professor of missions and ecumenical theology at Hamburg Uni-
versity in Germany, said in an interview here Saturday. He added, "Much more attention needs to be placed on this fact."

The 64 year old Anglican bishop referred to the "rat race" of the system, saying, "As a visitor I am troubled by the weight of teaching placed on the faculty and by the rush of the students." He continued, "I do not mean to say both sides should work less but rather that they should work more profitably."

Compared to German students, the actual theological interest among American seminarians is much less, related Bishop Neill. "A good many here want to just get through and into the ministry," he said. And he warned, "If a man goes out without a serious theological passion, his preaching in ten years will likely be rather empty."

And comparing the U.S. seminary system to the British, Neill said the strength of the British system is individual teaching. "This is where the British system has a major contribution to make," he declared.

Bishop Neill deplored the lack of time spent in prayer at Luther Seminary compared to Anglican seminaries. He said that relatively speaking, very little time is spent in prayer here and "the vast majority of students could learn a great deal in this field."

"Many seem to think they will come to it when they are ordained, little knowing that they will be twice as rushed then," he mused.

WITH EACH DAWN COMES A NEW DAY

First one eye opened; then the other. In stages he awoke. He rubbed his eyes vigorously. The sun shone through the window and laid a pattern of light on the floor. He got out of bed and walked over to the window. The grass in the courtyard was very green and glistened with dew. He drew a deep breath of the sweet morning air.

"That's a damn good smell," he whispered to himself as he surveyed the far corners of the courtyard. "A damn good smell."

A group of small birds landed in the yard and began their ritual search for food. He watched the birds as they moved from one spot to another, pecking violently into the soft earth. As each of the birds became a victor in its personal battle, it flew upward to the roof... perhaps beyond.

"Them birds have a good life....flying wherever they want to go... lots of worms to eat....so South for the Winter...soak up the sunshine."

He had a lot of time to think and the birds were one of many subjects in his mental repertoire. The grass, dew, sunshine, people, hunting knives, electric razors and cigarettes were all subjects of occasional meditation.

He turned from the window and began to dress. It was Monday and he put on clean denims and a matching shirt. The heavy, rubber soled shoes felt cool on his feet.

(cont. on page 4)

Shaving was a routine activity carried out once a day for most of his adult life. He disliked using an electric razor, but it was all he had. He wished that he could use an old fashioned straight razor and get a really good shave. Those days were past. He wouldn't use a straight razor again in his lifetime.

He turned to his bed and busied himself straightening the sheets and smoothing the blanket over them. He was conscious of sounds in the building as other occupants became active and prepared themselves for the coming day. Reaching for his watch, he saw that it was nearly 7 o'clock. He wound the watch and slipped it on his wrist.

In a few minutes he would be leaving for breakfast, and then he would be off to his day's work. It wasn't the easiest work he had ever done, but it kept his mind busy, which was all that mattered. The work so involved him that he rarely had an opportunity to think of anything else during working hours.

From somewhere down the corridor a bell rang. Checking his watch, more from habit than necessity, he grunted his satisfaction. It was 7 A. M. on the nose. He walked toward the door. As he approached, there was a loud buzzing sound, and then the metallic clang of 30 electric bolts snapping open. He grasped one of the bars and swung the door open. Once in the corridor, he joined the single file line forming by the guard's desk at the end of the cellblock.

Every day for the past four years had started this way....and every day for the rest of his life would also start that way. No, he'd never use a straight razor again.

F. K.

EXCERPTS FROM KNOWLEDGE GAINED AT SEMINARY

(This article came into the hands of the Table Talk staff from outside the seminary community, and its authorship is unknown. We therefore make an exception to our rule of not publishing unsigned articles and hope it is not copyrighted!)

First Year:

Arrived at seminary. Not sure why I came, but confident that seminary will tell me. Met several students. Upset by one student who called seminary "the spook house." Overheard some students talking about Bark. Learned it's "Barth"---wondered what happened to that "th." Learned I must like coffee. Not sure I should be here.

Classes meeting: Found I must learn German. Latin and Greek wouldn't hurt either. Don't see much chance to use English. Decided English speakers ignorant anyway. Taking extensive notes.

OLD TESTAMENT: Moses didn't write Genesis, etc. Trying to figure out a spelling scheme so I can remember J.E.D. and that other fellow. Getting more complicated daily. Heard rumors that upperclassmen say there were two J's, and something about R. Could kick Moses for not writing Pentagon. Could kick myself for not realizing that he couldn't have. Got to learn Hebrew.

NEW TESTAMENT: John didn't write St. John, etc. Nosticks on the scene. Jesus believed in demons (doesn't say much for him). . . Switser messed

everybody up. . . Not sure Jesus worked miracles. They thought he did. Something happened, and the church was formed. . . Not sure Jesus wanted a church formed. Not sure of the form of the church. Jesus may have said some of the things in the N.T. . . . Not sure which ones. . . The stories are different, but the Gospels are sinoptic. . . Jesus spoke Aramaic, so the Gospels were written in Greek. It was fortunate that Greek was used because it is a very precise language, but each word has several meanings.

CHURCH HISTORY: Jesus didn't write anything! Heretics were once orthodox and orthodox were once heretics. Not clear on the distinction. Lots of heretics. . . Clement was from Alexandria. There was another one at Rome. . . There wasn't a Pope until the third century, but Peter thought he was one. . . The Holy Roman Empire was not holy, Roman, or an empire. . . Wesley wasn't a Methodist. Calvin wasn't a presbyterian. It doesn't matter anyhow, since the church is invisible . . . People wanted religious freedom, so they went to America and set up a theocracy. The Apostles didn't write the Apostles' Creed.

DOGMADICS: Barth wrote everything! (Maybe that student did say "Bark.") Learned that when there are two answers to a problem, they are in tension. Don't accept either answer. Be a dialectic. Tension is good. . . Still must learn German. . . Tillich had his being grounded, but Barth said NO! (from the Alps). Learned the scandal of Symptomatic Theology: A man spends his whole life working out a universal belief, but when he is through, he is the only one who can believe it. . . The "Word" means Jesus. I don't have the Word, but I should preach the Word. . . There is no such thing as an atheist (wouldn't they be surprised!) Sure I should not be here!

PASTORIAL THEOLOGY: Tries to remove tension (cf. notes on dialectic). Rogers left seminary so he could tell seminarians how to counsel. . . Freud had an illusion. St. Paul had a hallucination. . . Never preach! (cf. notes on Dogmatics). We cannot use pastoral language anymore. . . The innocent are more guilty than the guilty(?). . . Arranged for an interview.

MISCELLANEOUS REMARKS: Coffee break is a good thing. Parties in the library are usually exciting. Theology is a happy science, but most people seem pretty depressed. Graduate students know a lot (at least, they are older and smoke pipes). If I want to teach in America, I should study in Germany.

SEVERAL MONTHS LATER

Noted that numerous seniors aren't sure they are ready for the world; they are staying for further graduate work! Not sure I'll be back. Must learn German.

SECOND YEAR:

Arrived at seminary. Not sure why I came, but confident that seminary will tell me . . .

U. N. Certain