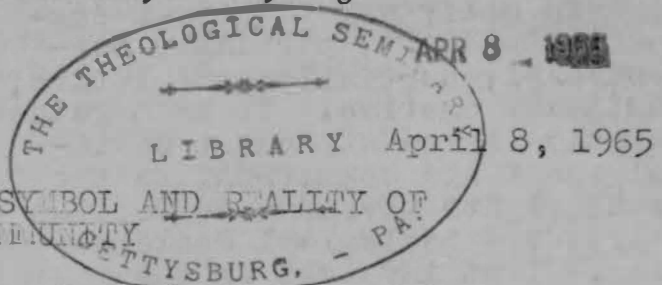


Table Talk



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

Vol. 1 No. 19



SHALL WE OVERCOME? or THE SYMBOL AND REALITY OF THE SEMINARY COMMUNITY

Symbols cannot be replaced at will; they must be interpreted as long as they are alive...The theologian cannot give a judgement concerning the life and death of the symbols he interprets. This judgement occurs in the consciousness of the living church and has deep roots in the collective unconscious. It happens in the liturgical realm, in personal devotion, in preaching and in teaching, in the activities of the church toward the world, and in the quiet contemplation of its members (Tillich, Systematic Theology, II, 165).

One of the most striking features of "The Montgomery Report" was the unanimous conviction on the part of the participants in the march that the church in general, and the Seminary in particular, should support the plight of the Negro everywhere. What is equally striking at least to my mind, is the speed with which the events between March 25 and 29 (the period of "involvement") have become a symbol pointing to the reality of this community. We have heard the report; we have given our financial token; and we have stored away in our "collective unconscious" the participation in Montgomery as a "private enterprise" of seven men. Life has to go on, my life. Some of us marched and got beaten over the head "down there". So what? It is their involvement, not mine. Let them spend \$300.00 for "civil rights". THEY WILL OVERCOME. SHALL I TOO OR NOT?

If I misread the symbols which point to a reality in this community I hope to be corrected. As a theologian I can only interpret them. The quiet contemplation of the Seminary community may already have made the judgment concerning the life and death of those symbols through which our social reality is communicated. Yet to me "Montgomery" has become a symbol for a reality that deserves our closest attention as we develop our "community consciousness". It means that only a small fraction of the community cares for certain events, be they academic, cultural or specifically "religious". I, for one, am not surprised about it. This is the way most communities behave. It is the human way. It is the way of the church as a "worldly institution" (as Luther taught us). What troubles me, however, is the judgment of certain theological minds (budding ones, I am sure) concerning the life and death of our social symbols. Table Talk printed statements according to which "worship" means death when it is not practised

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FEATURE EDITORIAL

In every way this is a personal statement, partially confessional, partially speculative, partially emotive. It is a rather quickly formed statement of involvement and commitment to the civil rights movement as well as a type of ideological declaration. I am involved in the civil rights movement, to various extents at varying times, because I wish to work to be able to accept, reject, love, dislike, pass on the street and ignore, dance or not dance with, with no if's, and's and but's, and move into a house without considering any manner of race in any determinative way. I want to be able to see a Negro play ball, fight, write, act, or speak without thinking, "He does well for a Negro," or "See, some of them can do it". In short, to find the simple idea of race slipping further and further back into my consciousness and my decision making and judgmental and evaluative mechanism. This a long process, perhaps even a process of changing "hearts". However, first I work for simple civil justice and rights for all men, and that must come now!! I affirm negotiation and education, and sit-ins, and non-violent protests as well as the use of literature, mass media, and the arts as all necessary means to an ultimate end of gaining civil liberties and educating both whites and blacks.

We are now very obviously in the midst of a social revolution. The marching season is again upon us. There will be good and bad in what is to come. We are in a very real way on the edge. Some feel that the non-violent protests hang on the

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EDITORIAL

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thread of the life of Dr. King. Even that thread will not stand unbroken under constant disappointment. The time for merely verbal support is past. The movement no longer hears our words because it is knocking on our doors. Now is the time to stand up or sit-in and be counted and seen and also the time to negotiate and educate. Marching is only a one day move and that day is passing. Has our church decided, really resolved? If so now is the time to throw open the church basements for education projects. Now is the time, to walk with them to schools. Now is the time to recruit and send workers to the North and the South. Now is the time to allow, indeed to seek, integration in our churches and where membership drops to subsidize those churches. Now is the time to actively publicize and financially support the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Now is the time to write not only to Congressmen, but to Newspapers, magazines and publishing

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SHALL WE OVERCOME? (cont. from page 1)

every day in terms of statistical "abiding presence". Individuals from all the walks of life known within our community (including segregated wives!) regard certain social activities as the only ways whereby community salvation is achieved. Wearers of the "gown" (or should one rather say "cloth") among us seem to feel superior to the "town"--thereby assuming that Seminary symbols (in careful selection) point to a better reality than Gettysburg symbols. We are no better than the symbols we create. "Worship" is not the absolute test for real communion with God. "Social life" may often destroy human relations. The "gown" is no better than the "town". We are as apathetic when exposed to genuine academic, cultural and religious challenges as their existence on the basis of "good works or words". But they can be known through "good works and good words" when they originate out of the reality of divine forgiveness. Let us quit complaining about the lack of "community" and interpret the symbols as realities of broken human existence. Our mission is not to be "princes of the pulpit", not even "back slappers in the pew", but to be "human Christs" to others. Let us live: always critical of the symbols, never afraid of reality and always prepared for what needs to be done in non-sensical community life.

Eric W. Gritsch

To Seminary Students:

Thank you for the unusual plant and floral arrangement sent to me in the hospital with a card that read "The students at the Seminary send their prayers and best wishes". It came at a time when I was very uncomfortable and discouraged and needed a lift. It is the type of gift that I can enjoy for a long time in my home. I deeply appreciate your thoughtfulness and friendship.

Fondly,
Mrs. Mac

WHAT'S GOING ON

To Table Talk from The Business Office:

Numerous inquires have been made as to "What's Going On" when all observe the workmen and equipment on the Campus and an air of things being moved and built. To help explain some of this, listed below are some of the projects and purchases approved by the Board of Directors upon recommendation of the Building and Grounds Committee. These projects are planned to further improve the Plant for the benefit of all and are financed through capital funds allocated by supporting Synods and available plant funds.

- 1) Renovation of top floor of library in to periodical section thus making both rooms on ground floor Reference Rooms.

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WHAT'S GOING ON (cont. from page 3.)

- 2) Building of storage and garage structures adjoining power-house. Hopefully to have one or two out door handball courts incorporated.
- 3) Start on long range program of landscaping. New plantings along with moving some of old and overgrown plantings - seeding, sodding, and fertilizing.
- 4) Decorating and upgrading interior of Refectory.
- 5) Enlarging parking areas and new blacktopping where possible.
- 6) Sidewalk repair and replacement.
- 7) Purchase of new Reel Gang Mower and Cubtractor with attachments. (Pete is happy.)
- 8) Sandblasting and pointing of Schmucker House.
- 9) Exterior painting of Aberly House, Power House and Administration Building.

In addition to these there is the constant task of normal maintenance and repairs.

It is hoped the returning students will enjoy and appreciate the improvements, and the present and soon-to-be Alumni will have increased pride in their Seminary.

Mr. B

FEATURE EDITORIAL (cont from page 2)

houses. If it is not this manner of total commitment, the movement will hardly be interested. Appearances of isolated clergymen carrying signs at "marches" and demonstrations is hardly an effective commitment to the whole church.

This may be a "hot" summer again. It certainly should be a "hot" life for each one of us. I know that I will have to stand-up and speak out and be counted and possibly march, sing, and talk many, many times in the months and years to come. I trust that in the Church together we can commit ourselves together to this. At any rate, we shall overcome and be overcome. Now we are fighting for the right, the opportunity, for all of us to have the possibility of being authentic here and now in this nation. We all wish to be free to be intelligently judgmental, decisive and valuable; to live and move and have our free being; to love and to hate, to sin; to be unemployed and to work; to mix and not to mix; to say merely "Yes" and merely "No" without any if's and's and but's. We seek to be truly free to the limited extent possible in this existence and to be responsible, to overcome and to be overcome.

Fred Reisz

April 6, 1965

To the Editor:

On April 5th a letter placed in the mailboxes in the Administration Building requested that the student body contribute the balance of \$146.83 which would alleviate from those who participated the financing of the recent trip to march for Civil Rights in Alabama.

It is right for all concerned Christians to act in this cause and we can have only admiration for the students and faculty members who sacrificed time and money and risked bodily harm to witness in Montgomery. Now we are asked to share in that witness by paying for the trip which was taken. May I offer the following observations:

\$146.83 will send 2,936 letters to congressmen urging the passage of strong voting rights legislation. \$146.83 will pay for more than 250 phone calls to peoples representatives in Washington. \$146.83 would send the entire Senior Class representing both North and South to the capital to personally confront our nation's lawmakers on this vital issue. \$146.83 will begin a life long ministry answering our Lord's question and command, "Do you love me?...Feed my sheep!"

Though it may be an exclusive opinion, I would like to suggest that we accept the Gettysburg marcher's sacrifice and, if they so desire, assist them financially and thus share in it; but also think of our own contribution now and in the future. Sharing in what has happened is a nice gesture. Being concerned with and participating in a responsible mature manner in what is and will happen appears to me to be "the better part".

Sincerely,

Richard Graf, Jr.

EASTER STORY--REVISED CHILDREN'S VERSION

Several years ago the members of a weekday church school class being taught by one of our present seminarians were asked to write the Easter story. One 10 year old boy wrote the following account, which his teacher saved and which we now pass on to our readers.

"Jesus was crucified on a cross on a Friday and then came back alive on a Sunday and that Sunday is called Easter Sunday and it falls in April. This is the way Jesus died on the cross. At first people liked him, then some people hated him. Then they got more and more, soon there were enough to fight him. Then they got him

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MASTER STORY (cont. from page 5)

they made him drink alcohol and then they chained him and all the people that hated him they threw rocks and stones or anything they could find.

After a while they built a wooden cross and they made Jesus carry it for miles and miles and his two best friends walked along with Jesus. After a while of walking Jesus fell over and all the people that were walking along started kicking him and that kept up for about an hour before his two best friends said 'We shall carry the cross for our friend Jesus'. So then the two best friends of Jesus carried the cross for miles and miles until they reached their destination to crucify Jesus and his two best friends. Then the people set three crosses, for Jesus and his two friends should die.

After they erected on the ground the crosses they asked Jesus if he had anything to say and Jesus said, 'No!' Then they nailed spikes into Jesus's hands and feet and they did that to his two best friends. After they were on the cross the leader assigned three men to watch the three crosses.

One day passed and the three men were still watching the three crosses. Then Sunday came and very bright light shined and blinded the three men. Then Jesus fell from the cross and his two friends did too. The leader said, 'What hath happened?' 'A bright light came from the sky and blinded us', the three men replied. 'And where is Jesus and his friends?' the leader asked. 'I don't know', the three men replied. 'Divide and go in every direction', the leader said. They came back and nobody found anything. 'Now he is gone', the leader said sadly. Then Jesus went up to heaven with all of his friends. That is the end of the story.

Don't forget the Friday he was crucified is called Good Friday. The Sunday that he came back alive again is Easter Sunday and it is in April."

David