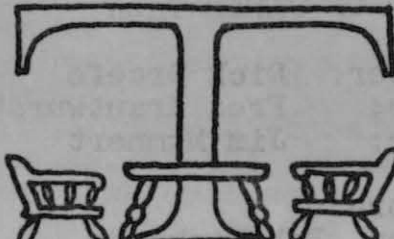


Table Talk



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

Vol. 1 No. 20

April 22, 1965

THE PROPER EMPHASIS IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

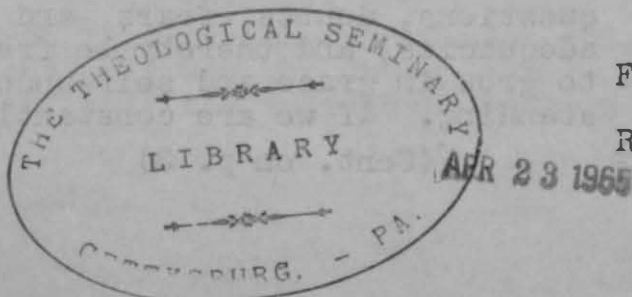
Much discussion is going on around campus about the new emphasis on academic achievement. The old school of thought was that the personality of the professors makes just as much of an impression on the student as the intellectual knowledge he offers. The new school of thought seems to believe that academic achievement is primary and that it takes place regardless of the personality of the professor. Along with this new emphasis on a classroom-centered curriculum there comes a concern about the lack of community on the Ridge. Perhaps the "new breed" should ask themselves whether the emphasis on academics has something to do with promoting the lack of community.

In former days community existed on this campus as a natural result of the atmosphere created by the faculty. This no longer seems to be the case. The professors are so loaded down with administrative and promotional responsibilities that their primary reason for being here is being shamefully obscured. This is not their lot by choice, but rather a result of the "system" that is growing among us. Since the majority of the student's time is spent in classes and in preparing for them, it is inevitable that the tenor of the student's attitude be greatly affected by the orientation of the professors. There is a direct and positive correlation between the sense of community on this campus and the attitude of the faculty. Perhaps all of this talk about community should begin with a discussion and evaluation of the attitude and purpose of the faculty who are called primarily to the ministry of teaching.

Part of this evaluation should include a statement on the proper emphasis in theological education. Should a seminary faculty demand stringent academic performance without at the same time offering the necessary pastoral concern? It seems to me that the proper balance of concern and academic achievement should be maintained. If this balance is not regained, there is a good chance that in a short time there will be no difference between Gettysburg Seminary and any comparable cut-throat graduate school. With the advent of the "new breed," the time has come to re-examine the direction which is being fostered by the new stress on academic achievement. The course we are beginning to take does not at all seem to be the proper one! Perhaps some clue to this whole matter can be exposed by asking whether parish experience should not be required of those who desire to become seminary professors.

Feature Editorial

Robert J. Richards



"COMMUNITY" CONFUSION

One limitation of being on an internship is that no matter how hard I try, I can't totally feel a part of the seminary. I can read issues of "Table Talk," exchange letters with some of you at the seminary, and maybe even get together with some of you from time to time, but I'm not present on the "hill" where I can feel the atmosphere and attitude of the campus. It is with this limitation and handicap, if you please, that I would like to share with you my thought on a matter of real concern to me. It is, in part, a response to an editorial about a month ago by Ed Vogel song where Ed made a plea for "thought regarding the nature of a seminary community."

In past issues of "Table Talk," a lot of negative comments have been expressed concerning the nature and, more specifically, the attitude of the seminary community. Each time I read such an article, I get as far as the word "community," and then I become confused. Everyone writing an article seems to take it for granted that all of us know what he is talking about when he uses the word "community." Expressions such as "seminary community," "religious community," "Christian community," "our own community," "different community," "the halting seminary community," "communities in the Church," "Spiritual community," etc. are used quite freely. But I'm just not sure what these expressions really mean. Maybe those using these expressions know what they mean, but somehow, these expressions haven't communicated any concrete images in my mind.

What makes a community? Do we automatically have a community because we live in the same geographical area or because we share the same goals in our vocational calling? I don't believe this is enough. I think community means

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Community Confusion
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more than this, especially when we are talking about a particular community--our seminary community. Ideally, we would be striving for that ultimate in the meaning of community--a true ecclesia and koinonia. But realistically, our seminary community is quite human, and we need to grasp an understanding of community in light of this obvious fact.

I would like to think of the seminary community as a place where we, as individual human beings, can come together to struggle in our growth in grace. This is where we can concentrate our efforts on becoming the persons God intended us to become (which each of us must discover for ourselves) and on becoming a part of a true Christian fellowship. I emphasize becoming because we never totally arrive at that point. We never reach perfection. So, it should not be too upsetting to us when our seminary life shows we have a lot to be desired before becoming the "hoped for" ecclesia and koinonia.

To me, the seminary must be a place for us where we can feel free enough to struggle with our questions, doubts, fears, and inadequacies, and thereby be free to grow in grace and self-understanding. If we are constantly

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criticizing each other for not being perfect, or being defensive because we are constantly the object of criticism, we cannot be free and honest enough with each other to share our deeply felt "growing pains."

Before there can be a feeling of closeness, or some sense of oneness, at the seminary, there must be an atmosphere of acceptance love. We must accept each other as having individual self-worth. We must realize and admit that our views are not the only "right" views possible, and that maybe we are wrong sometimes and the other person right. As individuals in our struggle for direction, greater understanding, and deeper meaning of life, we are not all at the same level in our spiritual growth. We must recognize this, and instead of condemning, we must provide an atmosphere where one is accepted at the stage of growth he or she now is. And then we must provide a climate where spiritual growth can possibly take place.

What, then, are the essential ingredients of a seminary community where acceptance love and personal, spiritual struggle and growth are possible? The first ingredient is knowledge. We must know and accept each other as persons. This includes having a sensitivity wherein we have some understanding and feeling of where the next person is in his or her spiritual growth and struggle. And to have this understanding of and feeling for others requires that we know ourselves and where we are in our own spiritual and emotional struggling. The only way to know and understand others at the seminary is by listening, truly listening, to what they are inwardly crying out.

The second ingredient is expression. If we are afraid to express our inward most feelings and concerns, no one, including ourselves, will be able to know who we are and what our needs are. Needs can be met only after they are known and clearly expressed. True, this self exposure leaves us open for hurt and possible rejection by others, but where knowledge and acceptance love exist, there is an atmosphere where our spiritual and personal growth can take place.

What then is the seminary community to be? This can be answered only as we work together in our struggle for continued self-understanding, understanding of those around us, and growth in grace.

Roger Grothen

GOVERNMENT SEMINAR FOR LUTHERAN STUDENTS

"Intelligent awareness" were the key words of government officials this past week during a Lutheran Student Seminar on Government in Washington, D. C. 166 students from forty-five different colleges and seminaries gathered in the nation's capitol to hear government leaders discuss the crucial issues facing our country today. The only LCA seminaries represented were Southern Seminary (10) and Gettysburg (1). The three day seminar was cooperatively sponsored by the National Lutheran Council (LCA and ALC) and the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. The time spent was very informative and very exciting.

At an introductory session, the Reverend Philip Roepe, Pastor of First Trinity Lutheran Church (Missouri-Synod) told the students that the only way the Church can be relevant to and active in today's society is if the individual members of that body seek to witness to

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the Gospel through an informed, intelligent and alert participation in that society: in this case, through the governmental agencies.

But for those who are not directly involved in the legislative and administrative aspects of the government, there is also much to be done. Not only do we have the responsibility of being educated ourselves, but we also have the responsibility of seeing that others contribute intelligent participation. If we are concerned, for example, about people getting the vote, we must also be concerned about getting them educated.

Later in the week, Frederick Blachly, Public Affairs adviser of the Bureau of International Organization Affairs spoke on current trends within the United Nations. He reviewed the dual crisis in which the UN is involved: both financial and organizational. With uncommon optimism regarding the future of the international organization, he discussed the four point program which is underway to correct these crises: 1) Pressure on the defaulting countries which are in arrears in their payments; 2) Ask the International Court of Justice to decide if assessments of the member nations are legal under the charter (since the USSR is opposed to the court, it is doubtful if she will abide by the decision of the court); 3) Make another round of assessments of the member nations and ask for voluntary contributions (this will allow a 'way out' for the Soviet Union, because if they refuse to pay money for arms intervention, then they might consent to making an undesignated contribution); 4) Authorize the sale of bonds to raise money for the United Nations. However, when he was questioned by the students, Blachly admitted that there was question about the UN effectiveness concerning Red China, peacekeeping in Asia, disarmament, and civil rights (the UN charter prohibits intervention within domestic jurisdiction of participating states).

Hyman Bookbinder, Assistant Director of the Office of Economic Opportunity, spoke on the Dimensions of the war on poverty at a luncheon at the National Press Club. He gave some startling figures on the dimension of this poverty. 'Poverty' means an annual income under \$3,000. The gross national product is \$650 million, with 75 million people employed. The average national income is \$7500. But there are 25 million people (20% of the population) living with a total family income of \$1800 per year--including public assistance. And each year one million children are being born into families in this bracket. Of this 20% of the population, 50% are Negroes. The other 50% includes Puerto Ricans, Spanish, and families headed by women. Dr. Bookbinder said that there is, without a doubt, a relationship between discrimination and poverty.

The important thing about "poverty" is that it is a vicious cycle: a culture of poverty has established itself. Once a child is born into this culture (poverty), it is inevitable that he remain there in that culture. And so this cycle has got to be broken. The government has got to cut into the circle. In this country at the present time, there are three generations who are receiving public assistance. The fourth generation is now being born. The environment has got to be changed for the young people first, because these are the people who are or who will soon be producing a new generation of public assistance recipients.

Dr. Bookbinder then elaborated on several of the government programs which must be assisted and carried out on the local level. Job Corps: provides an opportunity to get away from home and have guides, friends, and administrators; Vista: a domestic peace corps;

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Neighborhood Youth Corps: for young people who are going to school or who won't or can't leave home. The idea is to help them set new goals: get them to dress neatly, shave, or simply do something according to schedule; Work-Study: so that the more intelligent children can go to college and work at the same time, to provide income at home; and Project Headstart: under the philosophy that 'poverty children' are two years behind before they even begin school at age five, this program provides eight weeks of intensive, careful training for 300 thousand children (pre-school) to help them before they begin school in September (including doctors, optometrists, dentists, etc.).

Among the other lectures were those in the Pentagon, which discussed the United States' role in South Viet Nam, including the presentation of the historical background of the country, the nature of the people, and the objectives which the US has set. Rear Admiral J. Floyd Dreith, USN Chairman of the Armed Forces Chaplains Board (and Missouri-Synod) spoke on character guidance in the Armed Forces.

The Hon. Alec Olson, Congressman from Minnesota, Albert Quie, also from Minnesota, and all of the other Lutheran officials in government said essentially the same thing concerning the Christian's participation in his government. Participation government is not an optional matter for the Christian. We have an obligation to put our faith to practice in every aspect of our lives. We cannot be a Christian one part of the time and a citizen the other. One must permeate the other: there can be no walls of segregation. This takes prayer, time, thought, and consideration. And this is the responsibility of every citizen. The responsibility of the Church and the individual members of the Body is to commitment and action through Faith.

Gwenn Hilburn

THIRD ART EXHIBIT

The exhibits of Carol Lange and May Martin are being followed this week by the work of Mrs. Eileen Cooper, wife of senior Dick Cooper. Eileen has selected approximately 20 works, all in oils but on different surfaces such as plywood instead of canvas. Her work will appear in the Library Rotunda for the next ten days.

A fourth exhibit will follow and be up during Seminary Week and the Convention of the Lutheran Society of Worship, Music, and the Arts. This exhibit will combine a few pieces from those who had already shown plus selected works from Mrs. Betsey Myers and Fred Reisz. This Community Show will be open to all, anyone else who would like to submit work to the selection committee please contact John Hagedorn.

JH