Table Talk

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

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REPORT FROM MADRAS

Dr. Folkemer, Professor of Systematic Theology at our Seminary, is currently spending a Sabbatical semester in Madras with his wife Ann and his daughter Mary. His article was accompanied by the following letter.

Dear Bill:

It occurred to me that the Seminary may be interested in periodic articles from me on the state of the Church in India etc. In the event that they are interested I am sending a first installment.

The Folkemers are faring very well here in Madras and all of us are kept busy. Mary has her school (she is the only westerner in an Indian Girl's School); Ann is doing a bit of a good many things including some writing and social service work in a village outside Madras; and I am busy at the University as well as studying Sanskrit from a private pundit. The latter would be even more fun than it is if I could give it more time. I suspect that my pundit, who is quite a conservative and evangelistic Vaishnava is hoping for something more from me than the learning of Sanskrit. He is sure I would make a good Hindu.

Please convey to any of the students who are interested our warmest (that is an appropriate term from S. India) greetings and fervent hope that they may find thia a whopping good year at the Seminary.

Personal Greetings,
Lawrence Folkemer

(Dr. Folkemer's article begins on page 3.)

R.C. SEMINARIANS TO VISIT

The Ecumenics Committee has made arrangements for a visit by students of Mt. St. Mary's R.C. Seminary, Emmitsburg, Maryland, thia Thursday, December 1. Twenty-five to thirty students from the various classes at the "Mount" will take part. Arrival is scheduled for 11:45 p.m., vespers, and the Advent Service at 7:30. Naturally "hosts" will be needed for each of the visitors from the time of their arrival throughout the day, but with work pressure at the customary beginning-of-the-quarter minimum, we hope that most Gettysburg students will take part. Members of the Ecumenics Committee from the Mount indicated that besides the scheduled activities they would be interested in hearing our reactions to the new theologians, especially Robinson, Cox, and Altizer.

Mount St. Mary's was founded in 1808 (about the time our venerable Samuel Simon was celebrating his ninth birthday) and is the second oldest Roman Catholic seminary in the United States. Besides this distinction, it is unique in being the only "free" Catholic seminary in existence. All other Catholic theological schools are under the control of either the diocese in which they are located or of an order with which they are affiliated. Control of the Mount rests with the faculty, who are responsible to the church at large and to Rome rather than to a bishop or order.

A return visit by G-burg students to Emmittsburg has been scheduled for early February, after senior thesis deadline and before second quarter finals. Plans will soon be made for exchanges with a Roman seminary belonging to an order (perhaps the Benedictines or the Paulists), and contacts may be made with non-Lutheran Protestant seminaries if interest is shown. Suggestions for ecumenical projects will gladly be received by members of the Committee.

Let's start by all taking part this week.

Jere Hock

A FINE DISTINCTION--EXPRESSION AND BELIEF

One of the exciting reasons for being in the church today is to participate in the dynamic changes taking place. New expressions of the ministry are appearing in areas untouched by the traditional churches. Store fronts, special chaplaincies, centers of dialogue, and coffee houses are but a few of the various expressions the church is taking. The purpose, I suppose, for these expressions is to reach people who would not darken a church door ordinarily. Such people may feel the church does not answer their own pressing problems, is judgmental, does not express how they feel inside, does not speak a language they understand, has been left behind by current scientific discoveries or sophisticated urban philosophies concerning success and morality, or even is just not interesting enough to bother with. There are naturally intelligent individuals within the church structure who inwardly resent it not being interesting or "with it." There are also individuals who judge themselves and the church to be standing outside their mission if they cannot or do not communicate what they believe and feel to be worthwhile. The old axiom that the religion which does not meet the needs of the people dies hangs like the sword of Democles over the head of the social s structure of the church.

It seems to this writer, however, that whatever the motivation for concern may be, and whatever various forms the message may take to communicate what it believes to be valid, an underlying factor still needs to be considered--the effect of expression on belief, or belief patterns if you will.

As the new breed peels the onion skins of traditional orthodox forms away how much of what we have held to be our own belief or faith is peeled away also? When te tradition of firery speakers is replaced by a liturgical emphasis, what happens to the place of "the Word?" The "hell, fire, and brimestone" orators, with their literal, Biblical stance, are no longer in vogue. New historical, archeological, and scientific discoveries

(Cont'd next column)

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PICTURE OF THE WEEK

Not only the speakers in Hyde Park, London, but also the listeners catch the visitor's attention. So while their eyes and ears were directed to the orator, I focussed on them from time to time. (Incidentally it is worth noting that only the innate good manners that kept the people from staring at the outsider with the inquisitive camera, or at each other, made pictures like this possible.)

The influence of British hair styles in the States was less pervasive when this picture was taken last March than it is now. Consequently, the long hair mane-ia seemed more of a novelty and worth recording on film. By chance two subjects grouped themselves into a natural shot. You see them in the center of the composition. They not only stand out from other coiffeurs around them, but they also resemble each other to such a degree that such a remark as "Which twin has the Toni?" is inevitable.

Actually, the better question would be, which is he and which is she? From the angle of the faces visible it is not too difficult to see the answer. But could you tell from a rear view of the two hair-dos which is John and which is Joan?

Dr. Howard Bream

A Fine Distinction (cont'd from last column)

have appeared to undercut their position successfully. Is the church's answer to replace or subordinate the Word to another form? If it is, or if the use of the Word still reminds theologically sensitive

(Cont'd on p. 4)

ENCOUNTER WITH OTHER FAITHS

The real battleground for the Church in India today is the struggle for human dignity. Only by full participation in that struggle can the Church relevently proclaim the Gospel. In the Name of Christ and for the sake of mankind the Church is called to enter into partnership with all other groups working for human justice and well-being.

It is just at this point of staggering human need and the almost insuperable problems of common national concern that the Christian community may find one of the open doors for constructive meeting with men of other faiths. Here creative conversations may take place on the nature and destiny of man and the meaning of society; not in some abstract, ideological jargon but in concrete, real, "dirty-hands" involvement with the problems. Out of that plunge into the very center of the human dilemmas will come the clearest witness of what Christians really believe about man, society and their ultimate significance.

The stark realities of modern Indian history are compelling traditional Indian philosophy and religion to reexamine critically all its patterns of life and thought. To the Christian whose Christ is no parochial Saviour but Lord of all history this must be seen as the Power of the Spirit working in judgment and reconciliation. The work of Christ cannot be cabined and confined. "He works where He wills,"and that work cannot be limited to the organized Christian Church. "It is not for us to judge the manner and place of His working." By no means does that minimize the significance of the Church as the true instrument (where authentic) of His working. Let no one glibly and from a distance belittle the profound thrust of the witness of the believing community through the years and now (that's no pep talk for the boys oversees!). It means only that our Christ will not be domesticated and canalized into the channels we so neatly carve out for His working. He crosses all our neat boundaries and works His work over all the realms of His created world.

(Cont'd next column)

DR JORDAHL TO STAY

(Included below is the announcement by Dr. Heiges of Dr. Jordahl's new position.)

It is with gratitude that I announce the election and the acceptance of the Reverend Leigh D. Jordahl, Ph.D. as associate professor of church history, with special responsibility in the area of American Christianity, effective immediately.

Professor Jordahl came to Gettysburg in June of 1963 as librarian, and served the Seminary in this capacity with competence and faithfulness. Nevertheless, in the conviction that he could be of greater service to the Church as teacher than as librarian, he resigned, effective August 31, 1966, but later consented to remain as visiting professor during the sabbatical of Dr. Frederick K. Wentz. Then the acceptance by Dr. Wentz of the presidency of the Hamma School of Theology left a vacancy in the Division of Historical-Theological Studies.

Although it is not necessary to welcome Professor Jordahl and his family to our community, I do welcome him, on behalf of the entire Seminary, to his new position. We pray for him God's great blessing.

Donald R. Heiges

Encounter (cont'd from last column)

When the full dignity of that man in the Madras slums, whose mud-thatched hut along with hundreds of others floated down the river yesterday in a cyclone, is recognized, when a sense of national and universal solidarity of all men is really accepted, when a positive attitude towards history and its ceaseless enigmas and demands is embraced, wherever that takes place, be it within an awakened and startled Hinduism or in aggressive secular movements, let God be praised. Let the Christian rejoice. Christ is the source of many a revolution and its hope. God works as He wills.

God is at work in all cultures and religions. He has no mere private enterprise going. Because He is at work

(Cont'd on p. 4)

A Fine Distinction (Cont'd from p. 2)

individuals of something crass and irrelevant, then personal belief may well disappear with outmoded expression. The Onion peelers with then discover that the onion has no solid core. Therefore if we are willing to say that the Word no longer has power to convict, convert, or uplift a person we should also be willing to pay the price. Or if we say instead that the Word takes form in corporate action, we have taken one path among several, and rather than being relevant we have become merely more selective.

This writer for one believes the spoken, written and acted out expressions of God's Word go forth from Him through human channels and return not empty. The promise carries its own primacy and relevance. The human role, then, is communicating what has already been revealed, not mirroring contemporary man's critical agnosticism or synical empiricism.

Charles Pohlhaus

Encounter (cont'd from p. 3)

there, cultures and religions stand under His judgment. Wherever men, in or out of religions, rebel against the true God, worship false gods, exalt self and separate themselves from their brothers (sometimes in the name of religion), there God stands in judgment. Wherever there is healing in all the human breaches, God is at work reconciling. The mission of the Church in the non-Christian world is not a "clash to the death" between religions in which the Christian somehow hopes for the laurel wreath of final superiority. It is the quiet, humble and sincere call to encounter all men, in all the ways which are open, with the God who is at work everywhere and supremely and decisively in Christ Jesus.

(Next report on "Indigenization")

Lawrence D. Folkemer