

# Table Talk

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

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## WHO WILL BE OUR PRESIDENT?

Get out your Manual of Information sometime and read the Student Association Constitution and you'll find that under the present rules it will be impossible to elect a slate of Student Association officers for next year. Why? Because of the compulsory intern year which goes into effect this year, which will remove the whole present middler class from campus and thus from election eligibility.

What's the solution to all this? If you think about it thoroughly you'll come to realize that whatever election procedure is followed only one of the three classes electing the officers will be around to be governed by them. In fact, every year from now on no class on campus will know any other class at the start of any school year; the juniors will be newly arrived, the middlers will only know the interns and the previous years seniors who are gone, and the seniors will only know the interns who've just left to start internship.

Several solutions have been proposed, including the suggestions of electing an intern as president to take office when he returns, to elect a middler before internship to take office after internship, to have elections in the Fall instead of the Spring, and numerous other ideas. Perhaps you might have other thoughts on the matter. If you do, why not volunteer for the Constitution Committee and help work out these knotty problems?

The Constitution Committee will be meeting several times this quarter to discuss these matters and also the possibility of combining the offices of class presidents and Student-Faculty Relations Committee representatives to alleviate the existence of do-nothing offices. Near the end of the quarter it is hoped the committee will have concrete proposals to bring before the Student Association in the form  
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## Editorial

### THE SEMINARY FORUM

Regarding this relatively new campus phenomenon, I would like to make three general remarks and then comment on the first forum of the year held last week.

(1) My first remark has to do with its value. For those who are not yet acquainted with the Seminary Forum (and a considerable number still exists in all three classes), its primary function is to provide the means to discuss, on an informal basis, issues which are not usually encountered at any depth, if at all, in the classroom. The issues selected for discussion are, for the most part, those which have arisen spontaneously, and which seem to have a rather broad appeal. Thus a program planned for the entire year would be out of keeping with the basic intent of the Forum. Framework for the discussion is provided for by faculty members whose fields of interest include the area under discussion.

It should be obvious that no curriculum can provide both a comprehensive and a detailed theological education. Our three years are but the beginning of a life time process. Ideally, such an education should acquaint the student with the important issues, questions and problems and their ramifications. It should also equip the student with the means with which to form an adequate response. To expect conclusive answers to these issues is naive, at best, and irresponsible.

The forums can provide, and have provided, discussion on some of these issues which do not fit neatly into the curriculum. The importance of these issues is dramatized by the selection of faculty members who represent differing responses. The resultant "debate" is thus doubly instructive, and the student who dismisses the Forum as a minor element of campus  
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GROUP LIFE WEEKEND:  
"AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER?"

The Juniors have been initiated. At times it seemed like trial by fire or purification by hot coals, but all of us were back in class Monday morning looking as docile and good-humored as ever. Some of us have new friends, some are trying this or that activity for the first time. Have you noticed some new faces around the tables in the Coffee Shop? I don't think you'll see many new faces in chapel, however. That's one area where Group Life Weekend left something to be desired. I suspect that our leaders have not been exposed to many vital forms of worship. There was no attempt to include prayer in our gatherings until Saturday night when we were all asked to sit in a circle and pray our hearts out. The result was an awkward silence and a meditation from one of the leaders addressed to God but preached at us. Sunday morning, when some of us were ready for communion and were hoping that while we were sitting in our accustomed circle someone would bring out a table, a loaf of bread and a glass of wine, we were ushered over to the Chapel for an abbreviated matins service and a very wordy non-verbal sermon. (Fred Shilling gave one of his jargony lectures while Otto Kroeger led the rest of the staff in a silent comedy.)

On behalf of all his buddies, including this one, I'd like to apologize to Don Derby for the impatience, hostility, and rudeness we displayed while he was doing his best to get something across to us as part of a very revealing demonstration. Not that this was anything new or different for us. The fact is that all of us could practice a lot more patience, sympathy, and understanding in classes or discussion groups. Let's make that a lesson learned, guys.

A lot of us learned that we don't trust each other and don't give many people the benefit of the doubt very often or give our leaders a chance. Of course, it is natural to be apprehensive about a weekend devoted to some unknown cause by some unknown people, especially when those  
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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

Re: Your article of last week entitled, "Some Reflections IN Daily Chapel." So this is what you do in chapel.

Don Main

-- Typographical errors will sometimes hang one. Substitute "on" for "in."

Ed.

LETTER TO THE FACULTY

Dear Faculty,

I have a request to make. Inasmuch as the public forums held in the coffee shop at various times throughout the year are intended as informal "learning" experiences, please do not schedule tests or the following day. While there is no conclusive proof that tests prevent student participation, it should be evident to all that they do not encourage it. Because I have found the forums to be one of the most stimulating experiences of seminary life, I urge you to take all possible steps to encourage student participation.

Respectfully,  
 J. William Novak

PRESIDENT (Cont'd from page 1)

of amendments for constitutional change in preparation for election of next year's officers. If you have the time to help, see John Nagle or Dick Graefe.

Dick Graefe

AN ANCIENT RIDDLE

A great many years ago a prominent merchant in Taunton promised to an eccentric old lady named Lucy King--that if, taking her subject from the Bible, she would compose a riddle that he could not guess, he would give her a certain prize. The riddle was as follows:

Adam God made out of dust,  
But thought it best to make me first;  
So I was made before the man,  
To answer his most holy plan.

My body he did make complete,  
But without arms, or legs, or feet;  
My ways and acts he did control,  
But to my body gave no soul.

A living being I became--  
And Adam gave to me a name;  
I from his presence then withdrew,  
And more of Adam never knew.

I did my Maker's law obey,  
Nor from it ever went astray;  
Thousands of miles I go in fear,  
But never on the earth appear

For purposes wise, which God did see,  
He put a living soul in me;  
A soul from me my God did claim,  
And took from me that soul again.

For when from me that soul had fled,  
I was the same as when first made;  
And, without hands or feet or soul,  
I travel on from pole to pole.

I labor hard by day or night,  
To fallen man I give great light;  
Thousands of people, young and old,  
Do by my death great light behold.

No right or wrong can I conceive,  
The Scriptures I cannot believe;  
Although my name therein is found,  
They are to me but empty sound.

No fear of death doth trouble me,  
Real happiness I ne'er shall see.  
To heaven I shall never go,  
Nor to the grave, nor hell below.

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Ancient Riddle (Cont'd from page 3)

Now when these lines you closely read,  
Go search your Bible with all speed,  
For that my name's recorded there,  
I honestly to you declare.

HYANNMIS

Answers solicited by Mrs. Birtie D. Grandstaff, 4422 Mechanic St., Hagerstown, Md. 21740

Riddle taken from the Hagerstown Almanak, 1967.

REPORT FROM MADRAS

PICTURE OF THE WEEK

This article is actually the first one which Dr. Folkemer wrote for Table Talk and should be read before the article which appeared two weeks ago. It is entirely due to an error by the editor that the order was reversed. -Ed.

Biblical Division, King James section  
(Ps 22:21; 29:6:92:10)

Every foreigner in London hopes to a greater or lesser degree to catch a glimpse of Royalty. With a lesser degree of that commodity I betook myself to Buckingham Palace one Sunday afternoon. There were Bobbies to see, other tourists to see, pigeons to see, but no sign of the rara avis, regina.

Mission of the Church in India

We have been in Madras now almost four months. That is hardly a long stretch but things have moved rapidly for us. Not that India moves very rapidly but we are forced to hurry our work along because a six-months stay does not give us a barrel of time. One thing we want to do is to send back periodic reports to the Seminary community through Table-Talk describing some of the more significant things going on here in the life of the Church. We might even get a little personal and tell you what we are doing. We assume you are interested. If not, don't tell us. Keep it as a surprise for us when we return. We all like to be thought interesting and needed.

However there was something to shoot, and bring back home as a bloodless trophy. It seems appropriate to dig it up for presentation now. We are at the time of the year when the jolly red and green giant is pulling tricks from his bag, and when miraculous things take place for the benefit of others.

By the aid of this pictorial proof, we can confidently write in a sceptical world, "Yes, Virginia, there is a whatyou-maycallit". Readers of the RSV have, by one of those searingly helpful advances of modern science, been relieved of the presence of the whatyoumaycallit. This thing which has its habitat in the King James version (being found there in nine passages), has been put out of existence by being rendered "wild ox."

In a recent series of meetings at Nasrapur, Christian leaders of India did some real soul-searching. It was more than that. They searched the Church's soul in the context of happenings in contemporary Indian life. This was far more than nave-gazing. The Indian Church like the Church everywhere else struggles with the problem of ghettoism. It too is concerned about such matters as church structures, inward-looking congregations, and the "communal outlook." The Christian  
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Whatever you may say of oxen, wild or tame, they are not picturesque or romantic. Hardly the sort of thing that you would want to find wrapped up with your name on it at Yuletide. How refreshing, then, to find that at the residence of a royalty whose main claim to existence is symbolic value, a real, if not live, thing of beauty whose existence has been translated out.

Dr. Howard Bream.

GROUP LIFE (Cont'd from page 2)

who went through the experience last year have delighted in rattling you about the whole venture for the past quarter. But where is the integrity of the irate fellow who refused to participate unless he was told the purpose of what we were doing, and, when told quite honestly what "encounter sessions" were designed to accomplish, went back on his work by continuing to stand aloof?

It took some of us longer than others to catch on and begin benefiting from what was offered, but those of us who did were glad we had trusted the staff all the way along. We heard many perceptive comments throughout the weekend, at least some of which, I hope, will haunt us for a long time. "Your teachers call you docile and good-humored but we have seen how tight and insecure you are underneath. Your frustrations and hostilities are very close to the surface. You find it very hard to loosen up and relax."

All of us continue to participate in group life. Some of us are better prepared for this after last weekend. Most of us feel we could use more opportunities to examine what we are like and how we communicate. I think the professors are at a disadvantage for not sharing a similar experience. Consequently we all suffer by not being able to get the most out of our classes and seminars. The tensions created by our excessively heavy work load continue to curtail our freedom for greater personal and corporate growth, if only by limiting too severely the opportunities we have to develop a vital, cohesive community life. Does our integrity as an institution of higher learning necessarily require that we work at such a break-neck pace? What are we doing to guarantee that our personalities as well as our intellects will be adequately developed for successful ministries? This weekend was one answer. Let's explore ways of integrating this type of experience more thoroughly with all the other experiences we share.

Bud Persiko

MADRAS (Cont'd from page 4)

community has a strong tendency, so the reports have exposed, to consider itself as "one caste among other castes." And what India does not need is another caste. Caste constricts, caste protects, caste excludes. The Gospel extends, the Gospel ventures, the Gospel embraces. The Gospel negates caste. Even if it should be shown (and it will have to be proved) in the years ahead that some principles underlying caste may be valid for India, caste cannot be affirmed without also being strongly negated.

The only meaningful proclamation of the Gospel in India will have to be done at the center of the struggle for human dignity. There is the real battleground for the Church in India. Undue preoccupation with its own domestic interests makes the Church seem merely peculiar. It can't afford that dubious luxury. The revolutionary upsurge of disinherited groups like the Harijans, the tribals and landless labor, the overdue widespread demand for decent wages (our waiters get 50 rupees a month--about \$7), human (not just better) living conditions, basic human rights, the bridging of the cavernous gulf between the rich and poor, the struggle for literacy and education, the cry for social and economic justice,--these are the ingredients for the struggle for dignity. And the Church knows that its place is in the center of it. Fussing over apostolic succession and confessional niceties will only seem at best like quaint parlor games to an Indian society which clamors for real help. Christ is active in the thick of this revolution with or without the Church. The Church realizes to use what is now an old chestnut that it must get where the action of Christ is in India.

"Only by conscious participation in this struggle," reports the Nasrapur Findings, "as an essential part of our response to Christ can we relevantly proclaim the Gospel." Such concerns call for the Church's urgent participation in every movement for human justice no matter who started it. If other religions or secular faiths are in the forefront of the organized struggle for human dignity, then Christian  
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MADRAS (Cont'd from p. 5)

cooperation and partnership is a necessity, - in the Name of Christ for the sake of men. And no special effort should be made in the process for feathering Christian nests or establishing Christian "pressure groups". That only feeds the tendency to turn into communal groups, fighting for their own rights and thus separating themselves even further from the rest of the community. Not that the Church must not constantly and critically re-examine the basis and the areas of cooperation. The Gospel is not synonymous with revolution. But suspicion or timidity about cooperation dare not weaken the intensity and sincerity of Christian partnership with others.

Laurence D. Folkemer

FORUM (Cont'd from page 1)  
life is not truly a student.

(2) My second remark is in the way of a suggestion. So far the Forum Committee has been, more or less, an ad hoc organization. This has resulted in a late start this year as well as last. To rectify this situation, the Student Association should make the Forum Committee a permanent committee, selected for the following years and composed of members from each class (to assure some continuity).

(3) Faculty Cooperation: Two things must be noted in connection with this aspect of the Forum. The first is that such cooperation is essential to the forum's existence. Not only is their participation the locus around which a particular evening is built but their participation in a more indirect capacity is also vital. This brings me to the second point. While much of the faculty has been extremely cooperative in a direct capacity (presentations and attendance), their efforts have lagged in the indirect capacity. This was especially true this past week. In past Forums, the attendance has fluctuated between 50 and 100 plus. Granting the fact that the topic "Christ- (Cont'd next col.)

FORUM (Cont'd from col. 1, this page)  
ianity or Religion" might not have been a real "comer," the attendance of about 40 was still quite disappointing. This poor response cannot be attributed solely to student disinterest (although this, of course, was a factor). The most important factor was undoubtedly the fact that all three classes had tests scheduled for the following day. Many other students, I am sure, would agree with this. This lack of cooperation on the indirect level by the faculty was every bit as disappointing as the attendance (if not more so). Assuming that the faculty recognizes the value of these informal discussions, their lack of support on this level is surprising. It is hoped that in the future their second form of cooperation may be commensurate with the former.

(4) Despite the poor attendance, last week's Forum was quite interesting, and in this sense a success. Most of us were fairly well acquainted with the positions of Drs. Hefner and Jordahl regarding the concept of religion, and the discussion revealed their own difficulty in overcoming the fact that it was but a rehashing of their past encounters. It was evident that familiarity on all sides had dulled the edges of this very significant issue. But Dr. Sponheim's commentary placed their discussion in a new light. In analyzing their arguments he employed a conceptual scheme which not only defined their positions but also made clear the problem inherent in them. I do not think I am overstating the case by saying that this commentary made the evening. In addition to seeing Hefner's and Jordahl's thoughts from a different perspective, Dr. Sponheim presented a third alternative. This became especially clear in the discussion concerning the problem of Evil. Hefner's monistic position must regard Evil as the great "undigestible surd," while Jordahl must accept the sovereignty of God by faith in the face of Evil which seems to deny it. Sponheim is admittedly a dualist and as such starts from the ontological reality of both. He sees both as valid elements of Reality. Evil is thus not the surd (Cont'd on page 7)

FORUM (Cont'd from page 6)A CHRISTMAS THOUGHT

which in some sense cannot be, but is. Nor is it a reality inconsequential when seen from the perspective of faith in God's sovereignty. It is rather a valid element of reality as is Good, and which, in some sense, threatens God and man. Sponheim's problem is, of course, how to assign priority to Good. In what sense can he proclaim God's victory?

This crass summary serves to point out the important fact that while we all assume some theological position, no position is without its problems. If Christianity does have something to say, how do we go about saying it? All three men have tried and all have in some way failed. What are the implications of this? Does the truth of Christianity hinge on some successful response?

\*As an added note, suggestions are most welcome as to future topics. Situational Ethics is one fairly frequent suggestion so far. What about it?

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Bob Pielke

About six years ago I had occasion to observe a Christmas Eve as celebrated by the Men's Ward in a large City Hospital. If you can't imagine what this is like, allow me to take you along for a brief trip. As Christmas and New Years approach, the senior nurses and doctors jockey around for work schedules which will afford them opportunity to be with relatives, friends, and loved ones. Therefore, there are usually just skeleton crews on duty.

The hospital volunteer workers pitch in at this point and decorate the ward with tinsel and possibly a small tree and then bid their adieu before Christmas Eve. You may see some families gathered about the bed of a more fortunate patient. More often than not however, the patients are poor negroes whose families would like to forget them or else may be working to keep the family going.

Whatever decorations are present, the atmosphere appears unlike Christmas. Those that moan are given a needle or simply left alone. Those that feel no pain but that of loneliness look at television or attempt to sleep through to another ordinary day. Their attitudes may range from melancholy to cynicism or a purposeful indifference.

The Church today is concerned with being relevant. It may in fact be looking for a rationale or credibility for existing. It is rightly rejecting what is superficial and phony for more meaningful expressions. The Church is looking away from complacency and middle class rigidified mores to challenging and vital issues and experiences. Into this crucible the spirited are invited to contend and rightfully so.

For those who have felt the loneliness and subtly depressing atmosphere of a hospital ward on Christmas and New Years Eve know a relevant meaning to the first words to the Old Testament Lesson for the Third Sunday in Advent from Isaiah:

"Comfort, comfort my people, says your God."

C. Pohlhaus