

# Table Talk

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

Vol. III No. 12

January 10, 1967

## REPORT FROM MADRAS

### Part Three

#### Indigenization:

The significant meeting of the Indian Church leaders in Nasrapur disclosed that no problem is more troubling to the Church than the problem of indigenization. How does the Gospel become God's own Good News to the Indian born, bred, shaped and attached to his own cultural heritage? Does the Gospel call him out of his culture? Does it make him a stranger and a suspect within it? Can he be Indian and Christian too? Is not being an "Indian" Christian a hard dialectical experience of both accepting and rejecting? And at what point do you say "yes" and "no," both for the Christian individual and the Community of Christians? One might argue that the same case could be made for Christians in Europe and America. But somehow it seems different here.

Certain things seem clear to the Indian Church. For one thing, the basis for indigenization is the "Lordship of Christ over the whole of life and the presence of Christ in all cultures." Indigenization means the mission of Christ and His Church as it relates to culture. The Church's task is to work responsibly for the transformation of cultural values--not a cultural blitz--in order that Indian history and life may be renewed in Christ. Whatever is of value there in the culture remains and is to be affirmed; whatever is inimical to the well-being of India must be transformed. And to know the mind of Christ is to have the power to distinguish the two. The art of that discrimination demands spiritual perception, sensitivity and compassionate understanding.

(Cont'd on page 3)

## Editorial

### DO WE HAVE A RULE OF FAITH?

During that day last month when seminarians from Mount St. Mary's were visiting us, one of them asked me a disturbing question. He wanted to know what the Protestants regard as their source of authority. Jere Hock and I began answering in terms of individual reason, the scriptures and the whole tradition of the Church, but our friend wasn't satisfied, and I have to confess that neither was I. Our conversation was interrupted never to be continued, but I have been struggling with this problem of authority ever since.

Recently I have come to feel this more urgently; I sense a certain chaos about our work and worship here at Gettysburg Seminary. We jump from one class to another, one forty minute seminar to the next, one point of view, option, hypothesis, theory, conviction, bias, set of facts, piece of information to another, but how much understanding or discipline have we gained? Every morning we have a different type of matins service, but worship does not seem to be a natural part of the rhythm of our lives. Vespers is more disciplined, more natural and vital for me, but it does not seem to hold the same place in the lives of most other seminarians on this campus. Why?

The point is that I don't like chaos and don't regard the Christian faith as a limitless series of options. I'm not looking for simple answers, but I am looking for guidance and discipline.

The juniors who are reading Death and Birth of the Parish: "In the Suburbs" by Roy Blumhorst this week have come across the following statements:

Christian faith is commitment to Jesus Christ...Christianity never intends to be an exercise.

(Cont'd on page 4)

FROM THE SPORT'S WORLD

With the start of the 1967 basketball campaign only hours away, I thought that it might be appropriate to pass on to you, the loyal followers of the Seminary Angels (?), some of the views which have been expressed by the various players of this season's team.

• • •  
"Portrait of a Team"

11-29 The coach had just explained to the team that they were going to have to go on a strict training schedule if they intended to win the trophy. This included two practices a week, in bed by 11:00, no smoking, no Pub Train, and above all no women. At this point all of the single players got up and left.

12-2 After a meeting of the league managers, it was announced to our team that things would be different this year. In order to comply with the strong feelings that were generated last year, a team will be given four downs to make a touch-down and the two-point conversion rule will go into effect in any game where both sides agree to take up a collection for the referees. It was also pointed out to the players that anyone caught washing their mouth out with soap prior to a game would be given a "balloon test" to determine if he did his pre-game warm-ups at Wolfe's. The team was also informed that the glinders which the whistle-jockies wore last year would not become a standard part of their equipment, if the two blonds which followed several of the players around during last season failed to show this year.

12-6 (A few passing comments at a practice session.)

Miller: "I'm starting to get tired; I think we ought to call it quits for tonight."

Rudy: "But we haven't finished lay-ups yet."

Little: "Hey Art, I'll flip you to see who runs down to the other basket this time."

(Cont'd next col., this page)

STAFF

Managing Editor - William Avery  
Senior Editor - Karl Pohlhaus  
Middler Editor - William Dreikorn  
Junior Editor - Harvey Weitzel  
Staff - Robert Fielke  
- Frederick Persiko  
Typist - Carol Avery  
Printer - Kirk Bish

SPORT'S WORLD (Cont'd)

Art: "O.K.; heads you win, tails I lose."

Ferra: "I know you're tired Stetler, but do I have to carry you piggy-back every-time there's a fast-break."

Latshaw to Dreikorn: "You think Rudy deserved an Academy Award for last year's acting job; just wait till his wife starts coming to watch him play."

Quail: "You are not the fastest fat-man on this floor!"

• • •

Yes fans, I think you will have to agree that this could be a season which could see many records broken, among them the one which is jointly held by myself and the seminary wives for arguing with the referees the most times in any given quarter of play.

In closing, remember this--being a minister may not be the best job in the world, but it takes four men to carry up all the money for our oen-hour appearance.

See you at the game.

Art Patterson

PICTURE OF THE WEEK

During the eight weeks of the archaeological dig at Deir Dibwan (biblical Ai), the non-national members of the staff naturally learned to know some of the Jordanians with whom they worked pretty well. This week's display shows one of them who spoke English well, was a respected member of his community and was friendly with the foreigners who employed him as an artist drawing pieces of broken old pottery.

He invited a Roman Catholic priest from Kentucky, also an artist, and me to a noonday dinner at his house. The meal was prodigious, having as a feature chicken prepared in two ways. While the festive eating was going on, the wife and children kept discreetly out of sight and made no noise, as is proper Arab manners.

Following the main meal the host served coffee in the drawing room. Then came the time for the guests to show their appreciation, by photographing the host and his children in various group combinations. (No, the lady of the house did not appear even to have her picture taken.) This climactic happening was especially enjoyed by the family because cameras are luxury items for Jordanians.

For his last picture, the host made a special request. He had, as you can see, donned his Friday best, including the customary white kaffayeh. Now he took his stand in front of his house and posed for a shot with some unusual and valuable equipment.

At the time there seemed to be no particular significance in this composition. In view of later and recent developments, however, it seems portentous that he was facing west, toward the border of Israel a few miles away, and had taken a stance that makes it appear as if he were defending his home.

Dr. Howard N. Bream

MADRAS (Cont'd from page 1)

Indigenization carries certain implications. Not only should the life of the Church sensitively "express the culture of the country in which it is rooted, but the Church should be able and prepared to communicate its message in a kind of language and in a form of action which is understandable in the context in which it lives. Here the Indian Church is continually embarrassed by the accusation of "foreignness." At times the accusation is political and unjustified. It betrays a not too subtle reactionism on the part of other religious groups. And, to me, it is rather refreshing at times to read editorials and letters to the editor, from non-Christian sources, exposing that kind of harassment and deceit.

Yet there remains over a "foreignness" which is embarrassingly justified. And the Church is quite aware of that. As in many other Asian countries, the Church of India is still a transplant of foreign patterns of structure, liturgy and theology where only to a small degree indigenous cultural forms and values have been incorporated. It becomes a stumbling block to evangelization, and many of the converts, particularly from Hinduism, find it difficult to adjust to the present form of the Church.

There are always pitfalls in the process of indigenization and one of the more serious ones is syncretism. We could write at length about that. This has been a perennial spectre to haunt if not bedevil the mission Church in the "other-religious" cultures. It is especially so of India and the Church must always be on guard against any such tendencies to emasculate the Gospel. Indian Christians recognize that in any process of indigenization there must be discernment of transformation of culture through the Gospel. On the other hand, there has often been such an unnecessary if not pathological fear of syncretism that the Church has been virtually paralyzed in its larger witness. One is almost tempted to say, in this regard, in the words of the adage, (Cont'd on page 4)

MADRAS (Cont'd from page 3)

"nothing ventured (risked) nothing gained. All this also affects theological education, and about that deo et tempore volente, we shall try to write in the next installment.

Lawrence D. Folkemer

---

RULE OF FAITH (Cont'd from page 1)

in religion aimed at providing peace of mind and satisfying man's inner needs...Nor is Christianity an exercise aimed at helping man make himself good. It writes that goal off as impossible. The Christian proclamation is that in Christ God became incarnate in the world, the real world. In the world He called men to Himself to rescue them from being natural enemies of God no matter how moral, or good, or secure they might feel. Christian faith is the positive response to that call...(pp. 108&109)

Statements like these have the sound of the gospel; they carry an authority I can respect. I long to see our lectures and seminars become opportunities for exploring such statements and applying them to our lives and the lives of those we will serve. I have the feeling in many of our classes that we are exploring other directions men have taken in Christian history and thought before we understand the core of the faith by which other directions can be judged. I'd like to see us develop a Rule of Faith on campus based on the gospel and the tradition which has brought the gospel to us through the ages. I get the feeling that our professors assume we have this Rule of Faith when most of us do not.

The fault lies with us as much as with our professors; however, in classes the professors determine the course of (Cont'd next col.)

RULE OF FAITH (Cont'd from last column)

Discussions and these discussions are the crucial points for such encounters with the faith. Too often we cut short or avoid a discussion on the meaning of death, the nature of human personality, the role of the Church in society, or the significance of Jesus' life, death and resurrection. Perhaps we need to appoint a student as an observer during our seminars to assist us in seeing where crucial issues have been avoided, questions have been ignored or students left outside a vital discussion. I'll make that my suggestion and conclusion for this article, but I'd like to hear what my professors and fellow students think about it.

Bud Persiko