

Table Talk

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

Vol. III No. 18

March 14, 1967

INTERN WIVES--FOR BETTER OR WORSE?

(Anne Siler, the writer of this article, is the wife of Intern Russell Siler who is spending this year at Faith Lutheran Church, Oxen Hill, Maryland.)

Well, here it is, time to be heading into the third quarter of another seminary year. And, many of you are faced with the prospect of spending a year away from the classroom, friends, and somewhat ordered life you've grown accustomed to during the past two years. There are probably many mixed emotions about it. Trying to be realistic, you look at the advantages internship offers but on the other hand, who wants to pack up and move just to have to turn around in a year and move back. What a drag.

So I thought some of you wives might like to hear from a presently interning seminarian's wife. Even if you are looking forward to it with much enthusiasm, you probably still have a few doubts and worries, for it is a step into the "unknown."

When my husband entered seminary, the intern year was not compulsory as it is now, and we had absolutely no intention of taking one. Our attitude was one of "it's probably good experience but why waste your time and take an extra year to get through seminary." Attitudes and ideas do change, and here we are and it's great--wouldn't change it for anything in the world! In fact, when we hear from friends who are getting ready for graduation and their own parishes, it's frightening. For if we weren't interning, we would be going out, too. Though I'm sure it'll still be an overwhelming experience next year, maybe not quite as much so with the help of an intern year.

(Cont'd on page 3)

An Intern Speaks

"On Learning Things"

(Our writer is Fred Krautwurst who is spending his intern year at the Lutheran Church of the Messiah, Decatur, Georgia.)

As an intern currently in the field, I suppose that I could be lengthly and dull in writing all about how internship is the greatest thing ever to come down the pike. Despite the fact that there would be a certain amount of truth in it, let me rather concentrate on just one part of internship--the things you learn.

One thing that an intern (or Vicar if you're in the south or midwest) quickly learns is that people sure do have problems. Sometimes you get to thinking that the "good, Christian people" have the worst problems! The brand new intern learns that the people in his congregation aren't terrible concerned about J, E, D and P; they could care less about Augustine; they are generally disinterested in a scholarly dissertation on the subtleties of agape, filios and eros; for them, their "ground of being" is a mortgaged plot in a subdivision. The important things lie in other areas.

Being "one of those who always goes on to enumerate," what about these people that I've come to know? The teen age girl who receives a black eye from her father; the 23 year old fellow who's dying of leukemia, has only a couple of weeks, tells the neophyte pastor to go to hell and take the church with him; the alcoholic; the mentally ill woman who denies she has a problem, and another woman who voluntarily commits herself for psychiatric help; the family that enjoys a quiet Christmas dinner and then watches in horror as their husband and father keels over with a fatal

(Cont'd on page 4)

C. P. E. VETERANS MEET

Friday afternoon, Feb. 10, found a group of seven seminarians all of whom are veterans of last summer's Clinical Pastoral Education program, piling into Professor Herb's station wagon bus and journeying to Downingtown, Pa. There, at the Philadelphia Y.M.C.A. camp, they participated in a joint conference and discussion of the summer's C.P.E. experience with their counterparts from the Philadelphia Seminary.

The conference was held under the auspices of the Board of Theological Education and served the purpose of providing feedback to the B.T.E. concerning the value of C.P.E. in theological education. The B.T.E. was represented by Dr. Ted Bachmann, Dr. Henry Cassler and the Rev. John Stump. The Philadelphia contingent of nine was led by Prof. David Koplín and the seven Gettysburgians by Prof. Don Herb.

Business was underway just after 3:00 P.M. on Friday afternoon and was completed by about 2:00 P.M. the following day. The entire group was divided into several sub-groups to discuss the general value of C.P.E., what place it ought to have in the seminary curriculum, and whether or not faculty members should be required to undergo the experience. A primary concern of the B.T.E. was should C.P.E. be required at all L.C.A. seminaries? Most of the members of the group saw their summer's experience as most meaningful. There were those who could see it as the center upon which the entire theological curriculum ought to be based. Many felt that quite a few faculty members are as much in need of a soul searching experience as are the students. There seemed to be general agreement that this would lead to a more open and mutually concerned atmosphere on the campus, one in which theological education could be far more meaningful.

At the concluding session informal summaries of what the members of the B.T.E. had understood from the discussions were presented. Questions and additions from the group were elicited. A ques-
(Cont'd next col.)

STAFF

Managing Editor - William Avery
Senior Editor - Karl Pohlhaus
Middler Editor - William Dreikorn
Junior Editor - Harvey Weitzel
Staff- Bob Pielke, Bud Persiko
Printer - Kirk Bish
Typist - Carol Avery

C. P. E. (Cont'd from col. 1 this page)

tionnaire concerning individual opinions and suggestions had been prepared during the conference and was now completed by each seminarian. Overall, the opinion seems to have been that the conference was valuable and may well become a regular event, at least for the next several years, until the program as now required by both Philadelphia and Gettysburg seminaries is firmly established. It was the conclusion of the B.T.E. representatives that, while C.P.E. is certainly of tremendous value, their recommendation to the board will be to allow each seminary to decide for itself whether to make C.P.E. a requirement.

Dan Hoy

Overheard recently in the coffee shop...

"I wish profs would grade more on 'grace' than on 'good works'."

A CHALLENGE TO TAKE CHRISTIANITY
AS SERIOUSLY AS OTHER THINGS

Although I am sure that Martin Luther was more sensible than Trudy Tiekken portrayed him last week in her response to the middler who had intellectual difficulties with the Christian faith, I am not so sure many of today's Pastors and seminarians are. Whatever our revered reformer may have meant by "Faith...greater than learning" the spirit of anti-intellectualism appears to have gained the day in the contemporary Church. What I mean by this is that despite men like Pike within the Church and other without it, we have failed to take seriously the demand for clear, logical thinking and for empirical observation. Any statement which makes assertions based ultimately on pure speculation with no regard for confirmation, at least in part, by sense perception is not even worthy to be entertained by any sensible person. No statement--no, not even a statement of faith--can have meaning if it is completely divorced from knowledge which is rooted in sense experience.

What happens then when we are confronted with religious statements whose structure and form are identical to statements which we encounter apart from religion, but which we reject? Certainly much of the present difficulty arises from misunderstandings concerning language itself. From a purely logical viewpoint, the Incarnation which "speaks of God as fully man and fully God" is a contradiction in terms if God and man are not considered identical (which clearly they are not in the traditional Christian interpretation). If such statements of doctrine are not logical, then what are they? Are they poetical, analogical, metaphorical, mystical, or what? Obviously if they are not logical the theologian or Pastor (I assume these terms are not always identical) must be able to defend his use of language as legitimate. It appears that solid objections could be raised against expounding doctrine in non-logical or non-rational terms and expressions precisely because it is (Cont'd next col.)

CHALLENGE... (Cont'd from col. 1)

doctrine that must be communicated to others.

In addition, serious problems arise when the Pastor, seminarian, or layman is so unconditionally committed to his particular formulation of the Christian faith that he is unable to allow that it be considered false or meaningless, even from the perspective of another use of language. Perhaps there are many aspects of man's involvement in the world that cannot be adequately expressed without a myriad of linguistic expressions and feelings which do not lend themselves to logical interpretation. Be this as it may, we ought not pass lightly over attempts in our day to reformulate theology on a basis which is understood by the majority. My challenge is to take Christianity as seriously as you take other things in your life. If you are presented with an idea which pretends to be logical, but turns out not to be, you reject that idea from the standpoint of logic. Similarly with empirical investigation. By the same token, we ought to be brave enough to reject Church doctrine which clearly contradicts itself and destroys the ground on which it claims to stand.

Philip E. Howard

INTERWIVES.. (Cont'd from page 1)

We're "stationed" in a Maryland suburb of Washington, D.C. Washington is my home and I was happy to be in the area. Even so, I thought I'd go "stir-crazy" last summer. Russell was busy, and how long does it take to clean and do laundry for two people? However, if I'd had a little more initiative I'm sure I could have rounded up three more people to play bridge or found someone to go shopping or sightseeing. But this lack of something to do didn't last long.

School started and I went to face my class of third graders. This seemed to be a never ending job. (For many reasons it (Cont'd on page 4)

INTERN WIVES.. (Cont'd from page 3)

was much harder for me to teach third graders here than it was in Gettysburg.) And the church was moving full speed ahead after the summer vacationers returned. Though I haven't volunteered for any regular type of job in the church, and I must say I haven't been pressured to at all, I find that there is always something going on, a telephone call to be made or someplace to go.

I suppose one of the best things about interning is the people of the church. They are absolutely great! You just can't believe that people can be so very nice and really have the interest of the church at heart, always ready to pitch in and help. This is something for which I am really thankful. Often at seminary when we so often become upset over petty things (and I say we, for I am one of the greatest offenders) I wondered what in the world people in the congregations would be like, if the pastors and their wives were going to be such complainers. I was glad to see that the people of the congregation are much better than I expected.

In our situation there are also some material things that I certainly do like--particularly our apartment. It's brand new and has many modern conveniences, but the one we appreciate most is the shower. In Gettysburg, we didn't have one. (We lived in town).

The hardest part for me has been getting used to Russell's hours. They are certainly strange for a person like me who has been used to regular hours five days a week. Some nights he's home, but many he isn't. Then on the weekends when I'm free, he isn't. Some days it seems like you only have time to say "Good Morning" and "Good Night". So I guess I shouldn't begrudge him the mornings he drops me off at school on his way to the golf course. He usually deserves the break.

Of course, there have been days when it seems like a rat race, but I can honestly say there has never been one moment when I've even thought that we shouldn't (Con't next col.)

INTERN WIVES.. (From col. 1 this page)

have come. So far it's been a wonderful year. And, though we're looking forward to returning to Gettysburg next fall, it's going to be difficult to leave our intern year and the many friends here. Hope your intern year is as enjoyable and enriching.

Anne Siler

AN INTERN SPEAKS..

heart attack; the married man who's having an affair with a young lady in the congregation, and he's on the church council. They're true--and the list goes on.

What do you do, Vicar? Run to the bookshelf and find a book--an book--that tells you what to do. Dammit! I don't have any such book. Vicar you're on your own!

And by the way, Vicar, there are a couple other things. When you hit here you thought you were a pretty capable guy--you knew a lot--you were worldly wise; you had two whole years of seminary under your belt. Oh boy! That first faux pas! But your pastor-supervisor is there to bail you out if you can't extricate yourself. The frustration is there. The joys are there. The plaudits are there. The brickbats are there. And you are there, getting more and more humble as the days pass, learning more and more, doing more and more, loving the parish ministry more and more, and occasionally allowing yourself the luxury of hating it, too.

You're doing some of the darndest things. You sure do look funny with all that ink on you after fighting an evenly matched battle of wits with the mimeograph machine. You're tired of ringing doorbells that are never answered. You're bowled over when a Luther Leaguer brings his new girlfriend by your apartment for approval." You're scared to death as you begin to talk--the speaker at an assembly at the high school; that's a tough crowd to keep interested in a speech (Cont'd on page 5)

AN INTERN SPEAKS.. (Cont'd from page 5)

at an assembly! You feel a little bitter as you don your dungarees and spend a Saturday afternoon cleaning out the supply room: "No wonder you can't find anything in here; those idiot teachers never put anything back where it belongs! You're almost speechless when a teenager asks if you'd like to go down to the local billiard club and shoot a few games of pool with him, and you don't feel too bad about being beat. You die a thousand deaths as you shake hands after church and a P.H.D., a professor at Georgia Tech, tells you that "...your sermon was too damn long!" Then his wife eases the pain by confiding that it was the first Sunday in several weeks that her husband hadn't dozed off during the sermon.

And so the story goes, day by day, week by week. There's never a dull moment because you never can predict what will happen next. Then, after 6 months or so, you suddenly realize that you've changed some. You're not the same guy that drove in the driveway last September. You've developed an attachment to the congregation, a fondness and respect for your pastor, a good deal of filios (there's that word) in regard to the young people with whom you work. But perhaps most of all, you've taken a good, long hard look at yourself. Some of the things you've seen in yourself make you want to throw up; other things give you a certain feeling of satisfaction and accomplishment.

Lo, and behold! It suddenly dawns on you. It's about all those Sunday School classes, Weekday Church School classes, confirmation classes, your pastoral ministry and your sermons. Why, good grief! Good old J, E, D and P have been there, so have Augustine and Luther, so have agape and the others, so have Hefner, Bream, Myers, Wilken, Heim, Hale, Sheneman, Stroup, Heikkinen, Stuempfle, Jordahl, Clippinger, Gritsch and others. Yes, Vicar, they're all around you. They've all been a part of the care and
(Cont'd next col.)

feeding of the seminarian who'd now an intern.

You hadn't realized just how big a part, had you? You sure do learn a lot of things on internship! And before you finish, Vicar, there's one last thing. What have you learned about the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Have you learned that you find it in strange places? Have you learned that it isn't always welcome? Have you learned that it undergirds everything else you do and have learned up to now?

And with tongue in cheek, but nonetheless with all sincerity, the Vicar answered: "Precisely."

Fred Krautwurst