

Table Talk

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MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM THE EDITOR AND STAFF OF TABLE TALK

A Response to the open letter in Table Talk,
Oct. 23.

The point in question which Seminarian Howard raises is one that, I am sure, has concerned each one of us at one time or another. I do not think it an exaggeration to state that it is indeed a relevant issue in this 20th Century, not only for the Faith, Life, and Order of the members of the Lutheran Church, but also for all Christians involved in the present and future ecumenical movement. I can understand Seminarian Howard's "concern" in this matter, I admire his successful attempt to clearly lay out this concern in all its parts, but I cannot agree with many of the (premature) conclusions at which he arrives in the article in question.

It seems to me that underlying this entire issue is one's understanding as to the function of a pastor in the context of his congregation. What is his place in the Body of Christ? What is his function in the parish community? Closely connected with this is the question of the meaning of the Eucharist. What, in fact, is this act? What does it "mean" for the Christian who is part of the worshipping community? What significance has it for the Christian in this existence? One must resolve these questions, and then speak from that understanding. If I interpret it correctly, it is essentially around these two points: the doctrine of ministry; and the meaning of the Eucharist, that the LCA statement speaks. It is from the LCA understanding of these two doctrines that that definitive statement was issued.

There is a prayer in the LCA service of Ordination that reads thusly: "... be ye mindful of the Holy office to which ye are called, having always in your hearts how great a treasure is committed to your charge. For the flock over which the Holy Ghost
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LIVE THEATRE COMES TO SEMINARY

Contrary to all rumor, the title of the first Chancel Player production has not been changed from THE AMERICAN DREAM to THE IMPOSSIBLE DREAM!

... nor is "the Ogar from the Black Lagoon" directing or taking ten tranquilizers a day. Actually it is only kindly Tom George (who would never say a harsh word to anyone) at the helm as director, and is only downing six tranquilizers a day. Would you believe four?

The above is just to point out that while the general seminary community has been leisurely basking in the rewards of the past semester, the Chancel Players have been busily preparing their first presentation.

THE AMERICAN DREAM by Edward Albee will be given on December 13, at 7 30 P.M. in the Aberly Room.

An All-starr cast has been selected for the play, which is a venture into the absurd and symbolic.

Come see Rick "Snake" Barley slither through his role of the docile Daddy. Come see Joanne Hunsinger 'nag' docile Daddy as the obnoxious Mommy. Come see Dick Little flex his muscles as the AMERICAN DREAM-BOAT! Come see Batty Hackmann in her slip!

We guarantee an unforgettable experience.

P.S. Yes, Virginia it's true, Grandma is played by Saint Foxie.

Sharon Beckhardt

Response (Cont'd)

doth make you overseers is made up of the sheep of Christ, which he hath purchased with his blood. Never cease your labor and diligence to bring those committed to your charge to the faith and knowledge of God, and to the fullness of life in Christ." This leads us to the words "special status" used in the Manuel of Information, and in Seminarian Howard's article. They are unfortunate, but not nearly as threatening as Seminarian Howard would lead us to believe. The above-quoted prayer gives us an insight into the LCA's understanding of the special function of the pastor: he is to "bring those committed to your charge to the faith and knowledge of God, and to the fullness of life in Christ". This is his special status. It is not a statement of quality, it is not a value-judgement, it is simply a fact of reality. A seminarian's special status is to diligently study for his vocation of the ministry, a church custodian is to tend the grounds of the church's physical plant, a widow gives herself for the work of Christ in the world, a mother raises her children to live their Baptism in their environment, in the midst of their peers, and so they all have their special status. Eligibility really has nothing to do with it. Each has his place in the Body of Christ. The pastor is the shepherd of his parish. Through him, on the Lord's day, the people symbolically celebrate their liturgy. As part of his function he presides at the Eucharist as sort of a "head of the family". The Eucharist, among other things, is an intimate gathering of the community of Christ. It is a fellowship among brothers in the faith. It is a corporate, mutual recalling of our Lord's sacrifice on Calvary, it is the receiving of his presence and grace in the elements, and by the same token it is the communal offering of that corporate family of their lives in service for the Risen Lord. It is a very corporate act that is performed, and you might say it is not a place for strangers. The pastor as a "symbolic" head of that family, as shepherd of that flock, ordained and acknowledged by the Church carries forth his function as celebrant and preacher. As teacher, preacher, bro-

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COME TO MIDDLE EARTH!

How sweet it is to escape! Far from the world of academia, theology, liturgy and the Pentagon lives a delightful little fellow named Bilbo Baggins. In many ways Bilbo isn't too different from many seminarians. Bilbo admittedly likes peace and quiet, comfortable clothes, bright colors, laughter, food, drink, parties and the giving and receiving of presents. He's also inclined toward chubbiness, has a suspicion of machines and rarely wears shoes.

Bilbo Baggins, the Hobbit, is the creation of J.R.R. Tolkien. In 1959 Tolkien retired from the faculty of Pembroke College, Oxford, where he was Merton Professor of English Language and Literature. His personal literary achievements have laid dormant for nearly 30 years, but are now receiving critical acclaim in the United States.

Bilbo the Hobbit, Thorin Oakenshield King of the Dwarves, plus scads of other delightful (and some not so delightful) creatures inhabit Middle-earth. It's a Camelot-ish sort of place, imperishable and fantastic -- a world of its very own.

Middle-earth is the setting of Tolkien's major achievement. The Lord of The Rings of Trilogy, of which The Hobbit is the prelude. It's adult fantasy, escape literature of the highest order. Like Beowulf only better. Tolkien liberally mixes a rich imagination with allegory, satire, bitterness, humor and an engrossing style of third person narrative.

At various points Professor Tolkien manages to flatter, stab and comfort his readers, while at the same time carrying them through the world of the "little ones" with stark realism.

Our Hero, Bilbo Baggins, is jarred from his Walter Mitty sort of life into real adventure. In this introductory volume he becomes the possessor of the One Ring of Power, which is the central force holding

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Response (Cont'd)

ther and pastor of that congregation, one in and with, but not above them, he performs his unique part in that Body as one of the people of God. In this sense he is above no one.

The question of a seminarian serving as supply-preacher is one that is very interesting. Admittedly there are an over abundance of small parishes waiting to be edified by the theological 'savants' of Gettysburg. Yet in all my experience as a supply preacher I can not name one example of a parish in which I distinctly felt at home. This of course was due, in no small part to my preaching which left much to be desired, but I felt very much like a stranger, which of course, I was! I could not talk, much less preach to those people, for I had little knowledge of their needs, or response to the Gospel. In this sense the supply program is, and will always be, a failure. In reality a supply preacher is nothing more than an interim figure in between pastors.

In conclusion then, barring much catholic Church tradition, practice, and order (which I suspect Seminarian Howard is not overly sensitive to) I suppose one could say a layman could celebrate the Eucharist. My question is, then, why would a seminarian or layman want to preside at the Eucharist? What would he or the congregation gain from that act? Would it really be for the benefit of the parish? Both layman and seminarian have their special functions and talents. One to witness to our Lord in the world by proclamation of the Gospel at work, or in the home the other to study in preparation for his calling to the Holy Ministry. All on one value-scale (if we must use that term). All for the same purpose.

I might say, Seminarian Howard, that all our troubles in this area would indeed be solved if the Eucharist were in reality, as you so earnestly put it, "words printed in the Service Book and Hymnal." It is of course much more than that, which I am sure you are aware of, If this would have been the case there would not have had to be the introspection of one's intellect, but neither, then, would there have been your article.

Seminarian S.F. Yelovich
Intern, Phoenix, Arizona

MIDDLE-EARTH (Cont'd)

together the volumes of the Trilogy: The Fellowship of the Ring, The Two Towers and The Return of the King.

Bilbo and all the rest of Tolkien's creations are painfully believable as they wrestle with the Ring and its marvels and its problems. From the maniac Goblins to the bloodthirsty Giant Spiders to Smaug The Terrible the reader travels in a world which is both wonderful and terrible, rational and wacky, but always exciting.

The Hobbit and The Trilogy following from it are for adult readers who aren't so sophisticated as not to believe in the world of fantasy. Bilbo Baggins - Tolkien's alter ego - compels us to follow him from his Hobbit Hole in the Shire, through eerie Mirkwood to Lonely Mountain; all mystic and exciting places.

One can read a lot of things into the adventure, or just read the adventure, or perhaps some of both. Middle-earth may not be many things, but it's definitely not silly or childish. It is pleasure, comfort, fantasy and escape. Someone has even said that it takes courage to read Tolkien.

THE HOBBIT, J.R.R. Tolkien, Ballantine Books. New York, paper, 95¢

Fred Krautwurst

FOOTBALL ENDS: PING PONG, BASKETBALL
MARK WINTER SPORTS PROGRAM

After an almost unbelievable football season ended with the Middlers still clinging to first place by virtue of their three victories and five ties, the gridiron All-Star squad prepared for the invasion from Philadelphia on November 10. In the meantime, a group of disenchanted 'Rejects' decided to get together and give the AllStars something to practice against. Despite an outstanding first half effort, the Rejects were unable to keep up the pace in the second 30 minutes as the All Stars went on to win 24-6.

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Unfortunately, the Gettysburg squad did not fare so well against the Mt. Airy men despite a warm, sunny afternoon and fairly good playing field conditions. The visitors tallied three touchdowns and a safety in rolling up a 20-0 triumph.

Nevertheless, the sports scene which has been lying dormant since last month awoke with new vigor after the Thanksgiving vacation. Most of the first round matches and several of the matches in the second round of the Ping Pong Tournament have already been played. Paul Jones has advanced to the quarter finals already by defeating Dale Wenzelburger in a close 3-2 match and Jack Keeler, 3-1.

(Cont'd next column)

Last Wednesday the Seminary basketball team held its first official practice. The team will be entering the Gettysburg Community basketball league and a meeting of the member teams was held Monday evening to establish a schedule. The games will be played on Monday and Thursday evenings at the junior high gymnasium.

Eight men turned out Wednesday for a rigorous session of drills and full court practice. At present Jim Bricker is the lone senior to make an appearance at practices while the returning Middlers from last year include Jack Ferra, Dick Little, Pod Shearer, and Charlie Stetler who is also coaching the squad. Some of the promising Juniors include Rich Barley, Roger "Junior" Baraes, Jack Keeler, and Dave Ungerman. Several other men have also indicated their intensions to play.

From all indications it looks like an interesting sports season is just beginning -- at least this time, there won't be any ties!!!!

Charlie Stetler