

Table Talk

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

Vol. V No. 18

SPECIAL SEMINARY WEEK ISSUE

April 29, 1969

"The America of the Inaugural"

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Reprinted from Dialog, Vol. 8, Spring 1969
pp. 84-85

In whatever other ways Richard Nixon may be new, his inaugural proved him the same theologian who in older days said John Kennedy's Catholicism was no drawback, so long as he believed "in something." America's state God is clearly not dead, and his church has suffered no Vatican II: On January 20 it celebrated its most magnificent ceremony yet. Metropolitan Billy Graham introduced God to the enthroned, who himself then preached the sermon, having sworn literally on a stack of Bibles.

There was the Vatican choir from Utah; an endless liturgical procession distinguished especially by its nubile acolytes, with their batons and glittering vestments; and the high point of "Climb Every Mountain" sung by an operatic soprano with symphony accompaniment. There were even appropriate ecumenical gestures: prelates from rival churches shared the chancel and priestly functions with Billy - though there is some suspicion that, in pre-Vatican II style, they were chosen for their crypto-Americanism. Nor was this a mere one-time liturgical bash: offices of the same rite will continue at the palace.

Radical Christians and other dissenters from this state church should, one thinks, worry. For one thing, there is always the possibility of persecution. But it is for the nation that we should be most fearful, for the rigid creedal orthodoxy and triumphalism of the occasion cast considerable doubt on the much-heralded ideological neutrality and technocratism

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APATHY -- DEATH?

The axe I wish to grind concerns Chapel services - the quick, easily-prepared, formalistic, even monotonous, or what-have-you type where Matins is merely read. At times this year the manner in which it has been done borders on a defiance or "couldn't-care-less" attitude. However, even when this attitude is not evident, merely doing the Matins service (a tone that was set at the first Chapel services this school year) presents the possible attitude: "It is my turn to conduct Chapel; it is a nuisance; it is a bore; I suppose I have to do something; how little can I get away with? I'll be pleased when it is all over." To me, not only is it an insult to have to sit through this, it is flagrant disrespect for the whole meaning of Chapel, especially when it is done as a despicable chore.

It takes time to prepare a "thought on the lesson" or a short homily; it takes concern and reflection to present the set forms of the liturgy meaningfully and reverently; it takes time to conduct a Chapel service. If an individual is not concerned enough to prepare the Chapel service (this could be very real for many who really only attend Chapel when they lead it, God bless them!) and do it with the dignity and respect it deserves (and those who attend deserve) then let him be a gentleman and turn in this privilege to someone who cares. Practical experience is highly prized by some members of this community.

In Chapel, students leading have a privilege to stand up and say a few words, to speak the Word of God in a new way, to express some relevant thoughts for today. To profess "I can't give a

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The America of the Inaugural
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of the Nixon administration. Perhaps, of course, the inaugural and post-inaugural self-presentations of the new administration mean nothing. But perhaps they do - and what then? Nixon's men will be, no doubt, as pragmatic as one could wish, within the wide limits set by the creed of Americanism. This is no major accomplishment: the boards of every denomination are efficient and pragmatic so long as the effective creed of the denomination is not challenged. But when that is challenged, they react unpredictably and self-destructively. The creed of American state religion is now challenged at home and internationally; the administration's self-presentation as the board of American religion suggests we shall have to watch for just such outbursts.

Many who in the '50's warned of the dangers of civic religion have been saying we have moved to other problems. It is now clear they have been premature: the '50's are back with us. There has been talk of America having outgrown its political moralism and ideological evangelicalism, and now, if anything, being in danger of disillusion. But this misreads the case altogether. It was never so that we acted ideologically instead of acting pragmatically. We have always played power politics and known that we were doing so. The problem was that we politicked for our interests, and then identified them with the interests of God. And there is no sign whatever that we have gotten over this. On the contrary, it was exactly this faith which won the November election, and has been celebrating its triumph since.

This faith poses two dangers. First, if decisions of interest are identified with obedience to the will of God, it becomes too difficult to change them. A mere mistake in identifying national interest, or a changed interest, can be acknowledged and rectified, even if with difficulty. But divine decrees are irreformable. Second, however hard-

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MERGE - A NEW SEMINARY
(reprinted from TT, Vol. V, No. 17)

The questionnaires concerning seminary merger with Mt. Airy have been tabulated. What follows is a brief summary of the results. 70% were returned making the survey a valid indicator of student opinion.

Concerning merger, 46% said YES while 54% said NO.

If a new merged seminary results:

Location in order of preference:

- Gettysburg
- Washington, D.C.
- Baltimore
- Philadelphia

Proximity to a university:

- very important 11 %
- somewhat important 50 %
- not important 39 %

Co-location with other seminaries:

- very important 34 %
- somewhat important 46 %
- not important 20 %

Co-location with Roman Catholic seminary:

- very important 30 %
- somewhat important 46 %
- not important 14 %

Location in the inner-city:

- very important 8 %
- somewhat important 40 %
- not important 53 %

A clear majority of the students think that a seminary cluster including protestants and Roman Catholics located near a university is important. Location in the inner-city is rejected by more than 50%. It might be helpful if the JC and the AATS stated specifically what they mean by the inner-city.

Should the faculty live on or near the campus:

- very desirable 69 %
- somewhat desirable 23 %
- not necessarily des. 9 %

Faculty and Board, take notice!

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CELIBACY IN THE LUTHERAN CHURCH?

After taking a poll here at the seminary on the question of celibacy, I was asked to share the results with the community. The question was, "For a moment disregard your marriage, engagement, etc. If the Lutheran Church practiced celibacy, would you be a seminarian today? Why?" 57% of the questionnaires were returned. Of these, 80% answered "No," 15% "Yes," 2.5% "Yes" because non-Lutheran, and 2.5% refused to disregard their marriage. Those answering "No" were mostly concerned about fulfilling their natural human longings. To quote some remarks - "Marriage gives a complete perspective on life." "From my own experience there is a deep loneliness in a man that, no matter how close and dear his male friends are, cannot be driven away except by that kind of love which a woman can give. Maybe some men can live without it - I can't." "Needed to understand and counsel marital partners." "Depth of commitment cannot be measured by external conditions." "The church is a part of the world as it exists." "Church has no jurisdiction over my marital status."

Of the "Yes" answers - "I would have been brought up in that frame of mind." "I would change denomination rather than let a church doctrine prevent me from marriage." "Guidance of the Holy Spirit over-powers." "I love the Church... If I thought even now that celibacy would help my ministry I would take it up."

While conducting this poll, I was constantly asked how I would answer the question, so here goes. For me, marriage can be surpassed by nothing else. I feel I've been called to both vocations - a Director of Christian Education and a wife. However, my earliest call was to be a wife. Since this call did come first, nothing will stand in its way - even a D.C.E. vocation. I do not feel that this is going against God or my faith in God, because I feel God leads me in all I do. This doesn't mean I'm putting one vocation aside for the other. In order for me to be a complete individual - to

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Apathy - Death?

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homily or sermon" must surely be a rare exception for a seminarian! With a little honest reflection, it seems to me, an answer more truthfully would be "I am not willing to spend the time that it takes to prepare an address..."

Vespers was discontinued earlier this school year and apathy plus a form of monotony had something to do with its "death." The same thing can happen to Chapel... but need it?

Paul R. Gerschwitz

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Celibacy in the Lutheran Church?

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truly understand life - I must be married. It's only with this understanding that I can fully help others. (How can I teach "Good Marital Relations" without the experience?) Besides all this, my "burning" (St. Paul) hinders my ability to be concerned about a Christian vocation. I've always lost all lack of ability to be "pleasing to God." In other words, I only exist until I can share that love as God ordained between a man and a woman. However, this does not mean I'm at seminary to find a husband as many people often think. Until my main goal of life (marriage) is fulfilled, I must strive to reach the next goal (a D.C.E.).

Peryl Miller

Merge - A New Seminary

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Married student apartments: how many should the seminary provide?

all	17%
majority	65%
some	17%
none	1%

Location of married students apartments on campus:

very important	61%
somewhat important	27%
not important	12%

Single student dorms: how many should the seminary provide?

all	47%
majority	38%
some	13%
none	2%

Location of single student dorms on campus:

very important	67%
somewhat important	23%
not important	10%

Both married and single students think that a majority of their living facilities should be provided on campus by the seminary.

If the seminary had to be built in phases:

first phase: library
single dorms
classrooms

second phase: married apartments
refectory
faculty offices
admin. offices
Chapel

third phase: faculty apartments
auditorium
lounges
recreational facilities

Priority you as a parish pastor would give a request for funds to build a new seminary:

high priority	28%
average priority	55%
low priority	17%

On Monday, April 21, seven students from the seminary traveled to Bloomsburg State Teachers' College to attend an open Conference on Black History. Generally, the seminarians attending did not find the conference informative or helpful in any major way. Several observations are worth noting: first, the discussion dealt almost entirely with generalizations which were shallow and possibly misunderstood and misused; second, the obvious aim of the conference: a broad perspective of the 'Afro-American(and his history, lacked precision and did not cover major issues; and finally, since the day was split into many sessions meeting at the same time, the interrelatedness of the topics was merely implicit in the structure of the conference.

Of course, the day was not a total loss! As a sarcastic note, we learned how 'not' to conduct a Conference on Black History. But, in addition, there were bright spots in the sessions which we attended. The following are our observations on the content and worth of some of these sessions:

The first session of the colloquy was an historical investigation into slavery. ("The Social Cost of Slavery: An Assessment") Among the discernable facts that Professor Turner of Bloomsburg State College mentioned in his lecture were the following: 1) the white American community does not understand the origins of slavery and the complexities of black history; 2) an integral part of American history is both overt and covert racism and; 3) it is a documented fact that the caste system and white supremacy have been and are realities.

During the succeeding discussions, Professor Newton of Bloomsburg made the following statement that historically, European cultures realize their superiority at the expense of all minorities (that which is different) like the Blacks. Whites have been conditioned to accept a division of

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FACE OF POVERTY

No one can communicate to you
 The substance of poverty-
 Can tell you either the shape,
 or depth,
 or breadth
 Of Poverty
 Until you have lived with her intimately
 No one can guide your fingers
 Over the rims of her eye sockets,
 Over her hollow cheeks-
 Until perhaps one day
 In your wife's pretty face
 You see the lines of poverty;
 Until you feel
 In her now skinny body,
 The protruding bones,
 The barely covered ribs,
 The shrunken breasts of poverty.

Poverty can be a stranger
 In a far-off land;
 An alien face
 Briefly glimpsed in a newsreel
 An empty rice bowl
 In a skinny brown hand,
 Until one bleak day
 You look out the window-
 And poverty is the squatter
 In your own back yard.
 Poverty wails in the night for milk,
 Not knowing the price of a quart.
 It is desparation in your teenager's face
 Wanting a new evening gown for the
 junior prom,
 After going through school in rummage
 store clothes.
 It is a glass of forgetfulness sold
 over the bar.

And poverty's voice is a jeer in the
 night-
 "You may bring another child
 Into the rat race that is your life;
 You may cut down on food
 To buy contraceptives,
 You may see your wife wa_k alone
 To a reluctant appointment
 With an unsterile knife-
 Or you may sleep alone."
 And one morning shaving
 You look in the mirror-
 And never again will poverty be alien.

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Face of Poverty

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For the face of poverty is not over
 your shoulder.
 The face of poverty is your own.
 And hearing the break in your wife's voice
 At the end of a bed time story,
 You realize that somewhere along the way
 The stock-ending in your own story went
 wrong.

And now you no longer ask
 That you and your wife
 Will live happily ever after
 But simply that you
 And your children
 Will live.

-Author unknown-

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The American of the Inaugural
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headedly we may recognize that necessary
 defense of national interest will
 always compel nations to do intrinsically
 horrible things, humanity still
 insists there are horrors justifiable
 by no national interest whatever. Thus
 the National Socialists' final solu-
 tion to the - for them, very genuine -
 problem of the Jews is universally
 condemned. But where it is decided
 in advance that what is good for
 America is good for God, it is no
 longer possible to detect when we have
 passed the line. America has already
 fallen to both these dangers in South-
 east Asia, and, after the inaugural,
 it may be predicted that three years
 from now we will still be entangled
 there. We can only hope these de-
 dicated laymen of Americanism get us
 into nothing worse.

The danger is not only in our
 external reactions. A notable feature
 of the inaugural was its denomina-
 tional exclusivism: the blacks, the
 academic community, dissenting theolo-
 gians, the artistic community, were
 just missing. It is not mere snobbery
 to note the unmixed philistinism of the
 occasion's style. The point is not

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Colloquy at Bloomsburg

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superior and inferior; a psychological response that is dangerous. An additional danger is the assumption that Black history in America represents a Black people without recognizing the individuality of Black peoples. For example, is there possible a generalization of slavery that excludes the Nat Turners? A one dimensional history of the Black peoples dehumanizes and distorts history.

Finally there was a discussion of the church and its role in the history of slavery. In Latin America, the church's influence was more positive because the church respects the Black people as human beings - human beings for salvation. Slavery in Latin America did not separate the family unit. The North American church has always been regimented via denominationalism. Without a unified strength, each church reflected its location and membership. As a result, the church "gave way" to the profitability of slave traffic and labor. While it would baptize Blacks, the church continued to recognize the inferiority of Blacks. Baptism - for the church as it reflected society - in no way changed the Black peoples lives in this world.

TREATMENT OF THE AFRO-AMERICAN IN SECONDARY TEXTBOOKS was the title of the lecture delivered by Professor Anthony Sylvester of the Bloomsburg faculty. The Afro-American has not existed in our text books. He has been an "invisible man." In most history books there are one or two paragraphs devoted to the Negro who sings while he works and is grateful to his white master. The image is of "Little Black Sambo." The black man who is child-like, passive and who loves the whites more than himself. The situation is changing, however. New history texts are including more history of the Afro-American. Unfortunately, the result is a "Ghetto History." A chapter devoted to Negro history is sandwiched between chapters 19 and 20

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Colloquy at Bloomsburg

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with no integration throughout the text. Entire new histories must be written. We cannot really know American history without knowing Afro-Americans as a group with a particular history. There is a great need to train people in college in Afro-American history. If the teachers do not change, there will be no improvement.

THE EFFECTS OF THE SLAVE TRADE ON AFRICA was the lecture by Professor Iheanacho Nwokorie who is a Biafran. Africa had a rich past including highly sophisticated nations before the advent of Europeans and the beginning of the slave trade with the West. It was the white European who marked the destruction of all that Africa had become. Before the white westerner arrived, the leaders of the tribes and nations were concerned about the welfare of their people. However, the slave trade turned the leaders against their people. At the beginning the tribal leaders were anxious to conquer neighboring tribes and to sell them to the traders for such items as iron. Beginning in 1518 three centuries of slave exportation robbed Africa of 50 million of her best people. Not just anyone was bought. Only the best physically fit young were sold into slavery. Social systems were destroyed as tribes killed one another or sold each other to the westerners. The entire monetary system was based on slave trade. Slave trade having ended, the Westerner decided that he would "rescue the Africans from their plight" by dividing the continent into states controlled by Western nations. Obviously this was to exploit these nations even more. It is only now that the Africans are being freed from the bonds of white Europe which shackled her centuries ago. All is not well, however. Nwokorie, speaking about his home land, stated that there would probably not be a war in Nigeria with the Biafrans if Prime Minister Wilson

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had not intervened. Biafrans are a distinct people apart from the Nigerians. The Nigerians massacred a group of Biafrans, leading Biafra to desire independence. Nigeria would have been content to let Biafra exist as an independent nation. Wilson, however, offered support and encouragement to Nigeria to keep the two groups of people in one nation. Wilson's attitude and actions are typical of the Western Christian mentality toward Africa, according to Nwokarie. Africa's struggle with the West continues.

BLACK HISTORY IN THE SCHOOLS: A PRACTICAL APPLICATION was the theme of the fourth session. Performed by several black students from Vaux Junior High School near Philadelphia, the presentation had as its aim to dramatize the history of the Black man - from his African cultural setting to American slavery with its influence and finally to the present situation. Begun with a few African dances performed in the native costumes, the presentation then included several Negro spirituals (and all that they convey about slavery, the underground railroad, the old south, etc.) and finally some interpretations of what this particular culture means to the Afro-American and to the white Anglo-Saxon.

Needless to say, this particular session far surpassed the other events of the day in the fact that the performers were not Bloomsburg faculty, but Junior High students who had studied, practiced, interpreted, understood, lived and enjoyed what it means to be Afro-American. The performance expressed fully their involvement and enthusiasm - an enthusiasm which was shared with the audience by way of dance, drums, song.

It should be pointed out that not
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only was the performance interesting and intriguing, but also were the various reactions of the audience. They ranged from excitement to "so what", to confusion to disgust. A few walked out. To be sure, many of the interpretive dances - based on the authentic African culture - were very sexually suggestive. The question thus became: was that small part of the audience "turned off" because of disgust, because of the indecency among Junior High students, because of the freedom of expression, or because of envy? Interestingly enough, those who left during the "disgusting dances" missed the last two-thirds of the performance and, consequently, the real significance of the dances.

The one and one-half hour session ended when questions were entertained by the principal of Vaux Junior High and director of the performers. But, as he pointed out to the audience and, in fact, to the whole of American society: "It is not the answers that we give to you, but the questions which you ask. If you are unwilling to search for the proper questions, then our answers will mean nothing at all to you."

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The America of the Inaugural

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that Nixon should have had a "representative" of every sort of group, but that all that half of America that didn't vote for him was simply done without. The new administration made its inaugural into a ceremony of and for its original denominational constituency only, and has continued to celebrate a faith in which radical Christians and many others simply cannot share. Rhetorical appeals to
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join in will not unify us, anymore than ultramontane appeals to return to Rome unified Christianity. In the America of the inaugural, the rest of us can at best be tolerated - great vigilance will be needed to preserve at least the toleration. It would no doubt, indeed, be nice for the government if all who dissent from the faith of Graham, Peale and Laird, and from the social structures justified by that faith, would lower their voices. But this will not happen. The worry is: What will Nixon and Graham do then?

R. W. J.

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"A BLACK PANTHER ON CAMPUS"

Many of us have heard and read a lot about the racial problem. It has been so much of an issue that a person couldn't help but know something. However, probably some important questions some-even-many-of us have are, "what does the racial issue mean to the Blacks?" "What are their concerns?" "What do they foresee as their future?" Such questions and more can be answered for us on Thursday evening, May 8th at 7:00 P.M. in the coffee shop by Mr. Elijah Boyd, a lieutenant in the Black Panthers.

"Who is Elijah Boyd?" "Who are the Black Panthers?" "Why do they exist?" "What does Elijah Boyd have to say about them?" Hmm! I wonder. I think I'll find out - May 8th - 7:00 P.M.

COFFEE SHOP

The Dialogue Committee