

# T T able T aik

Vol. 6 No. 2 NEWS AND VIEWS OF THE STUDENTS AND STAFF AT GETTYSBURG SEMINARY October 1, 1969

## Humorous Luther: humorless Lutherans?

(no insult intended in any direction, just itching to raise a simple question)

Lutherans (identity not always clear) certainly do not command a monopoly on the scarcity of humor-, but they might well give an account of themselves as Luther's pupils demonstrating the indispensable role of humor in human life.  
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## Reformation Day 1969 The Orthodoxy of Conflict

Eck: "I ask you Martin-- answer candidly and without horns--do you or do you not repudiate your books and the errors they contain?"

Luther: "I will answer without horns and without teeth. Unless I am convicted by Scripture and plain reason--for I do not accept the authority of popes and councils, for they have contradicted each other--my conscience is captive to the word of God. I

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## SEMINARY Saints Without Halos

Somewhere C. S. Lewis comments: "How monotonously alike all the great tyrants and conquerors have been: how gloriously different are the saints." We must add a qualifying comment: the saints are not merely the "official", accredited, canonized, haloed ones. Many of the "official" saints bear a close resemblance  
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## Reformation

A sort of play, more or less on Luther and the Reformation, will be performed by an ad hoc faculty-with-wives group as part of Friday morning's Reformation celebration. For the first two of three scenes, the casting will be: Luther - Mr. Nieting; - Katie - Mrs. Gritsch; Tetzel - Mr. Gritsch; Schürmer - Schwärmer; Narrator - Mr. Jenson. All are invited.

## W.O.T.S. News

The women's organization of the seminary (W. O.T.S.) under the direction of Mrs. Nieting, and Mrs. Sandstedt, has already gotten  
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### Luther: Lutherans

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Somehow it has happened that a strange chemical amalgam in form of a stiff, sticky paste --a mix of unimaginative piousness and callous rigidity-- tends to deaden cells of the brain designed to lift instead of to depress.

Is it possible to find a single book from the hand of a Lutheran theologian devoted to humor? You can read through a thousand pages of theological exposition without encountering a single instance of liberating fun. There are, of course, exceptions among theological thinkers, two in fact: Nathan Soderblom and Soren Kierkegaard.

Soderblom wrote a study on Luther's Humor and Melancholy.

Kierkegaard is miscast most  
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cannot and will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. God help me. Amen"  
(Dialog at the Diet of Worms. April 17, 1521).

The Protestant Reformation and the American Revolution have determined Protestant religious attitudes for centuries. Luther fought ecclesiastical tyranny in many forms: salvation through money; justification through ignorance; hierarchical structures frozen in historic time, etc., etc. The fathers of the U.S.A. battled the British monarchy  
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### Saints

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to one another. They have the necessary degrees beside their names (three-plus miracles). And many of them come our looking as monotonously alike as perhaps "tyrants and conquerors": ascetics, mystics, meditatives, or even theologians. I prefer the run-of-the mill saints myself (I'm a status-seeker at heart, in search of identity). The biblical record gives me some encouragement when it speaks about the "saints at Corinth" (How's that for latitude!), or "Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi", - or Gettysburg. I prefer the saints in business suits and overalls rather than the ones in stained-glass and under glass. Besides, I've never really enjoyed taxiing up to the consecrated relics and dry bones of prominent Christians. Bones have a way of being quite uniform.

And one man's bones are about as good as another's.

What can be said, then, about these saints without discs of glory about their heads? Well, they have the same status as the disc'd saints, i.e. they consciously belong to Christ. They are "called" to sainthood. They are called to be "saints together", Saints, Inc. (not a closed corporation), the community of saints. They belong, - together. They are Christ's folk, manifesting His Spirit. If even those "very queer saints in Corinth" (Barth) belonged, so do we. All Saints Day was set aside to remind us  
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Luther: Lutherans?

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often as "that melancholy Dane". Yet, how far from the truth! He is worth knowing not only to stimulate existential thought but to lubricate our sense of humor.

There is, one must be sure, humor and humor, and the ability to distinguish the genuine stuff from all the fakery, is no small thing. Humorists are rare. The popular ones tend to be imitators, but not creators of the truly humorous. To arouse laughter is not in itself a test of humor. Some are clever, comical; others are sarcastic, slap-stick. These people do not generate a mood of good will, they do not open up  
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in search for self-government and on the basis of God-given "rights of man": freedom from foreign government; the pursuit of individual happiness; the equality of all men; national consciousness, etc., etc. Consequently, Protestants have known the orthodoxy of conflict. They have started wars of national liberation on two continents; they have created a "nevertheless"-theology which refuses to identify human with divine endeavours; and they have battled Roman Catholics, heathens and each other again and again in their refusal to accept temporal events as eschatological finalities. Conflict created at least a portion of Christian liberty;  
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Saints

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of that fact, - that even we belong. Many things differentiate us, - age, education, social position, culture, appearance, interests, prejudices, vocations - but this unites us. We "belong", - together. Celebrate your sainthood. We've all been canonized. Simul iustus, - even if simul peccator!

Saints are "new" creations. The New Testament reverberates about that. New men drawn into a new covenant, singing a new song, drinking new wine, acting like new people and publishing good news. And our "newness" means freedom, power and potentiality. Our feet are squarely planted in history, we are absorbed in it; but we are not trapped there. That's why we can change history. New men don't hawk change; they become changers. New men don't preach hope; they have it and act it. Saints are new beings with a future because they know what end's up. That's what eschatology is about. Saints are "little eschatons."  
So, little saints, live up (or out) your sainthood. Carry on your disabilities. Carry your sign of glory not as an ornament but as a garment. Be hope, do truth, practice love, serve need, fight oppression, radiate joy. Be a saint!

Saint Lawrence  
(Dr. Folkemer)

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Don't forget mixed bowling -  
Tuesday November 4, at  
9:00pm.

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Luther: Lutherans?

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perspective, and give a lift to the mind. They put on a show, and often at the expense of someone else. In fact, the lowest form of humor is to have it at the expense of the other fellow; the highest and purest form of humor is that which is had at one's own expense. Although Luther called Ritter Schwenckfeld as Herr von Stenkfeld, he also called himself a "miserable bag of worms". On one occasion he said; "Have a jolly time amid good folks, in honor and decency and fear of God, even if there be a word of drollery (anecdote, easy chatter) too many: this pleases God well".

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and Christian liberty secured at least a fraction of the "rights of man".

However, after nearly half a millerium of Protestant heritage in the West, protected by religious certainty and anti-Roman Catholic attitudes, the heirs of Martin Luther have grown weary of conflict. The "Here I stand" of Brother Martin at Worms has become the "Here we sit" of those who are no longer certain of either orthodoxy or conflict. Today they "tolerate": everyone should mind his own business; we will all live together as long as we pray together; religion is a private affair; etc., etc. Pastors and parishes sh. away from conflict; national church leaders make cautious statements so as not

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W.O.T.S.

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a good start on the year's schedule. The executive officers: Carol Dingman, Peggy Michael, Janet Ferra, Gail Fridenvals and Pat Diable worked hard this summer to plan the first meeting, (as well as a general outline for the year). This meeting, on Oct. 8 included a very informative session about the "problems and situations in the county home". Then the following tuesday, October 14, "Mr. Sandstedt, and the middlers" (as well as the senior wives present) spent the evening talking about Clinical Pastoral Education.

This year W.O.T.S. is sponsoring something a little different--a bowling league. The wives spent their first evening at Edgeware Lanes on October 16, and plan to go again on November 4. This time however, there will be a slight difference. The husbands and single students are also invited. (If you would like to go, please sign up on the lists posted on the bulletin boards in the Administration building, as well as the one on the 2nd floor of Baughman Hall.

The most recent project was the Halloween party on October 28. This was a wonderful chance for everyone to join in.

Just a reminder wives, there will be more meetings, and there are interesting projects to be undertaken, why don't you join us next time? The next WOTS meeting is Nov. 6, 7:30 pm. Social Room. Dr. J. Schwartz on eyes.

Luther: Lutherans?

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Humor and faith are close, good neighbors. Humorless persons nurse dangerous schemes. At any rate, they do little if anything to build up a more creative, common life together. What makes humor possible? The simple answer is: Love. Lovlessness and humorlessness are also close companions. He who loves much, forgives much, and never takes himself or his problems with over-seriousness. He is able to enjoy his feelings, he is able to view the complexities and frustrations of ordinary life in perspective. He will always seek to take the negative in the context of the positive.

Jacob W. Heikkinen

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to offend anyone; and Christians by and large seem content with an "inward spirituality" which comes close to the medieval assurance that this is the main road to heaven. The orthodoxy of conflict has become the apathy of ecclesiastical contentment. Martin Luther is dead--long live Lutheranism! Thomas Jefferson's experiment of religious liberty worked--long live toleration!

Ecclesiastical contentment and toleration are fast becoming the two pillows upon which this Seminary community rests its weary head. To be sure, there is some conflict between our walls--but it has little effect upon the daily rhythm of our being. We have learned to tolerate each other too well to see the orthodoxy  
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Notice

For Table Talk: Here is where I'd like your help. If you have a topic that you would like discussed--let me know. If you have read an article in a periodical or a book or have seen a movie, either drop the name of the work in my box, with or without comments. Please if an article in Table Talk is in disagreement with your own views, or if you have something to add, please do so. If something going on in the campus, town or nation pleases or displeases you, write it down.

Ken Hilston - Editor

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Quote for Table Talk

"How many a Christian minister, when by God's grace he first enters upon his office has the experience that many of the things to which he devotes hard work and great pains prove to be useless, that he must begin all over again to reflect on what is more necessary, and that he wishes he had known this before and had been wisely and carefully directed to it.

Philip Jacob Spener  
Advice to juniors!

Reformation Day 1969  
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 of conflict. So we sing once  
 again "A Mighty Fortress is  
 Our God", and remember dut-  
 ifully Luther's "Here I stand".  
 This is the festival of Pro-  
 testant Monday quarterbacks  
 who have missed the real  
 significance of the Sunday  
 game called "Reformation".  
 But there is still homp: the  
 orthodoxy of conflict is still  
 an event in many places  
 outside the walls of  
communic Gettysburgensis.  
 Sometimes you may hear the  
 battle scunds from afar, and  
 occasionally you may even  
 get h t by an erring bullet.  
 Conscience, reason and the  
 pose may not have much to do  
 with it because the battle  
 limes have changes. But the  
 conflict is celebrated...  
 Happy Reformation Day?

Eric W. Gritsch