

Table Talk

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

Vol. VIII, No. 7

Jan. 11, 1972

THE SAYINGS OF CHAIRMAN BEAVER

Soon after my election to the position of Chairman of the Board of Directors your Table Talk Editor asked me to write a monograph outlining my thoughts as to the direction the Seminary should take in the future. I did not respond immediately for several reasons: In the first place it would have been presumptuous of me to do so so soon after my election. In the second place, I delayed because I really was not sure what the future would or should be.

Now after several months of education in the problems of the Seminary, I am prepared to make one simple statement as to the future direction of the Seminary. It is my firm belief that the Seminary must constitute itself and reconstitute itself if necessary, to serve as the central resource for the parish and the ministry. I am using those words in the broadest sense possible. You may define "parish" and "ministry" as broadly as you please and you will not make me uncomfortable.

That is all I have to say about that subject at the present time so allow me to choose another subject which is more basic than the future direction of the Seminary. Consider the problem of the future existence of the Seminary.

Soon after I assumed my duties it became obvious that a great deal of time and effort would be required. I conceived that the work was beneficial to the church and therefore worth the effort and sacrifice. However, to check my own thoughts against those of another person I asked my parish

pastor whether, in his opinion, the Seminary was important to the life of the church. He pondered the question and then said, "In my opinion, the Seminary is the life blood of the church." In saying this he hesitated and so I asked him if he had doubts about his statement. He said he hesitated because he was not sure if those words were strong enough to relate his strong convictions to me.

I have read with interest the various petitions and position papers which the student body has circulated. I am impressed with the fact that our student body says that it believes in the importance of our Seminary in the life of the church. Now we are entering a period in the history of the Seminary when this belief which you express and which many others who have gone before you, have expressed, is going to be thoroughly tested.

We are in a financial crisis. We have just received word that all of our supporting Synods will fail to meet their budgetary projections of support in the calendar year. We will be in the red. We need to develop new sources of revenue and one area which must be developed is our alumni support. I am saying to you that the future existence of the Seminary depends directly upon the real depth of your conviction.

Can you afford to pledge and pay \$100.00 per year to the Seminary Endowment Fund after your graduation? Really the question is - if the Seminary is the life blood of the church, can you afford to do less?

(to next page)

I wish there was a more pleasant way to test the depth of your conviction but when the budget demands that we need \$743,710.00, with no reserve for deficit, to operate the Seminary and we raise \$700,000.00 we haven't made it.

The Development Office will be talking to you before you graduate. Your response will help to answer the question about the future direction and existence of the Seminary.

R. Hart Beaver

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CHARISMATIC COOKING

"Behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem."

By careful exegesis and a detailed knowledge of the culture, even this brief statement can teach us much of those men who followed the star. Of particular interest to us in this column is the fact that these sages (the term is fascinating in its culinary connotations) undoubtedly made their long journey to Bethlehem subsisting on a flavorful, nutritious stew developed in the East which they carried in boy-scout issue, two-quart, goatskin canteens. Because of the theological significance of any such Biblical revelation (and because its dietary properties make it obvious fare to follow the Eating Season) we happily present:

Mulligatawney Soup

- 1 chicken
- 3 small onions
- 1 tablespoonful of butter
- 1 tablespoonful of curry powder
- 4 cloves
- juice of half a lemon
- 2 quarts of cold water
- salt to taste

Cut the chicken up as for a fricasee; cut the onions into slices. Put the butter in a frying pan,

add the chicken and onions, and stir until a nice brown; now add the curry powder, salt, cloves and lemon juice; mix well. Put into the soup kettle with the water, bring slowly to a boil, skim and simmer gently for two hours. Serve with boiled rice in a separate dish. Three rabbits may be used instead of the chicken, if preferred.

Paul Xander
Larry L. McDaniel

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Toward the end of January, a literary journal will be published by the Student Publications Committee. Greg Lenihan is serving as its editor. All students are encouraged to make submissions to him in the next few weeks. Anything of a creative nature is welcome, although brevity is important. Stories should be no longer than a few pages.

Table Talk Staff

Contributors:

- R. Hart Beaver
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- Ray Steward
- Larry McDaniel
- Paul Xander

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- Greg Lenihan
- Bob vonFrisch

Deadline for next issue: Jan. 22.

The Sweet Secret of Success

During the holidays, I happened to run into an old friend, S.D. Slothmeister, who is now a young seminary graduate looking for a church position. During our conversation, he began reflecting upon his educational career.

"Yes," he was saying, "The education system is the easiest thing in the world to beat, and getting easier every day. I never cracked a book in college and still managed to get an all-expenses paid stint at seminary."

"How did you manage that," I queried.

"Well, in short, I became socially active. The first year in college, I joined a number of little campus groups, like the Soviet Literature Discussion Circle and the Cartography Club. Of course, with their limited membership, I became an officer in all of them by my sophomore year, and made myself president of several other groups which had been long defunct. This paid off in my junior and senior years, for as a 'concerned student' I was appointed to several administrative and faculty committees, and picked up a paying position as a Freshman Advisor—a job which I myself had promoted in one of the administrative committees. With this list of accomplishments behind me, I naturally was chosen 'Outstanding Community Leader' and selected for membership in the collegiate honor society. Well now, you tell me, what happens when you get some awards?"

"I'm not quite sure," I puzzled.

"Why, they give you more awards, of course. Look at it this way. Awards are given on the basis of what you have accomplished, accomplishments are judged by what you have attained. Thus, having attained several awards, they had no other choice but to give me more. It's the old snowball effect. And upon graduation, I was designated the 'Most Promising Pre-Seminarian.' All this on a C- average, which anyone with a modicum of intelligence can maintain simply by visiting the professor in his office twice during the semester and posing good questions. Classroom attendance is not even necessary."

"But surely when you got to seminary they expected you to do more work," I remarked.

"Boy, where do you come from!" he stated in amazement. "Seminary is easier than college. With a minimum of effort, my five-year-old could have passed at least half the courses. Seminary is run on a pass-fail system, is it not?"

"Right," I conceded.

He continued, "The beauty of the pass-fail system is that the student is assured a passing grade unless he proves himself otherwise. In a letter grade system, there is at least some possibility of figuring in student industriousness and initiative, or conversely, his lack of initiative. But in a pass-fail system, the professor must justify his giving out a fail mark by writing an evaluation of the student in question. Now where most exams are essay, by what criteria may the professor determine the fine line between passing and failing, and then write a defence of his choice of failure. You see the difficulty?"

"I think so," I declared. "It is much easier and efficient for the professor simply to pass the whole lot and be done with the business."

"Exactly," Slothmeister nodded. "All I had to do was look intelligently into the prof's eyes and answer his exam with sharp witticisms
(to next page)

and my career was made. The bonus was that as a needy student, with an excellent collegiate record, my synd picked up the tab."

I was still skeptical, and said, "but don't you think the whole process is a little dishonest? After all, there are always ways to beat the system, but we should be striving to improve ourselves by making purposeful use of the education available to us."

He was visibly upset. "No, no, you have misunderstood. I am not out to beat the system, but I'm working within it. I always honestly admit what accomplishments and positions I have attained, but never actually state what the job entailed. It is simply that no one asks. "Take a case of your own," he suggested. "You mentioned earlier that you were co-editor of the pitiful student newspaper. How did you get that position?"

"No one else would take it," I confessed.

"Ah," he exclaimed, "that may be the truth, but never admit it. Always act as if you had to prove your worthiness for the job. Now what happened when you became co-editor?"

"Well, that entitled my cohort and I to become Co-Chairmen of the Student Publications Committee, which in turn made us Members of the Executive Board of the Student Association."

He was delighted. "You see how already you have three titles, each more prestigious sounding yet less operative than the last, simply by taking a job no one else would touch? Why, with proper exploitation of that alone, I guarantee you could become an editor on the Life staff at their first opening. Everybody would think you were somebody, although we would both know differently."

"You may be right," I pondered.

He started moving off. "Remember this cardinal principle: People always ask what you were, and never how you did it. Take care," he called out.

"So long," I said absently. I was thinking how Slotheister, with his list of accomplishments and grasp of reality, would be at least synd president in ten years.

R.A. vonFrisch

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January Term

The flexibility and diversity of the January term is its principle strength. Many unique opportunities are available to students, and some are following either cenobitic or eremitic life styles. The cenobites include Don Holman and Tom Whalen, who are pursuing the monastic ideal at Mount Saviour Monastery in upper New York state, and Sally Kerr and Laurine Longfield, who are spending the term in an Episcopalian convent in New York City. The eremites may be found scattered about the campus engaged in various individual study projects.

We would also like to welcome to our campus five students from Washington Consortium schools who will be living and studying here for the month. They include Jim Bruce, Carlo Busby and Dan Flores, from St. Paul's in Washington, and John Gardner and Gunter Mader, from Episcopal Theological Seminary in Alexandria, Virginia. We hope they enjoy their stay here.

January 4, 1972

Dear Mr. Lenihan and Mr. vonFrisch,

I feel that I must respond to Roy Steward's Apologia of December 10. Although his actions have not been "offensive," his letter certainly is. The letter is offensive because Roy raises the three-headed people-eater (that nebulcus Political, Unethical and Immoral beast) with the zeal and blindness of Joe McCarthy in the 50's.

This combination can only be destructive to all concerned. Instead of evaluating the educational necessity of an ecumenical, urban centered experience for modern theological education and discussing that, Roy focuses on the process of decision-making in an attempt to make the program an ethical question. In the development of his emotionally charged Apologia, he implies that anyone who might favor or support mandatory involvement in the Washington program desires to manipulate (by charismatic power or "political" tactics) the defenseless -- students who should strive for "harmony, well-being, and love."

Roy, you've missed the point! You have not only manipulated an issue that may be vital for the preparation of men and women for service of the church, you have influenced (manipulated) these same people by developing a contest of charismatic skill and power which you so detest.

Even Saint Paul was not consistent in his thoughts, but he had his facts straight.

Sincerely,
Randolph W. Barr

cc Roy Steward
Dean Stumpfle
President Heiges

The following was submitted to the Editors in reply to Randy Barr's letter:

January 6, 1972

"Who has the facts straight?"

Randy Barr has I think raised a valid point in his letter to the editors. A point upon which I myself have given a great deal of thought since my article Apologia and Anfechtung. He also raises I think a most serious question for the Church, the leaders of the Church, the Seminary, the professors of the Seminary, the Administration of the Seminary, the Students of the Seminary, and for Randy and me. First the point of validity and then the question.

My attention has particularly centered about my use of the word manipulation. I recognize in hindsight that I too engaged in manipulation when I wrote my article with a zeal and blindness of emotive outburst, little realizing at the time of composition that I was engaging in something similar to that which I was detesting. My appeal to conscience, I now realize, tended to give my position an air of righteousness and sanctity. It has been impressed upon me that we all use manipulation and that this is a part of our every breath and movement. On this point, then, I think Randy is entirely correct. He has warned me of a very real danger: that of being sucked up in my own emotions. However the notion is a two-way warning, and I think it serves no purpose to call anyone a Joe McCarthy, or to describe one as a "raiser of three-headed people-eaters." I know

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this applies to me as well as to others.

However, in the process of (correctly) pointing out the dangers and reality of my own influence (manipulation), Randy has also raised a significant question. Who in fact does have the facts straight? Or simply, who is totally right? St. Paul did not always have his facts straight - to mention but one case in point let me direct your attention to his attitude toward women. I am firmly convinced that on one of us or any one combination of us has a monopoly on the facts, or truth, or wisdom. You are wise enough to know, Randy, that facts often lie or are at least misleading, and that people often use misleading facts to achieve their own ends. I believe that the church and the seminary should be striving against this tendency by seeking to stimulate and share the whole process of open information flow so that the whole body (at least idealistically) partakes together in the direction of its life.

This has not tended to be the case in the deliberations on the Washington Program. You, I am sure, along with many others disagree with me, but there are also many who sincerely feel that the making of the Washington program mandatory is not an "educational necessity." With this fact in view (if we wish to deal with facts) many questions arise for examination. Why, for instance, in view of the number of students opposed to the faculty and administration action, has there not been a wider attempt at a forum or colloquy including a wider spectrum of students? Why for instance was the second petition to the Board of Trustees allowed to remain exactly two days upon the Emergency Bulletin Board (true this is just a little matter) when the previous petition to the BTE sponsored by the Student Government and Administration and a subsequent petition concerning the Coffee Shop in Old Dorm were both allowed to remain for over one week each? The petition to the Board was removed to the cluttered bulletin board and a note placed in my box stating that the "Emergency nature of the Emergency Bulletin Board must be maintained." Petty on my part? Perhaps, but I think not. I think it is evidence of very subtle and in other cases not so subtle discrimination against a candid atmosphere of discussion.

In a very recent case it came to my attention that at the Jan. 5th meeting of the House of Studies Committee with the Synod Presidents, at which I think you were present Randy, not one word was mentioned indicating to the Synod Presidents the significant number of students opposed to making the Washington Program mandatory. Bishop Graeffe of the Metropolitan N.Y. Synod told me this with other student witnesses present! My assumption is that this was not by accident and I wonder why this was so? I also wonder why certain students were appointed and not others? I wonder why no students representing the opposing view point were asked to be present? Why Randy did you not yourself point out these things? Surely you knew of them even though you disagreed, for your letter is dated Jan. 4, prior to the meeting.

Randy, quite frankly I am not angry. I feel sad and sorry for us and for our leaders and for our church. There is something very much lacking in our relationships to each other which evidences a silencing of one group in favor of another, with a tragic expense in terms of trust and love among all. I seriously do not know what we are to do. I wish that Saint Paul were here now! This is our Anfechtung together.

Sincerely,
Roy Steward