

# Table Talk

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



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Volume X

January 25, 1974

Issue #4

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## SPECIAL WASHINGTON ISSUE

In 1971, there was a petition circulated on the Seminary campus. The issue at hand concerned the Washington Program. Now, in 1973, it seems quite possible that the same issue might be at hand. So, for the benefit of our reading audience, we would like to reprint the 1971 petition.

TO: The Board of Trustees of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg

RE: A Second Petition Concerning The Washington Program

I. We the undersigned acknowledge:

Item 1. that the Washington program of studies is a valuable facet of theological training which should be and remain an option of student choice;

Item 2. that the Institution of the Seminary does have the right to legislate programs for the training of men and women in the service of the church;

Item 3. and that the student representatives were given a fair and just hearing at the recently held Washington House of Studies Committee meeting of November 22, 1971 with a frank and honest exchange of views.

II. But we the undersigned feel that the following points should be underscored lest they be lost in the proliferation of words. We therefore confess:

Item 1. that we feel this discussion to revolve around a question of Philosophy of Education and that we have not been persuaded that a mandatory "incorporation" of the Washington program is wise or just;

Item 2. that it is our feeling that the Washington Program should stand on its own merits and that it can stand on its own merits given publicity;

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## PETITION(cont'd)

Item 3. that we have not been persuaded that simply because other theological schools are "incorporating" into their requirements urban training centers that Gettysburg should also follow suit.

Item 4. that the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg in its continuing tradition is a unique theological school and that the present flexibility of its program is a vital factor in the training of men and women in the service of the church as evidenced in increased enrollment.

Item 5. that the problem is not so much of "mobility" from place to place but a process of "cultural shock" from place to place which can be conducive to a hardening of the individual into a self-sufficient center acting independent of people in general and people in the parish in particular.

Item 6. that the students are indeed part of the seminary and have a right to share in the direction of the seminary, contributing and receiving insight to and from their instructors.

Item 7. that we do not feel that "the number of" bodies will necessarily make a program a "worthwhile and a living thing" just as the emphasis on sheer numbers does not necessarily reflect the "living body" of Christ in churches.

Item 8. that it be resolved to send a copy of the above to the faculty, the President of the Seminary, and the Academic Policies Committee.

III. We the undersigned declare that we are either in partial or full agreement with the above confession.

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Well, there you have it. "Table Talk" is interested in hearing how you feel about a mandatory Washington requirement. Drop us a line in the "Table Talk" mail-box, and let us know whether you are in favor of, or opposed to a mandatory Washington requirement. We are looking forward to hearing from you.

The Editorial Staff

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Definition of a theological education(?): "To provide occupation, recreation, and inspiration; not to instruct, inform, or reform."

WASHINGTON REQUIREMENT: STUDENT OPINIONS

Pro & Other Issues: by Ralph Strohl

The debate over whether or not a semester's participation in the Washington Theological Consortium on the part of every Gettysburg student ought to be mandatory raises a great many issues. In the opinion of this writer, those opposed to this requirement deal predominantly with only one of the issues, that of how many requirements there should be of the Seminary's students. To be sure, this issue and the corollary of how much authority the administration should have over its students is an issue of major proportions, and is by no means easily resolvable. In addition, it is clear that a number of logistical problems would be created by such a requirement, especially for married students.

However, the thinking which led to the proposal of a requirement for student participation in the Consortium raises a number of issues which bear more critical reflection than has been lent them recently. Specifically, three questions need to be considered in greater detail: To what extent is familiarity with the urban situation in America necessary for clergy-in-training? How essential is it that clergy-in-training be familiar with ecumenical situations, and ought the Seminary actively encourage such familiarity? And, lastly, what should be the nature of this seminary's commitment to the Washington Theological Consortium? I wish to deal with each of these questions in turn.

That the major cities of the United States have an incalculable effect on the entire nation is clear. As centers of political

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Con: by Bob Ward

Of late, it seems that an old controversy may be waiting backstage in the minds of many of the members of our community, and although no official action has been taken as of yet, it is sure to be centerstage and in the spotlight in the future. I am referring to the debate about the Lutheran House of Studies in the Washington Consortium, and whether a Gettysburg student should be required to participate in the Consortium.

I feel that I must speak to this debate, for I believe making the Consortium a mandatory requirement, even if only one course were required, would defeat the purpose of the program, and possibly endanger the direction of the Seminary by putting more controls on students. The Consortium program is a valuable tool, a unique program which should be kept a part of the Seminary. Let me try briefly to express my feelings on this matter.

Our Seminary is unique. One of its unique characteristics is the fact that it is the only LCA Seminary which shows a continued increase in enrollment. We are a growing institution which is attracting more and more students each year, while other seminaries are floundering. One of the things that I feel attracts prospective students is the flexible educational atmosphere of the Seminary, as well as programs like the Consortium. To make such a program mandatory would be putting an undue requirement on incoming students, a requirement which may deter prospective students. One thing that attracted me to Gettysburg was the quiet rural setting. Having lived in the suburbs of New York City all my life, I detest large cities, and have no desire to live in Washington or any large urban environment.

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and economic power, the potential exists that people in the most remote corners of Central Penn. and Western Penn.-W.Va. Synods will have the quality and style of their lives determined by what happens in New York or Washington and the Mid-West will be dependent to a large extent on Chicago and Minneapolis. As media centers urban areas play a substantial role in determining what people in the United States generally know, how news is presented to them, and how they may interpret all the information with which they are presented. Indeed, opinions on such issues as welfare, racism and crime are very largely based on what people hear happening in places like New York, Detroit, and Washington. Thus, it appears that a minister, even if his intended role is in a rural area, stands to gain a much greater appreciation of his role and the environment in which he performs his function if he is familiar with an urban style of life such as Washington represents. Indeed, I wish to suggest that it would be very difficult for anyone to convincingly preach the unity of all mankind in Christ without some tangible familiarity with the great diversity of life-styles that do exist, without some appreciation for the interdependence that exists among urban, suburban and rural areas, and without some conception of the dynamics that create stereotypes and easy classifications such as "welfare bums" or "country hicks" and "military-industrial complex" or "Georgetown cocktail party set." The extent to which this can be expressed in the classroom is limited.

Second, a great deal of dissatisfaction is expressed these days with the denominational set-up of the Christian Church. The constant theme which is heard from Gettysburg students in Washington is that ecumenical dialogue, which is far

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Had there been a Consortium requirement when I applied for admission to the Seminary, I probably would not even have applied. There is a married student at Southern Seminary who applied here, and at an interview, was given the impression that the Consortium program was mandatory. He felt that such a requirement was not necessary to his education, and as I said, he now attends Southern.

The Consortium program is indeed a great educational opportunity, but I think it should stand on its own merits. Students should not be forced to participate. Forced participation in anything can have bad results for all concerned. The student must be free to decide on the merits of the program and how it concerns his or her desires and goals. Sheer numbers of people participating in the program will not make the program a success. A learning experience must not be coerced or forced, rather it must be something an individual wants and will strive to achieve at, not another stumbling block that is said to be a good experience for all.

The requirement would also present a logistics problem that could be extremely bothersome, especially to married students where a spouse works locally. The yearly picking up and moving would be a hassle; and as the student petition of 1971 so aptly put it, the moving from place to place would be "but a process of 'cultural shock' from place to place which can be conducive to a hardening of the individual into a self-sufficient center acting independent of people in general..."

We are no longer college students, but are adults engaged in the direct pursuit of our career goals. We should have a say in what we do to reach our goals.

The faculty cannot possibly know what is always best for the student. Individual student needs

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from a major element in life in Gettysburg, has the effect of sharpening their conceptions of what it means to affirm a Lutheran theological stance, and to deal more critically with issues raised by denominationalism. So important is this element in the lives of these students that last term, they unanimously recommended to the Lutheran House of Studies that participation in the Consortium in some way be exacted from all Gettysburg students. However, it is the purpose of this essay merely to raise the question of the importance of ecumenicity, not to answer it.

Lastly, the problem of logistics must again be raised, specifically from the viewpoint of the administration. Since the inception of its participation in the Consortium, Gettysburg has existed as a member on a year-by-year basis. If the Washington Theological Consortium is to be taken seriously by this seminary, it will be necessary to plan long-term participation in and commitment to the institution of the Consortium. This will entail expansion of funds directed toward establishing regularity and continuity to the Seminary's role in the Consortium. Clearly, this cannot be accomplished without a commitment to participation of the Seminary as a whole--monetary and/or faculty participation alone will not suffice. The question then is whether or not the Seminary has the right to guarantee this comprehensive commitment to the Consortium, assuming it maintains its status as a Consortium member. If it does not have this right, a great many complications, possibly only hypothetical but perhaps not, might

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must always be kept in mind, and dealt with on an individual basis. Why force the student who has lived in an urban environment to return to broaden his experiences? Or, why force those with no interest in such an environment and ministry to spend time in an urban setting? Why not also send us to a farm for a semester?

There seems to be an incongruity in what emphasis the Seminary gives to the Consortium program. As a student, all I hear on campus and how I read the Seminary bulletin concerning the program says that it is the urban exposure that living at and participating in the Consortium provides which is the basis of the Washington experience. There seems to be an emphasis on urban ministry and the need of exposure to such a ministry. Yet, at the 12th annual Central Penn. Synod meeting in June of 1973, it was stated that

Gettysburg also affirms that confessional identity and responsibility must be exercised not in isolation but in relation to other Christian traditions. Consequently, in addition to the teaching and nurture of students in the Lutheran heritage provision is also made for the direct exposure of students to the faith and practice of churches with different heritage as represented by the seminaries of these churches.

This is in direct reference to the Consortium program. In a later paragraph concerning the Lutheran House of Studies, no mention is made of the great urban exposure that studying in Washington offers, but rather the ecumenical atmosphere of the Consortium. To be sure, these are both important

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arise, thus jeopardizing Gettysburg's membership status. For the student, the issue is whether we are to affirm the Seminary, that is in Gettysburg, or the full training program of that seminary.

In summary, it is surely to be emphasized that what the Seminary has to offer here in Gettysburg is valuable and essential to all its students; indeed, this is attested to by the students participating in the Consortium, who have constantly voiced the desire to maintain tangible contacts in both places. However, it is also probably true that as jobs within the LCA become limited, those who are capable of adapting to a variety of circumstances stand a better chance of gaining employment as ordained clergy than those who are not. Clearly, the Seminary has a responsibility to maximize the competence for such service of its graduates. Not to affirm the experience that the Consortium provides in as positive a manner as the experience in Gettysburg would be to meet that responsibility in a less than complete manner.

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ADIAPHORA

Coming Events and Activities:

Wednesday, Jan. 30: Last Day of Middle Term(No more Greek. P.T.L.!!)

Monday, February 4: First Day of Spring Semester.

Wednesday, Feb. 6 and

Friday, Feb. 8: "Dear Brutus"; a play written by James Barrie will be presented at 8 p.m.in room 206 Val. There is no admission charge.

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"When you are real you can't be ugly, except to those who don't understand."

CON(Cont'd)

aspects of the total Washington experience. But why the two different outlooks as to the direction and reason for and of the program? Are we afraid of scaring our rural Central Penn. friends with a lot of talk about urban experience? And are those who do not participate in the program less Lutheran than those who do?

I have expressed some thoughts that have been on my mind of late. Though making the Consortium program mandatory will not affect me, I feel I must say what I feel, for I am deeply concerned about our Seminary and its continued growth, both physically and spiritually. The Lutheran House of Studies is open to all. The freedom of participation is what makes it a vital aspect of the Seminary experience. We must let it live and breathe on its own, not suffocate it with bodies who wish they were in Gettysburg.

"GENERAL MOTORS AND ORGASMS"  
--Scott W. Gustafson

In direct opposition to the Christian is the Modern Corporate State's universal concept of production. This is said because production starts with the things of the present such as cars and toilet paper and states that is we have more things like cars and toilet paper in the future we will be better off. This line of thinking runs the whole political spectrum from reactionary to radical, for who would deny that a country such as Venezuela would be better off if they had twice as much toilet paper or double the automobiles.

It is my contention that a Christian would deny this apparent truth. In light of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and other revelations of the end-time, we are free to creatively negate the present or make the present what it is not. This means attacking the universality of the concept of production, and production is indeed a universal concept from the Board of Directors of General Motors to the bedroom. I say the bedroom because we have made the orgasm a unit for measuring love making. Just as modern Americans say, "I have two televisions," or "I have three cars;" we say, "I made love three times last night," (if you can believe some of the stuff you're told after some weekends). To be sure, you would not have stated that you made love three times if you only had one orgasm. As a result, orgasms are a unit of production and when they are sold as a service, they are computed into the Gross National Product.

It is the aim of this article to shed light on this not too often discussed problem that faces the world today, and also to test the waters for the initiation of an Anti-Orgasm League which is not against orgasms per se, just their universality.

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OUT OF THE DEPTHS (of the Library)  
--Elaine Matthews

Seen in a report of the directors of the Theological Seminary at Gettysburg made to Synod, 1882:

Eight young men have graduated, all of whom have secured fields of labor and are doing active service in the church. The prospects as to the number of students in the several classes for the coming year are encouraging. The financial condition of the Seminary is not what it ought to be. Extensive repairs upon the buildings are absolutely necessary and to this...we again recommend the appropriation of one hundred dollars.

Have times changed much except for numbers?

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Next issue: Feb..8, 1974