

# Table Talk

News and Views of the  
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Examination Boards...Synod endorsement...Official LCA policy... these are all part of the workings of the LCA; these are all things which concern most of us. But how often do we consider how the Lutheran Church functions in other parts of the world? After all, aren't we all members of the same body in Christ? For this reason, "Table Talk" presents...

## "THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN MALAYSIA" --A. Samuel Muthiah

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malaysia is one of the youngest Lutheran Churches in Asia. Her history begins from the first Lutheran Christian settlers, belonging to the Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church in South India, who migrated to then Malaya, even before the First World War.

In the early stage, those who were in Kuala Lumpur attended first the Anglican Church, and later, the Tamil Methodist Church. When their number increased to 70, they established themselves as a congregation in a shop house in Scott Road, Kuala Lumpur. A Church Building Committee was organized and the foundation of Zion Church was laid by the first Bishop of Tranquebar (T.E.L.C.), the Rt. Rev. E. Heuman on Nov. 11, 1922, and the first Lutheran Church was dedicated on Nov. 30, 1924, by the Rev. J. Sandegren, President of the Church of Sweden Mission in South India, who later became the Third Bishop of Tranquebar (T.E.L.C.).

When Tamil Lutherans grew in numbers in the northern part of Malaysia, the premises which had been the Anglo-Chinese school and parsonage of the Methodist Church in Penang was acquired in 1937. This was done by raising funds by the members. This area later became the worshipping center for Lutherans in this area.

Then the Lutherans were organized into two circles--the southern circle with headquarters in Kuala Lumpur, and the northern circle with headquarters in Penang. They were directly responsible to the Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church in South India, with no direct organizational link between the two circles, which were not only self-governing, but also self-supporting. Two pastors, who were selected from the T.E.L.C. to work in Malaysia covered the entire country. An impossible task! The Church was unable to carry out its evangelistic task.

(Cont'd on page 2)

In order to find out ways and means to facilitate the work, a Lutheran Consultative Conference for South East Asia was convened in 1952 under the chairmanship of the Rt. Rev. J. Sandegren, Bishop of Tranquebar(T.E.L.C.). The Conference decided to organize the Lutherans into an indigenous church--The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malaya--and expand the Lutheran work under it, in cooperation with the Lutheran World Federation and such other missionary agencies, which might be in a position to help. As a result of the above Consultative Conference, and at the invitation of the Lutherans in Malaysia, the Lutheran Church in America took up work in 1953 and concentrated its efforts mainly towards the Chinese population.

The Tamil Lutherans in Malaysia were anxious to expand their work, and carry out their evangelistic task. In 1960, through the Bishop of Tranquebar(T.E.L.C.) and through the Lutheran World Federation, they appealed to other Lutheran Churches to cooperate with them.

In answer to the appeal, the Church of Sweden, through its Mission Board, sent Rev. B. Envall, who had many years of previous experience in pioneering work, to make a preliminary survey of the country with a view to work jointly with the indigenous Lutheran Church.

After consultation with the Lutheran World Federation in Geneva, and the Rt. Rev. R.B. Manickam, Bishop of Tranquebar(T.E.L.C.), the Rev. B. Envall started the preliminary survey in Nov. 1960. He toured the length and breadth of the country; visited many estates; and interviewed responsible personages. He submitted a report to the CSM Board, outlining the main task "to help the scattered Tamil Lutherans to form living congregations and to carry out the Gospel in and through these congregations to the non-Christian Tamil population, so that the church may grow." The CSM Board decided favorably to enter into a joint agreement with the Indigenous Lutheran Church, and sent Rev. B. Envall back to Malaysia to be the implement of his own report.

The Rev. B. Envall with Mrs. Envall arrived in Malaya on Sept. 9, 1961, and set out to organize an independent indigenous church. On August 13, 1962, at a historic Conference of elected delegates from the two circles, the new consultation was passed unanimously, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malaysia was born. Since then, the church is actively alive to its task of nurturing evangelism and service.

(Ed. Note: Take heed and learn, ye Church historians!)

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"Emancipation"--marcia thompson

I saw the Lincoln Monument,  
and read the words on freedom  
that stated how this man  
had set free all the slaves.  
Impressed, I turned to walk away  
and leave the gallant statue on my heel,  
when hearing movement in the shadows  
of the vast enshrined exhibit,  
I turned to see a small, old Black man  
pushing faithfully his worn-out broom  
and keeping clean a fallacy.

### Silentium in Ecclesiam

It has been a delight to see occasional babies--especially such good ones--at our weekly Eucharist. Their decorum has spared us a plunge into the nasty schism which has rent congregations asunder over the burning issue of the excommunication of babies who are heard as well as seen.

Many arguments have been advanced by both sides, but it has always seemed to me that the anti-baby faction has kept one of its best guns in the holster by failing to present a careful exegesis of Psalm 100:1, "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord..." Since the Psalmist here mandates specifically a joyful noise, those babies who raise their eyes heavenward, open their little mouths and emit frightful sounds compounded of pain and anger are in clear and absolute violation of this commandment. Obviously these innocents have not yet attained what we Lutherans are wont to call "the age of discretion," so it is their parents who, having transported them into a situation of temptation in the first place, must bear the burden of their guilt.

My real concern, however, is the polar opposite of the bawling baby. I wish to raise my voice in protest against those grim and silent Christians who never raise theirs. One usually reliable source has estimated that for every two squalling infants in the average congregation there are at least eight sturdy warriors of the Lord who sit with arms folded across their chests, eyes glazed and lips sealed for one whole hour! How can any man, if man indeed be a "linguistic animal," keep quiet that long?

Women's lib types will have pounced upon the fact that I have spoken of "man" and not "person."

(Cont'd on next column)

I do this advisedly, for it is my observation that these strong silent types are, in point of fact, predominantly male, though usually in the tow of their wives. While recognizing the danger of probing the murky waters of human motivation, I do, nevertheless, venture some thoughts about the reasons for this phenomenon which for want of a better term, we might label silentium in ecclesiam.

There are some, I am convinced, who, because of a literalistic bent of mind--but with the usual tendency of the literalist to find a verse which buttresses his already well-buttressed bias--have put all their money on Psalm 46:10, "Be still and know that I am God." The fulfillment of some of the Lord's commands may forever elude their grasp, but of their performance on this count they need never be ashamed. Thus, their real peril lies in a passive variety of works righteousness.

Another type, with whom I have considerably more pastoral sympathy, is motivated by an admirable, though misguided, social conscience. Invariably he is seated or standing beside a wife of statuesque, even monumental proportions who, baying in full voice, is relentlessly tracking the little notes across the pages of the hymn book. She is one of those sopranos whom I once heard graphically described as "having plenty of meat in the upper register." Her mate, standing mute beside her, may merely be suffering in silence. I prefer to think that he's been doing a little ecological reading lately, has made (in secret) a decibel count of his wife's high C, and has decided that, short of throttling her, there is only one way left to do his bit for the cause of noise pollution.

(Cont'd on p. 4, col. 1)

Silentium im Ecclesiam(cont'd)

My real concern for these de-voiced Christians is eschatological. The Revelation of John suggests that the saints in heaven spend most of their waking hours strumming harps and singing hymns of praise. Obviously non-singers would not be happy in their work and would soon find heaven hell. They would only pine away for that nether region where no high C is ever belted out sola gloria Dei.

What we need in our churches, therefore, are babies(scads of them) whoae vary silence(though a reasonable level of such joyful noises as gurgling, giggling, chortling, and chuckling is admissable) creates the vacuum which pops all their elders' glottal corks. Then the church's worship will become again the weekly tune-up for that Everlasting Hymn Sing to which we are all invited.

--Brother Sisypus

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ADIAPHORA

Coming events:

- Sun., Feb. 10th; Field Education begins again for 1st yr. students
- Fri., Feb. 15th: Film Festival, 8 p.m., Valentine Hall(see item below)
- Mon., Feb. 18th: "Godspell", 8 p.m., Mt. St. Mary's College. \$2.50 admission charge for Seminarians.

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The first social activity of the Spring Semester will be a film night on February 15, at 8 p.m. Two comedy films will be shown in Valentine Hall. Popcorn will be provided and the coke machine in the Coffee Shop will be accessible.

Due to the Difficulties in scheduling, and the results of the questionnaire, the roller skating party has been eliminated from the calendar. Also, there will be no additional charge to any of the events this year. Social Committee

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Item: "Say what you will about President Nixon, he must be credited with one major accomplishment while in office. The late President Kennedy--with his wit, his flair, his open intelligence--made it difficult for many people to settle for the vulgarity of a Lyndon Johnson or the evasiveness of a Richard Nixon. However, Nixon, much like the inept magician in a burlesque show, is going to make whatever comes next look very good."

Mike McGrady

-Untitled-

- Pietism
- Egotism
- Apathy
- Wait!
- Pessimism
- Cynicism
- Cruelty
- Too late!

- Destruction
- Compunction
- Prayer
- Relief!

- Salvation
- Creation
- Freedom
- Belief!

M.M.

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"To suffer one's death and to be reborn is not easy." -F.S. Perls

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"Dear Brutus": A Review...by steve patrick

The Seminary Players came out victorious over inadequate lighting, and extremely poor seating in Wednesday's performance of "Dear Brutus." Despite the unusual wiring set-up of the Aberle Room, the lighting crew somehow managed to set the proper moods with a minimum of actual lights. From the brightly-lit drawing room to the dark and moonlit wood, the blending of lights to match the mood of the characters was the work of a craftsman.

The Players, themselves, were superb in their roles in this delightful, but haunting play about second chances. This reviewer would venture to say that Kari Jenson "stole the show" in her portrayal of the young girl frightened with the possibility of being a "might-have-been." Brad Wallace, as her "might-have-been" father, does a commendable job both in that role, and in the final scene back in Lob's house. Caroline Stumpf is also extremely convincing as she advances from a haughty rich woman to a humble poor woman, and returns again as a seemingly humble rich woman.

Ruth Gritsch, with her compassionate nature, and Bengt Hoffman, with his care-free attitude make the ideal older couple falling in love again. A well-deserved ovation was registered by the audience following the appearance of Bengt as an "old codger" dancing about Lob's Wood as a musical bachelor. Beth Spitzner and Lisande Bissonette prove to be capable of handling their roles in their triangle of love with Ken Thompson. Ken displays a convincing "two-timing barristar-at-law" as he pleasantly smiles at each of the ladies attempting to decide to which one he is currently attracted.

Jane Shields and Fred Opalinski do justice to the prospect of the least likely couple in the wood, especially in their final recognition scene. Fred should get an extra star for his convincing "bumbling servant" portrayal, resulting in the smash-up of a delicate teapot. I hope that was not an authentic antique, eh, Matey? Tony Harvey's Lob is something that must be seen to be believed. Although one may be hard pressed to separate the actor from the character, the delightful antics of a silly, old man could only be achieved by certain people--Tony is one of them.

Jim Drury deserves recognition for his handling of the lights as mentioned earlier. George Mendis, Salud Nieting, Suzy Nieting, and Kathy Drury were all part of the total crew that put the play together. I attended one of the work sessions personally and observed everyone working hard at pasting scenery together, nailing doorways together, and deciding which furniture would best fit each scene. Under the capable direction of Blanche and Bob Jenson (who makes an excellent curtain man), "Dear Brutus" became a total group effort, deserving of every bit of applause and laughter from the eight senior citizens at one performance to the overflow crowd of the Wednesday performance. Each person in the audience had a chance to consider their own wrong-turnings, their own might-have-beens, and their own second chance.

Perhaps a second chance should be considered for not only the seating arrangements, but for the seats themselves. It would be difficult to improve the seating, especially with a low stage and a flat floor, but the seats were deplorable. At least one chair was hardly fit to put coats on, much less to sit on. The play, however, triumphs in the end, and is well-worth the time to see it. Congratulations and thanks to the entire crew. We all look for more of the same!!!

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