

Table Talk

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



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Issue #9

MISSION IN SOCIAL CONTEXT

--Beth Humiler

It sounded like a test of true dedication to learning: "Will you give up one day of your interminable two-day Easter vacation to participate in a seminar on missions?" Or maybe it was a question of relative priorities: "How would you like to trade one day of vacation to get out of one day of classes?"

This kind of soul-searching wasn't necessary for our twenty-five German visitors, who were all included in the seminar whether or not they needed a rest after their visit with the Amish and Mennonites the weekend before. But it may have helped determine the twenty-five American students in the conference. The U.S. participants included fifteen students from Gettysburg, five from Philadelphia and five from Consortium schools other than Gettysburg.

The seminar was planned by Mr. Ridenhour and Mr. Gobel of the seminary faculty along with chairperson Ruth Wick of the LCA's Division for Mission in North America. They planned a broad spectrum of presentations to give the participants an overview of concepts of mission in different social contexts--whether German, American, African, or Chinese.

The basic questions asked were, "What is going on culturally and socially in different parts of the world?" and "What is the church's role in these developments?" Dr. Elizabeth Bettenhausen, Dr. Eugene Stockwell and Bishop E.E. Mshana all provided different viewpoints.

All three speakers raised questions about the role of the church. To probe these questions further, participants separated into small discussion groups. There the dissimilar viewpoints of Germans and Americans and even of Gettysburg and Philadelphia students were brought out.

The final combined session on Tuesday afternoon was a panel discussion in which German and American students discussed mission. The question-and-answer period produced the liveliest argument of the seminar, the church's relationship and responsibility to the political and social realities of the surrounding culture.

But we did not end with controversy. As we had worshipped together at the beginning and middle of the seminar, so we gathered at its end for a chapel service. The representatives of different continents joined voices, singing in two languages the hymn we know as "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty," speaking in two languages the Lord's Prayer.

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It was a strong confession of the diversity and unity of the whole conference. Although we differed in expression as well as in perception of mission, we did end together. We even all said "Amen" at the same time.

Reflections from "The Other Half"

--Cathy Bentley Digges

Becoming a part of the seminary community poses many problems for women married to students here. On arrival in Gettysburg, one finds many things changed--moving away from family and friends, leaving a job, living in an apartment that's much smaller than what one is used to. Suddenly, the woman has to cope with being the unemployed breadwinner in a town where jobs are scarce and minimal. Many couples are married shortly before moving to Gettysburg and face the added challenge of establishing their relationship during this period of transition.

In addition to changes in the physical surroundings and to role-reversals, points of conflict may arise over field education, CPE, or even with regard to Lutheranism. The woman may feel some covert expectations to go to the field ed church and participate in events there. In other cases, the field ed church may be an hour or two away and/or the seminarian may need to be gone from 6 or 7am until 10 or 11pm. Some uncertainties may also develop in conjunction with CPE, and later, internship. First there is the anxiety over getting into a good program, then the inevitable worries about housing during CPE and at the seminary the following year. Another point worth considering is that not all women who are married to seminarians are Lutheran or even active churchgoers. In such a situation, the woman may have to work against the implicit expectations of her husband in order to come to terms with her own faith and choice of religions.

It's not enough, though, to just repeat the list of grievances--perhaps there is something that each of us can do to help make the transition to seminary life more pleasant. In discussions with other members of the community I have heard these suggestions made.

Since the first obstacle which must be overcome is finding a job, perhaps the seminary could provide some assistance along those lines. It helps greatly when the seminary can hire the women directly. Another possibility would be to expand the amount of contact with local employers and to establish a job-pool of local businesses and agencies. Several people have also suggested that it would be beneficial to have more information in advance about field ed and CPE. Of course, both are explained briefly in the catalogue, but somehow one doesn't get the impression that field ed will take all of Sunday and maybe even a weeknight as well or that CPE may necessitate the woman leaving her job (if she managed to get one!) in order to spend the summer with her husband.

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This is only a very brief idea of what changes could be made here. Each "seminary wife" (which is, in itself, not the most complimentary of terms) probably has her own suggestions for changes that could be made-unless opinions are voiced and changes made, things will remain unchanged.

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Wouldn't you know it!
Everything's coming up
roses!



I planted tomatoes.

Senior Call Process

--Ralph Smith

Somehow the years of work and preparation take on new significance when viewed from the perspective of impending graduation. The simple truth that these means do have an end is for the first time an inescapable fact. So with a peculiar mixture of relief, confidence, and apprehension Seniors look to new beginnings. Call and ordination are no longer subjects of theological reflection; they are the focus of identity and reality.

But the final stages of the process are not without problems. Many seniors have experienced first-hand the troublesome politics of the Church's synodical structure. The rosy picture painted by the Northeastern U.S. Synod Presidents in a January meeting with seniors in Philadelphia and in individual conversations full of story and promise was found to contain a few shades of gray.

The Examining Process was the first sign. Though the examination procedures vary considerably in different Synods, a general dissatisfaction with the system prevails among seniors. Some committees did not do their work of preparation by reading senior LCA exams or by familiarizing themselves with the students' backgrounds. Others asked narrowly conceived and designed questions in interviews which seemed more like an interrogation for treason than a discussion of readiness for ministry. Still others asked nothing at all of consequence, neither challenging nor encouraging seniors in their new beginnings. A few, of course, did their job well, taking their task seriously and sharing openly and honestly their concerns with students. But the work of these few makes one wonder about the rest.

With the examination completed the real work began. Having chosen Synods of preference for first calls seniors began the task of meeting individually with Synod Presidents to discuss specific openings. Then the long process of developing meetings with a church Call Committee ensued. To date, nearly all seniors are or have been actively engaged in the call process with a congregation. A few have settled their call but the majority will not reach the stage of an official congregation vote before late April-early May, and for some much beyond that. But at least the numbers are encouraging this year in that sufficient openings do exist in the LCA to place all graduating seniors although it may not be in a first choice Synod.

Here again, however, students have been hampered by the variety of (sometimes conflicting) rules at work in different Synods and by the strictures placed on them. No one denies that we have come a long way since the not too distant past when seniors had no choice about where they were going for a first call. But it seems clear that the move to allow more participation and choice has been so encumbered with regulations and "safeguards", that the end result has been less than satisfactory. And some Synod Presidents have added to the confusion by their condescending attitude toward senior seminarians troubled by the prospects of a first call. Indeed, at least one President is not actively engaged in the procedure at all; the responsibility is delegated to a deployed staff.

Perhaps it is time once again for the LCA Synods, seminaries, and congregations to review the procedures and guidelines from the Examinat-

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tion Committee to the Congregational vote. First call and ordination are one of life's difficult passages for those who choose the route. A bit more seriousness and humanity in the process might result in a stronger ordained ministry and church.

Book Review

--Meredith Schwartz

Nothing bad can be said about George Boch's and Peter Wyden's book The Intimate Enemy: How to Fight Fair in Love and Marriage. Well, almost nothing. Suffice it to say that this book hits you smack in the face but with a subtleness that doesn't leave you flat on the floor.

As the title implies, it is indeed a handbook--"Bible" if you will--on getting along and being married, two things not necessarily diametrically opposed. It's a long book--375 pages--but is filled with useful, practical and understandable methods of dealing with aggression, or the lack thereof. Examples of "typical" fights are presented and analyzed. (You'll be surprised how typical fights can be!) There's a chapter on the language of love, delving into the ways we hide our feelings from each other, being afraid of censorship or repression.

The Intimate Enemy is a definite reading for anyone even the slightest bit interested in a self-help marriage. Its well-titled chapters provide easy reference for a quick review on once-read material. As it says on the back cover, (this may be) the most important (book) in your life!"

OOt of the Mouths of Babes

Small child (observing chapel in progress while looking through the narthex doors) "We can't go in there--church is going on!"

B-Ball Finale (Finally)

--Jon Helmer

The seminary basketball tournament will end April 15 with the championship game between Teams A and E. In Tuesday's game Team E stomped Team A 50-46. Since this was Team A's first loss of the tournament it was necessary to have another game between the two teams to decide the championship. If you thrive on competition and pressure situations come out and see the game. (Combat helmets will be distributed at the door.)

It's been a great season for all who participated. Thanks to all who were a part of it. A few footnotes to this season: Ralph Boyer was drafted by the Baltimore Bullets. He has decided to accept a position with the team provided they allow him to preach at half-time at all home games. Meanwhile, Mike Rainey was drafted by the Philadelphia

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Flyers of the National Hockey League. Mike, however, has declined the position saying that "hockey isn't really a physical enough sport for me." We expect him back for next year's basketball season. A moment of silence for one who will not be back next year...our commissioner, Rich "Bowie" Scheu. It'll be tough filling his shoes (after all, they're size 14). Rich has accepted a position as basketball commissioner for the Gettysburg Park Board. We're sure he will use his skills as well for them as he did for the Seminary team. (too bad for them.) (Just kidding, Rich!)...It's been a fun year. We can't wait till next year.... (Addendum: On April 15, Team A won, 50-45.)

ADIAPHORA

- Mon., April 18 Student Assoc. Meeting, Valentine 206, 2:00pm
- Wed., April 20 Student Faculty Relations, President's Office, 3:30pm
- Wed., April 20 Film: "Challenge in the Classroom," Stahley Hall, Rm. 11, 7:30pm
- April 21-25 Black Arts Festival, College Union
- Thurs., April 21 Dick Gregory, satirist and humorist, College Union Ballroom, 8:00pm
- Fri., April 22 Lecture: Culture in the Contemporary Arab World, Kamal Boulatta, Palestinian poet and artist, College Union, Rm. 231, 4:00pm
- Sat., April 23 Production: "Jesus Christ Superstar," State Correctional Institute, Camp Hill, 7:30pm (Tickeys are \$2.00 per person and may be purchased from Jim or Meredith Schartz by April 18)
- Sun., April 24 Planetarium Show: "Eclipse of the Sun and Moon," Masters Hall, 2:30 and 4:00pm
- April 25-29 Preregistration for Fall Semester
- Wed., April 27 Film: "Shoot the Piano Player," (French), Bowen Auditorium, 7:30pm
- Lecture: "Educating the Parish for Liturgy," Rev. David Gleason, Valentine Lounge, 7:30pm
- Sat., April 30 Band Concert, College Union, 8:30pm
- May 3-4 Seminary Convocation with lectures by William B. Oglesby and Bishop James Armstrong
- Production: "John Gabriel Borkman", Chancel Players, 206 Valentine Hall
- May 11 Seminary Auxiliary Day
- May 13 Graduation

Estate Planning Review

--Wayne Moritz

On the evening of April 13, the Student Lecture Committee sponsored an informative seminar on "Estate Planning." The participants included: Mr. James Tipton, Gettysburg Seminary, Mr. John Phillips, Gettysburg, Gettysburg attorney, Mr. Carl Meyer, Development Director of Susquehanna University, Mr. Harold Anderson of Lutheran Social Services--South Region, Mr. Richard Walker, Development Director of Gettysburg College.

Special emphasis was given to the pastor's role in advising members of his congregation on the formation of wills. Other topics included the need for a will, the proper procedures of drawing one up, and the complications of inheritance if no will exists. Likewise, the most useful and appropriate types of bequest gifts were explored.

Baseball

--Ken Ettinger

It's that beautiful time of year and that means BASEBALL SEASON is about to begin! Many have already signed up for a position or a team, but for those who haven't, it's not too late! Simply contact Dave Krieder or Ken Ettinger or just come to the first scheduled game to be held Thursday afternoon, April 21 at 3:30pm. The baseball field is located behind the tennis courts. Announcements regarding arrangement of teams and positions will be posted on the bulletin board in Valentine Hall by Tuesday, April 19.

NEXT ISSUE--MAY 6

Jon Holmer on baseball
Cathy Digges on "The Other Half"
Kathleen Rystad on MAR calls.

Plus an interview with our new student body president!
TT staff--Review of "John Gabriel Berkman.

That's all folks...see you next time!