

# Table Talk

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



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## Editorial

In the midst of Advent it seemed appropriate to share with you two paragraphs from a Christmas Sermon by Kaj Munk -- a sermon that perhaps can help to refocus our time of preparation for the coming Christ. Allow me first to provide a brief introduction of Munk.

Munk was born Kaj Peterson on January 13, 1898 in Denmark. He was orphaned at age six and adopted by age seven and raised by a couple surnamed Munk. He was a playwright, a patriot and a pastor. He was pastor to a village church in Vedersø from 1924 until his death. His first play was finished shortly after his ordination and entitled "The Idealist". By the time of his death he had written some fifteen plays and countless poems, articles and sermons. He was feared by the Nazis' because of his outspoken involvement with the Danish resistance movement and arrested by them in the fall of 1943. By Christmas he was released to be with his wife and five children at Vedersø only to be taken from his home by the Nazis' on January 4 and found murdered on January 5. They had left his body in a ditch with bullet holes through his head. It has been said that he was Denmark's Martin Niemöller. Over 4000 attended his funeral. The LBW commemorates Kaj Munk on Jan 5.

"We have heard a number of sermons advising us how to obtain our share of Christmas joy: 'If you are lonely and sorrowful, troubled with doubts and anxious thoughts, come, my friend, and kneel at the manger, and the manger Child will give you His peace and a share in the heavenly joy.'-- To this we may briefly say that Jesus did not come to make us happy. God has not appointed Himself an entertainment committee. It may be true that to know Christ is to be

truly happy. But if you want to know Christ in order to further your own well-being you are guilty of sacrilege. Christ is the object of our faith, and he who wants to use Him as a mere expedient is a blasphemer....

"The pagan Christmas with eating and drinking and parties and family joy may well be contained in the Christian celebration, but it can never take the place of it. Jesus Himself took an interest in family life, and He attended parties; but He was, nevertheless, ever on His way to the cross. Let us sing Ingemann songs and eat goose and play with our children about the glittering Christmas tree; but we must never forget that the coming of Christ to earth means dauntless struggle against evil. And if we kneel by the manger in other than sentimental moods, we shall become aware that one hand of the little Child is open and kindly, the other clenched in blood." (Kaj Munk. Four Sermons. Lutheran Publishing House; Blair, Nebraska, 1944.)

a.e.c.p.y.

## Book Review

Gritsch, Eric W., Born Againism: Perspectives on a Movement, Fortress Press, 1982, avail. Bookstore and Library, \$4.50.

One thing for certain, this book is causing somewhat of a stir among conservative evangelicals. In a recent issue of Christianity Today (Oct. 82), the reviewer, John Warwick Montgomery, calls Gritsch's book and others like it "serious backlashes" to the evangelical movement, and "theological aberrations". Montgomery is, himself, an evangelical of the conservative bent and would indeed find Gritsch's insights somewhat unpalatable. Nevertheless Montgomery's review of Gritsch highlights one of the less desirable aspects of this "dialogue" between evangelicals and non-evangelicals. It so very often reverts to mere name-calling.

Gritsch's book is an attempt to engage the evangelical movement (s) in a meaningful

dialogue. The book is divided roughly into two equal halves, the first dealing with a historical outline of the evangelical movement from its roots in millennialism, through the fundamentalist movements, to its modern form of the 'holiness' or charismatic movement. In examining each of these manifestations of Christianity in their historical contexts, Gritsch is attempting to point out both their failures and successes. He uses the historian's eye here to simply view the events of history that produced and enhanced these movements, and to interpret them in the light of 20th century Orthodox Christian understanding.

The second half of the book is issue oriented, dealing with such issues as morality, baptism, secularity, glossolalia, etc. Here I found Gritsch less than clear. Restrictions of both space and a desire to be ecumenical in outlook seemingly hampered him in his efforts to delineate the problems and expound them. At times he presupposes knowledge of technical language on the part of the reader, language that is open to various interpretations, e.g. 'a cruciform life', to 'encounter' Christ, just to name a few. Anyone who has read his book on Lutheranism (written with R. Jenson) will at once recognize these catch-phrases and understand their meanings. Likewise, if careful consideration is given to the content of the book, his use of such language can be inferred. Its meaning, however, is not overt, and misinterpretation and lack of understanding, in this reviewer's opinion, could ensue on the part of the reader.

Nevertheless, I would stress that Gritsch's book is, for the most part, clear and concise. He attempts to direct the dialogue with the evangelical movement in an appropriate direction by 1.) asking the correct ecumenical questions concerning the issues of baptism, glossolalia, morality, etc; 2.) directing a not-so-subtle polemic against the 'self' pre-occupation, improper understanding of biblical authority, and the restitutional, idealized goal of Christian life proffered by these groups; while at the same time holding in tension their very proper critique of puritan ethics and morality, religion of the head (Greek metaphysical tradition) and lack of vitality in the worship life of the church; and 3.) offers his own definition of "born againism", stating that to be born again means "to be born again and again in

the encounter (through the communications event of the Gospel) with the gospel of Christ crucified. . . " and to live a "cruciform life".

Gritsch has rightly pointed out that the three typical responses of pastors in the field to evangelical extremism is integration, theological confrontation, and separation. He seemingly encourages us not to 'throw the baby out with the bathwater' when confronting such movements, rather, to confront them theologically in an effort toward mutually constructive dialogue with goals for either integration or separation based on sound theological judgment, not name-calling. This book is designed as an educational tool for pastors and congregations facing this issue. Gritsch provides the necessary foundation for both education and dialogue to begin. I highly recommend it.

clf

NEW BOOKS OF INTEREST: bookstore only

#### Old Testament

Carmody, D.L., The Oldest God, Archaic Religions Yesterday and Today, Abingdon Press, 1981, \$5.25.

Zimmerli, W., I Am Yahweh, trans. Brueggemann, W., John Knox Press, 1982.

#### New Testament

Martin, R.A., and Elliot, J.H., Augsburg Commentaries on the New Testament; James, I - II Peter/Jude, Augsburg Press, 1982, \$6.00.

Mitchell, J.G., Fellowship; Three Letters from John, Multnomah Press, 1974, \$3.75.

#### Theology

Eller, V., The Language of Canaan and the Grammar of Feminism, Eerdmans Press, 1982, \$2.25.

Kung, H., Structures of the Church, Crossroads Press, 1982, \$9.75.

#### Religion/Psychology

Hale, S., A Cry for Help, for Families of Alcohol - and Other Drug-Dependent Persons, Fortress Press, 1982, \$2.65.

Kelsey, M.T., Afterlife, the Other Side of Dying, Crossroads Press, 1982, \$6.00.

#### History

Nestingen, J.A., Martin Luther, His Life and Teachings, Fortress Press, 1982, \$3.00.

Plantinga, T., Learning to Live with Evil, Eerdmans Press, 1982, \$4.50.

Allaneous

ron, D., OLDE CHARLIE FARQUHARSON'S TESTAMENT: from Jennysez to Jobe and After Words, Macmillan of Canada, 1978, \$8.25.

Wallis, J., Waging Peace, a Handbook for the Struggle to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, Harper and Row, 1982, \$3.75.

"We'll stick to the oral Word. The devil can't stay where this means (of grace) is. So, for example, there are people who can't stand a bodily God, as God became flesh for us. They want to have a spiritual God and boast of their use (of the Word,) though the use without the fact is a figment of the imagination. God's sending (of his Son into the flesh) is a fact. The sacrament of baptism is a fact....I'd like to ask a fanatic how he becomes certain from his thoughts and the arguments of his own heart apart from the Word. We have the Scriptures, miracles, sacraments, testimonies. God sent his Son into the flesh, and of him it was said that men saw him, touched him, etc. We intend to stick to this. If they don't hear us in God's name, they may hear others who speak in their own names. Let him who doesn't want the truth believe a lie. This is what will happen to the world."

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L.W., Amer. Ed. vol 54.

## *Pastoral Issues*

In an interview with Larry Cunnings, a Gettysburg Seminary student, we discussed at length his experiences within the charismatic movement. After about a decade of absence from the organized church Cunnings was invited by his sister to participate in a charismatic fellowship. This involvement, which lasted approximately two years, eventually led him back to the Lutheran Church and later to enrollment in seminary.

The scriptural basis for the structure of the fellowship came from Galatians 5:22 and I Corinthians 12,13, and 14, which deal with the attributes of a spirit-filled Christian and with numerous spiritual gifts such as prophecy and "ecstatic

utterances."

A group of 10-35 mainstream Protestants and Roman Catholics from a diverse age range and professional background made up the charismatic membership. In their weekly meetings, which began in homes, they came seeking a close, personal fellowship, a reaffirmation of their faith, and a better understanding of the Gospel.

One of the experiences they shared was teaching from scripture. Such teaching came only after meditation on the meaning of the verses and daily strict, disciplined study of the particular Bible passages. Also typical of the charismatic meetings were songs of praise, speaking in tongues, prayers for healing, prophesying, witnessing, and the sharing of "words of wisdom". The latter refers to words which are received as a message from God. Sharing of the Peace of the Lord, followed by embraces and kisses, was also an integral part of the charismatic meetings.

Praise singing followed an impromptu, spontaneous style. While singing the members often closed their eyes, lifted up their hands, and let their emotions carry them through to a mutually agreed upon stopping point. After the singing ceased, there might be a peaceful mood or sometimes a dissonant, angry, unresolved feeling.

There are a number of pastoral issues related to the charismatic movement; some negative, some positive. Cunnings identifies some possible dangers the pastor needs to be aware of: 1) rigid thinking which views the charismatic approach as the only approach, 2) involvement of inappropriate leadership, and 3) church contention and dissension resulting from excitement and extreme enthusiasm in the movement.

The pastor needs to be aware that charismatic involvement is spurred by the desire for a more personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Also, charismatic meetings often spark greater church attendance, more praise singing, and testimony. Cunnings observes that the Lutheran liturgy can sometimes inhibit expressions of emotion, joy, and praise. On the other hand, he does not recommend a "loose rein" during worship. Cunnings believes that a pastor who is aware of the needs of both the "charismatic" and "traditional" groups must then be open to both groups, to allow fellowship to continue as a unified body in Christ.

Eventually the group of which Cunnings was a part dissolved due to leadership difficulties, a basic lack of structure, and

the fact that the group did not change as rapidly as individuals within it changed. He views it as having served a viable purpose in his life, as a step in his spiritual development. He and others in the group "graduated" and went on to other ministries.

sbm



## Interview

In the Spotlight: Richard Nelson

Our newest and youngest faculty member is Richard D. Nelson, 37, Assistant Professor of Old Testament. A year ago, when he had been teaching at the seminary less than two months, he was amazed to discover that the junior class had decorated the Luther statue as a likeness of him, on the occasion of the Luther Colloquy.

"I was thrilled! I felt like I'd gotten an honorary degree!" he exclaimed recently, looking at a photo of the statue as it was decorated -- with beard, bicycle, and the sign "A wandering Aramean was my father. . . ."

Richard Nelson comes to Gettysburg from the American Lutheran Church -- his mother is second-generation Norwegian and his father, third-generation Swedish. After childhood years in Gary, Indiana, and teen years in Pittsburgh ("I was a science buff in high school"), he

had decided to go into the ministry by his senior year in high school.

"I used to read Haley's Bible Handbook in high school. Once, in Bible camp, I asked the teacher about some discrepancies in scripture. He suggested that if I wanted to know the answers, I should go to a seminary. And if the questions interested me, I should be a seminary teacher."

Nelson attended Capital University, a Lutheran college in Columbus, Ohio, and majored in New Testament Greek -- in a program Gerhard Krodel had begun just a few years earlier.

He graduated after three years (he did summer school at Duquesne), in 1966 -- summa cum laude -- and went to Capital Evangelical Lutheran Theological Seminary in Columbus (now known as Trinity).

"I originally wanted to teach New Testament; I'd been a Greek major, but professor Ron Hals sold me on the Old Testament so much that I thought the New Testament was sterile by comparison. It's his fault! So I studied Hebrew for the first time at seminary. By my senior year I was teaching it -- they were really desperate. But that's when I really learned it.

"Karen and I were married my second year of seminary; then I did my internship at Rocky Point, New York, on the north shore of Long Island. After graduating in 1970, I went immediately on to grad school. You see, I had this wife who could work -- she supported me for years! So, I'm stuck with her. . . ."

Grad school was Union Seminary in Richmond, Va., where Nelson received the Master of Theology degree in 1971, and the Doctor of Theology in 1973. His dissertation, "The Double Redaction of the Deuteronomistic History," he reworked for publication as a paperback book in 1981 (by the Journal for the Study of Old Testament Press, University of Sheffield, England).

"I loved Richmond -- a town of southern gentility. I met professional blacks for the first time -- Karen taught, mostly with black teachers. I did some preaching in black churches."

Somehow they fitted in a trip to Israel for five weeks, and did a stint at the Gezer archeological dig, which is no longer open.

"After graduation, I was without a call for nine months; we lived with my parents. Then I served as interim pastor at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Pittsburgh, was called and ordained there in 1974, and served as pastor there until I left in 1977.

"That's where I met charismatics in the parish. They had driven my predecessor away.



The members of the church had had the speaking in tongues experience and wanted others to have the experience. They were very responsible people, pillars of the church. I had no problem with them, really. I think I successfully demonstrated acceptance of their experience.

"But they decided to leave when the congregation didn't follow their lead. There was a lot of tension until they left; this issue was underlying everything. About fifteen left; we were sorry, but it was not a bad experience.

"I just didn't think their experience was normative for all. In fact, I felt good when their leader told me, 'You are just too Lutheran.' Yes, it was a theological mismatch -- there was no way our theology could match. So it was a friendly divorce....I think everyone grew.

"Then I got a letter inviting me to interview at Gettysburg Seminary, and I came to interview for a job. But teaching experience was required, and I had very little. So, I realized I had to get that experience, and got a teaching job at Ferrum College, in Ferrum, Virginia -- in the foothills of the Blue Ridge. Ferrum is particularly known as a college that helps marginal students, with low grades but high motivation, to get an education."

While they were at Ferrum, the Nelsons' second child was born -- the first had been born in Pittsburgh. Danny is now seven and Gretchen is three; and in early February the Nelsons are expecting -- "at least one more."

What does he think of Gettysburg Seminary? "I love it! I'm surprised they pay me to do this! The faculty are very congenial, and pretty talented, overall. I'm having a good time! I think the students are motivated and serious. I don't think they are as well prepared academically as we were; but this is a more cosmopolitan community, and the students are incomparably more aware of the real world.

"But when it comes to languages, we were supposed to have had Greek plus one modern language. Students don't know as much history and literature as we did." He would like to see the curriculum adjusted so that there is real Greek reading ability -- maybe a qualifying exam for seniors.

"I kinda like the loose curriculum we have. It seems to be pretty well balanced. It's shaped, of course, by the number and expertise of the faculty at hand. We have three church historians, and only one and a half New Testament teachers. We need one more to teach in New Testament and liturgics. My feeling is, this institution should not hire a chaplain. The need for another faculty member is the greater need.

"Students with problems can come to this office, and talk with me. There are all kinds of persons here one could find to be comfortable with. But some say it's not acceptable if the chaplain is a faculty member." He shrugs his shoulders.

"What interests and surprises me about students is they don't seem to be as politically active. Or they don't seem to see social activism as an outgrowth of their studies. They seem unpassionate about political and social issues, compared to my days in the Vietnam/civil rights era. But then, the faculty here are not political firebrands. I'm not anymore, myself.

"Don't you want to ask me what irritates me about the LCA the most?"

Compliant interviewer: "What irritates you about the LCA the most?"

Nelson: "It seems very provincial. Concerns don't seem to get outside synodical boundaries. Its system of vocational assessment and certification for ordination -- it's a poor way of doing it. I believe synods should have committees; but the synod committees we've got don't have the theologically astute talent to guide and evaluate students. I'd rather see the seminary faculty do that. I'm used to the ALC process.

"The LCA synodical system rewards the conventional, penalizes the eccentric. Faculties are more tolerant of oddness. Everybody who's 'different' has to be worked through by their seminary supporters. I think faculties could catch unqualified people sooner. The faculty may see deficiencies better and earlier than these committees can.

"My hopes for the new church? One that is more centralized than the LCA's parochialism. Some pastors spend their entire ministerial lives in one synod.

"I'd like to see the name 'bishop' dropped -- unless they're elected for life, are consecrated, and do something bishoply: like ordain, confirm -- not just be pastors to pastors, and administrators, but have relationships to congregations. They ought to be elected, and look and do like bishops -- or else not use the term."

During the summer Mr. Nelson teaches courses for lay persons and pastors. "Next summer I hope to hole up for a month and write something. My great project would be a full-scale theology of the Deuteronomistic history -- no one's tried it the way I want to. But I'm tired of the Deuteronomistic history right now. I'd like to write something popular someday."

He has done a study guide on Proverbs and Ecclesiastes for the ALC -- called A Word for the Wise. "Currently I'm writing on Amos for the Search Bible series -- a five-year program for lay people. The first part is to be published in 1983. Amos isn't until the fourth year -- but my deadline is May, 1983. ...Just like students, sometimes I don't make my deadlines. That's life."

jbh

Recently, I interviewed a third grader for Dr. Gobel's Children in the Church class. The child lives on the third floor of West Hall. While discussing the parting of the Red Sea, I asked if miracles happen today. The child answered Yes, and I asked if she could give an example of a present-day miracle.

After a brief pause, the reply was, "Well, like if they would put an elevator in this building. That would be a miracle!"

The residents of West Hall are still waiting.

Randy Marburger



'Sam — Drop Your Gun and Repent'

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- December 10 8:00 p.m. "La Cage Aux Folles," College Union, G.C.  
WINE AND CHEESE PARTY
- 11 8:00 p.m. "Scrooge," College Union, G.C.
- 12 1:00 p.m. "Special Starlight"- Annual Christmas Program, Planetarium, G.C.  
3:00 p.m. same as above  
3:00 p.m. Messiah "Sing-In", C.C., G.C.
- 17 END OF SEMESTER
- January 3 BEGINNING OF MIDDLE TERM
- 6 8:00 p.m. Performing Arts Theatre, National Players, G.C.
- 7 8:00 p.m. "All Quiet On The Western Front," College Union, G.C.  
8:00 p.m. Recital, Leslie Burrs, Composer in Residence, Schmucker, G.C.
- 8 7:30 p.m. EDDIE BONNEMERE TRIO, CONCERT, CHAPEL
- 9 3:00 p.m. Sr. Recital, Richard Hurlbrink, tenor, Schmucker, G.C.
- 11 noon Lecture, Leslie Burrs, Composer in Residence, Schmucker, G.C.  
7:30 p.m. THIRD ANNUAL COMMUNITY SERVICE; A CELEBRATION OF MARTIN LUTHER  
KING, JR., RALPH ABERNATHY, PREACHER, CHAPEL
- 14 8:00 p.m. "Taps", College Union, G.C.
- 15 8:00 p.m. "The Boat Is Full", College Union, G.C.  
8:00 p.m. Concordia College Jazz Ensemble, College Union, G.C.
- 16 3:00 p.m. Sr. Recital, Joyce Scheyhing, soprano, Schmucker, G.C.

G.C. = Gettysburg College

C.C. = Christ Chapel

TABLE TALK began many years ago in a converted Augustinian Monastery in Electoral Saxony. Then due to the untimely death of its sole contributor, it ceased publication. It was started up again in 1964 by seminary students who clearly were not bothered by humility. In 1980, due to an all too literal Diet of Worms, it once again expired. It is being hauled back from the grave for one more go round due to the Publications Committee Chairman's highly developed sense of responsibility. The staff includes: Ann Rinderknecht Yeago, General Editor; Carol E.A. Fryer, Art Editor; Craig Fourman, Book Review Editor; Judith Beck Helm, Interview Editor; Marlene A. Nelson, Events Editor; Sue B. Mielke, Pastoral Issues Editor; Leann Fourman, Typist; Scott Noon and Bill Weiser, Business Managers; Mary McWilliams, Washington News Editor. Arcticles (including Letters to the Editor and Classified Ads) may be submitted to A. Yeago no later than the last Friday of each month and must include your name. Staff deadline for columns is the first Friday of each month. TABLE TALK will be circulated on the second Friday of each month.

Contributors in this issue: Randy Marburger



Figure 30. Joseph lights a fire



Figure 31. Joseph dries the diapers