

Table Talk

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



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Stele of G'burg?

(This anonymous contribution from some members of the junior class was called to our attention by Mr. Nelson. Here is the letter he received.)

Rick-

This was found when the cannon was removed from in front of Singmaster. Could it be the Lutheran Stele of Gettysburg? Any documentary hypotheses or form criticism insights?

And it was in that time that Ricky, son of Nel, was sojourning with his tribes. And they passed through lands of many battles. They were spared the wrath of mighty generals who stood firm on those lands. But he felt lost and alone.

*And Ricky, son of Nel, desired to know if anyone was plotting evil against him; and he said to Karen the priestess, "Bring the ephod here." Then he called to the LORD, "What is to happen to us in this land, and how will we know that you are present?" And the LORD said unto Ricky, "What will be will be, and you shall know me by that name."**

And then he lead his family to the far side of the lake (that is, Knodel) and he lay his head upon a stone. And in his sleep an angel of the LORD appeared and said unto him, "I have heard your wailing and gnashing of teeth. Know that I, the GOD OF WHAT WILL BE, have not deserted you. I have lead you to this land plentiful with squirrels. I will make of you a great teacher of generations to come. Your

pupils shall be as many as the leaves on the ground. You will be blessed with many students. And they will be wise, intelligent, industrious, creative, curious, attentive, insightful, clever, and neat."

And the angel said unto him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Ricky." Then the angel said, "You shall no longer be called Ricky, but Richard. For you shall be rich in wisdom and students."

And Richard said, "How shall the students listen to me, and how shall I be confident in that which I teach; I who am a man of uncircumcised lips? How will I know what is truly your word, when there are those who come from Wesley and Eastly ways also teaching people?" And the angel said, "I will set before you this man Luther. Teach boldly in his ways."

*Richard awoke. He took the stone which he had put under his head and carved from it a likeness of this man Luther. And he built next to that a sanctuary to the LORD as a reminder of his abiding presence.** And he made garments of fine twined linen and blue and purple and scarlet stuff. These he made to be sumptuous vestments for service in the sanctuary. And he gathered his four tribes in this place and made offerings to the LORD of eucalyptus leaves. Then sang Karen the priestess on that day:*

"Most blessed of instructors be Richard, son of Nel. Of wisdom imparters most blessed."

* Heb, Que Sera Sera

** That is, the Church of the Abiding Presence

Chaplain's Corner

As All Saint's Day approached this year, it had special personal meaning because I was immersed in remembering one of my seminary professors from 40 years ago-- Dr. Bertha Paulssen. I hope you will go to see her portrait in the lounge. The committee responsible for planning the convocation in her honor had invited me, for this tenth anniversary of her death, to compile memoirs submitted by 27 of her former students and friends.

Doing that was for me, and I believe for many others, a powerful kind of remembering in the biblical sense -- experiencing once more in the present what we had known to be so in the past. Dr. Paulssen was a refugee from Nazi Germany. She was a person of broad cultural interests; a scholar particularly qualified to integrate the disciplines of theology, psychology, and sociology; a woman of profound Christian faith whose mystical spirituality expressed itself in utterly practical discipleship; a teacher whose charisma and enthusiasm continue to affect her students in an unusual and remarkable way.

Above all, those who submitted memoirs testify to the love and delight she felt toward her students. They speak of her sensitivity and compassion, her caring and support, her availability and specialized treatment of each one as a respected individual. Her interest in them persisted long after graduation. One of them wrote: "...Part of being young is not to know that there are not Bertha Paulssens around every bend in the road, and I wish I had truly learned to know her better when there was one."

Forty years later, students still have the opportunity of associating with and learning to know uniquely stimulating and influential people who are rich in personal resources -- particularly among the faculty but also among fellow-students and others within the seminary community. It is a privilege, while reading many important books,

to be nurtured also by the people who surround us as a gift of God. The books can be re-read. The lives cannot be re-lived. So, while you can, be blessed by the communion of saints -- not just those from the past but those who are with you now. --Robert W. Koons

QUIPS AND QUOTES

STARS

Vague new light, gathered and pressed
Molten in his hands,
Then flung like diamond flecks
Across the dimensionless expanse of void.
Suddenly
There was
Perspective
Intrigue
Pattern
Familiarity.
And dark became
Night.

by Janet Comings

In short, the church is a dwelling, in order that God may be loved and heard. Not wood or stones, not dumb animals, it should be people, who know, love, and praise God. And that you may be able to trust God with certainty in all things, including cross and suffering, you should know that it is the true church, even though it be made up of scarcely two believing persons. That's why Christ says: He who loves me keeps my word; there I will dwell, there you have my church.

--Martin Luther

Christ is not valued at all unless he be above all. --Augustine

Faith, like light, should always be simple and unbending; while love, like warmth, should beam forth on every side and bend to every necessity of our brethren. --Martin Luther

BOOK REVIEW

Toward a Christian Political Ethics,
by Jose Miguez Bonino, Philadelphia: Fortress
Press, 1983. 115 pages.

If we have been reading The Lutheran recently, we are aware that, at least in Minnesota, Lutheran Christians who believe that the church has a role and responsibility toward secular politics are in a minority. If we read the letters to the editor of The Lutheran, we know that some of our sister and brother Lutherans adamantly oppose any involvement of the church in the political order which might disrupt the status quo. Most of studying and teaching in this institution would, I suspect, disagree with the majority of Minnesota Lutherans, would believe that a part of the church's mission is to act in some way (perhaps, as yet undefined) to right the injustice we continually see around us. It is the intention of Miguez Bonino's book to begin an ecumenical discussion which can lead to the development of a theological and ethical base from which a viable Christian political praxis can develop; a base from which "the 'frozen protest' against the world as it is, the story of God's struggle against chaos and injustice to create a human life, the story of the power of the cross and resurrection, [can] be unfrozen and transformed into a historical will for change, into an active hope" (105).

Miguez Bonino offers no solutions, offers no recipes for social reform, offers no idealistic views that a new Kingdom of God on earth is just around the corner if we can only learn to love our fellow humans. Rather, he raises questions and suggests that Christians must begin the difficult task of developing "an incarnational ethics which would affirm: (1) the ultimacy of the christological determination of ethical priorities, whereby Jesus Christ in his historical and permanent ministry is the measure and power of God's purpose in the world; and (2) the significance of historical action and fulfillment as assumed in God's permanent concern, initiative, and action for humanization in history" (81).

Miguez Bonino notes the urgency of the task he sets before the church when he writes that "we seem to have reached a point in the history of human kind . . . when the 'inevitable consequences' of the so-called objective exigencies [i.e., the seemingly inviolable laws which determine fundamental political decisions about economy, education, use of resource, population policy, arms production] threaten to lead us to self-destruction" (15).

In raising the questions which Miguez Bonino sees as central in the development of a Christian political ethic and praxis, he turns to the Bible, to Luther, to Barth and Tillich (among others) and to the experience of the church in Latin America to discover both precedent and promise to guide the difficult task he sets before the church, a task which is, he writes "necessarily an ecumenical task, both in the sense of demanding a worldwide perspective and the participation of Christians from a wide range of places and traditions [i.e. the liberation theology of the Latin American church cannot be merely translated into English] and in the sense of drawing from the insights of diverse disciplines. Above all, it is a task that cannot be accomplished at a purely theoretical level, but must be related to praxis--a praxis that is entered into and reflected on critically" (17).

-submitted by Bob White



The staff for this month's issue of the Table Talk includes:

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A special thanks to all of those who contributed this month!!!

INTERVIEW

The following interview was conducted with Dr. Eric W. Gritsch.

Q: Dr. Gritsch, what type of things are you doing in celebration for the 500th anniversary of Luther?

A: In Gettysburg we have the colloquy with the lectures and Birthday Party. In Washington we have the Jubilee from the 6th-12th and I will be lecturing on the exact date-the 10th. Throughout the year I was in East Germany for ten days with other Luther scholars and chaired a section on the Lutheran Society. My book is coming out Nov. 1 also.

Q: What do you want to get across to people during this important event?

A: I want to make him known as he was through what people read, films, to go to events. But I especially want to get across the ecumenical importance of Luther. Luther has become to Catholics the "Father in the faith" which was St. Paul's title for Abraham. Luther has become more popular. Mt. St. Mary's College, Emmitsburg, MD. is celebrating their 175th anniversary and are celebrating Luther and St. Mary together.

Q: How has the Catholic opinion of Luther changed?

A: After the Second Vatican Council it was impossible to condemn Luther with his emphasis on Biblical theology. He was a conservative liturgical reformer.

Q: Is the popular opinion of Luther far from the real man Luther?

A: There was a time when Luther supporters glorified him. I think now there is a squaring off and it has to do with the interest in religion in general. I think at the present time some in the U.S. get excited about the postal office bringing out a stamp on Nov. 11. Particularly some of the representatives of Judaism are against that because of Luther's very satirical outbursts against Jews. But we've had significant encounters with the Jewish community in this country which I've participated in since last May where

we could see the facts. Lutherans say that they don't support Luther's anti-Jewish statements. Luther was a child of his time, but that's no excuse to say where he was wrong or right. Besides, Lutherans don't believe in Luther, they believe in creeds, Jesus Christ, Scripture, and so forth.

We should get to know Luther as a father of the Church like many others; Augustine, Thomas, Kierkegaard, etc. and recognize him in the Christian tradition, the pros and cons. Besides, he was a prolific man.

Q: How much more aware is the laity of the contributions of Luther that in the past?

A: Ten or twelve years ago, most of us scholars concluded that people don't know Luther very well, which lead to, among other things, our Luther institute. But there is little known about Luther even among Lutherans and it would be helpful to know some things he supported, such as; preserving liturgy in the sense of preserving Christian tradition and not throwing everything out as say; Calvin, Zwingli, and other reformers; and also being atune to creating and leading a wholistic life and enjoying human relationships.

Q: How far away have we as Lutherans come from Luther's ideas?

A: We have moved away from the 16th century. I don't know if this is a negative development. We had to join the ecumenical world. We were made to be ecumenical. On the other hand, there are certain criteria that we have to be made aware of. And I think that Lutherans like many other groups, have not carefully investigated and appreciated the Christian heritage. Often we placed immigrant values much higher. We would do better to see ourselves in the long mainstream of Christian tradition. It takes critical discernment and we're only beginning stages to train our people, pastors, to do this. Seminaries would be a key to this. I personally still think that we need better trained pastors particularly in two twin pillars: education and worship. A pastor used to be, and should be, a kind of a Christian Rabbi, a bit of a scholar, who has a wisdom about life, and continues to educate him or herself. We still have a long way to go due to the isolation demonination-ism imposes and also the American system of competition between congregations.

Q: How did you get to be interested in the Reformation?

A: I grew up in a Lutheran parsonage in Austria where 4% of the population was Lutheran. I learned early on what it meant to be Lutheran. I became interested in the Reformation through an assignment. When I had my final exams in Europe in 1956, my assignment was a man called Thomas Munster, leader of the peasants war. And I was to do a research paper on the theological foundations of his program. I started from the "left wing" of the Reformation and moved towards Luther. Luther is not my exclusive interest now, but an axial point in history.

Q: Are you excited about your book coming out in November?

A: Yes. It was hard work and it's the biggest book I have ever done. It was written for some popular consumption. An author has feelings about books, like children. They are out there reading their own lives. You only know how good it is after reading the reviews. I've become a bit experienced about it so I let people read it before it is published. I had Professor Bainton read it and the Dean of Catholic University read it, so at least I had one Protestant and one Catholic give me a critique which I could feed back into the book.

Q: Is it difficult to write a book when so much has been written?

A: Writing in general is difficult. As a writer we write without blood. It took a long time to get to know Luther, fifteen years or so. This is not a technical, scholarly book, and I refuse to write one of these because it is not in the spirit of Luther. Only about Jesus Christ are there more books written than about Luther.

Q: What do you particularly want to say about the 500th?

A: The 500th is a very important event because for the first time Luther is appreciated worldwide.

There is a multiple involvement of interest in Luther from Marxists, Catholics, Lutherans, Protestants, those interested in culture. There has been a real encounter with Luther, not just by scholars, and I think that that would be for the first time.

PETER'S FOUNTAIN

(adapted to Luther by Eric W. Gritsch)

1. When the church became fat and bland,
God devised a new plan,
He called forth from the Saxon land,
a particular man.

REFRAIN: Di-ri-a-hollara-dira-a-
hollara-cuckoo,
hollara-diri-a-hollara-
cuckoo,
hollara-diri-a-hollara-
cuckoo,
hollara-diri-a-ho.
(To be repeated with an
additional cuckoo after
each stanza.)

2. Martin Luther came on the scene,
with both knowledge and wit,
and when challenged by the Roman team,
he refused to quit.

REFRAIN

3. Soon a movement of reform arose,
and spread the good news,
that the church would now get a dose
of the gospel in the pews.

REFRAIN

4. When the pope and the emperor
tried to change his views,
Brother Martin stuck to his guns,
and preached God's very good news.

REFRAIN

5. Justification by faith alone
He proclaimed with good cheer,
Instead of worrying over works,
it is better to drink beer.

REFRAIN

6. "Here I stand," Luther said at Worms,
"I'm captive to God's word.
and my conscience is bound to norms
which defy bull and sword."

REFRAIN

...continued.

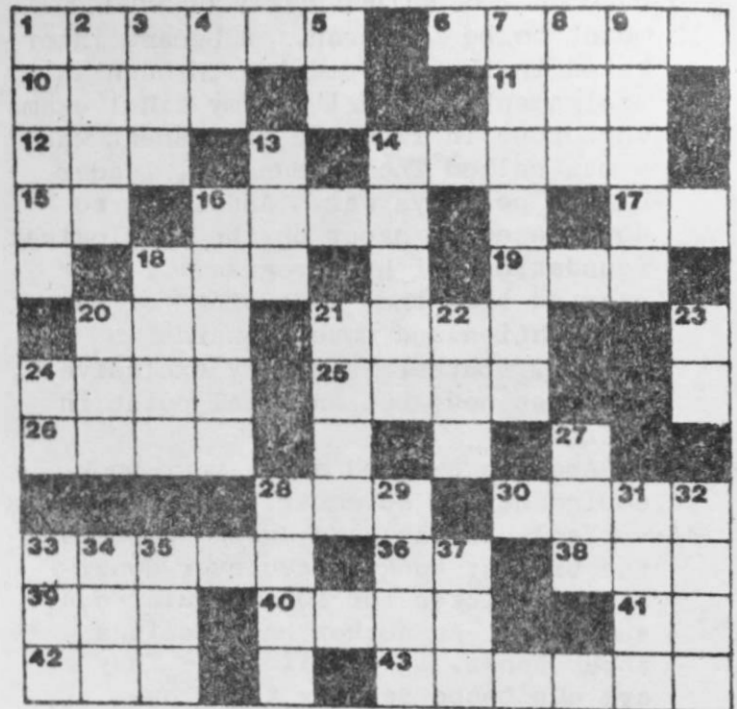
7. With the aid of strong princes
Luther reformed the church,
and succeeded in leaving
Rome and pope in the lurch.
REFRAIN

8. The lesson of history
is clear and to the point:
When Christians have lost their salt,
God will clean up the joint.
REFRAIN

9. Today we honor Martin
for taking his stand,
Thus preventing us Christians
From becoming too bland.
REFRAIN

From The Parish Visitor, Moxham Lutheran
Church, Johnstown, PA.

BOOK OF GENESIS



ACROSS

- 1 The Book of Genesis is an introduction to the history of _____.
- 6 Chapter 11 of Genesis tells the story of the Tower of _____.
- 10 Something to sit upon.
- 11 A container.
- 12 Small insect.
- 14 The Great Flood in Genesis lasted _____ days.
- 15 "After Christ."
- 16 Place of evil.
- 17 Point (abbrev.).
- 18 Large vehicle of transportation.
- 19 Opposite of cold.
- 20 Not bright.
- 21 State of unconsciousness.
- 24 Information.
- 25 First man.
- 26 A sign; prophetic meaning.
- 28 Girl's name.
- 30 God created Eve using Adam's rib _____.
- 33 Son of Isaac; patriarch of Israel.
- 36 Either/_____.
- 38 Short for father.
- 39 Period of time.
- 40 Twin brother of Jacob.
- 41 Myself.
- 42 Number of commandments.
- 43 God's home.

DOWN

- 1 Son of Abraham, patriarch of Israel.
- 2 Cause to go; emit.
- 3 A rodent.
- 4 In, on; by.
- 5 Sixth tone of the musical scale.
- 7 Patriarch of the Israelites.
- 8 Used to hit a baseball.
- 9 Country of exile for the Israelites.
- 13 Affirmative answer.
- 14 God sent a _____; Noah escaped by building the Ark.
- 16 Having to do with people.
- 18 Chew.
- 20 Holds back water.
- 21 Adam's son; killed Abel.
- 22 On the sixth day God created _____.
- 23 Opposite of down.
- 24 To finish, perform.
- 27 Oug Creator.
- 28 Son of Adam; killed by Cain.
- 29 Built the Ark to escape the Great Flood.
- 31 Title of person.
- 32 God sent Adam and Eve from the Garden of _____.
- 33 Fast plane.
- 34 Plural of "is."
- 35 Is able.
- 37 Be sorry for; regret.

If you are willing to review a book for Table Talk, have we got a deal for you! Many new book releases will be offered at half-price in conjunction with Table Talk. There is a limit of one book per person and a limit on the number of books per semester. If you are interested, see Mary Anne Bieber, Louise Knotts, or Karen Stiles. Several new releases now in the bookstore include: The New Testament and Homosexuality, by Robin Scroggs; Anatomy of an Explosion - A Theological Analysis of the Missouri Synod Conflict, by Kurt E. Marquart; The Darkness of God, Theology after Hiroshima, by Jim Garrison; Francis: A Saint We Share, A discussion guide for Lutherans and Roman Catholics, by Gail Ramshaw Schmidt; and many, many, more. For a more complete listing of new releases and more information, contact one of the three people mentioned above.

SHALL I DO?
 Mattered he was
 Not a pretty sight
 After the thieves and the elements
 Victims seldom are
 When they've been cudged down and
 abandoned
 Along some Jericho road or other
 They have little left to thank you with
 And Jesus knew
 We cannot be allowed to pick among our
 neighbors
 But, given an example,
 Commanded
 In need, in passing
 In invitation
 To love.

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A continuing commitment

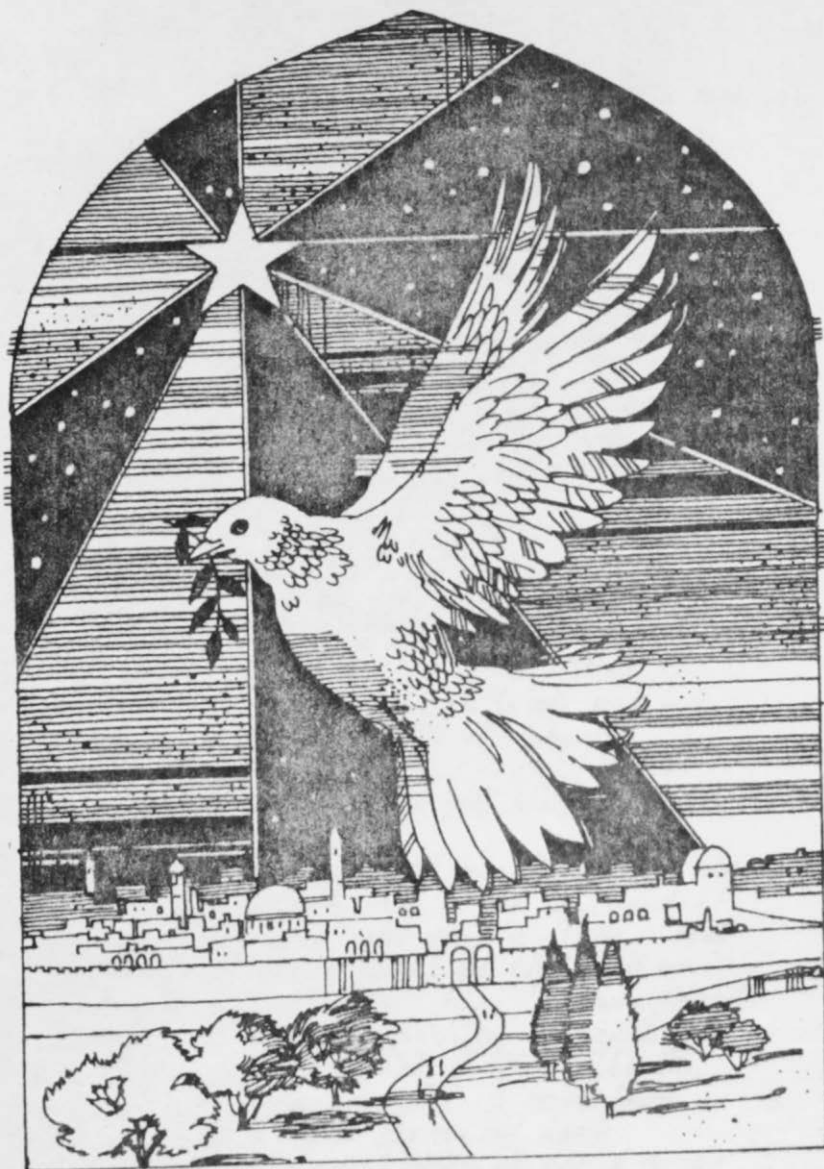
...that's what AAL's symbol stands for. It's a commitment
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O Come, O Come, Emmanuel !



from Isaiah 9:

- 2 The people who walked in
darkness
have seen a great light.

They lived in a land of
shadows,
but now light is shining on
them.
- 3 You have given them great
joy, Lord;
you have made them happy.
They rejoice in what you have
done,
as people rejoice when they
harvest grain
or when they divide
captured wealth.
- 4 For you have broken the yoke
that burdened them
and the rod that beat their
shoulders.
You have defeated the nation
that oppressed and exploited
your people,
just as you defeated the
army of Midian long ago.
- 5 The boots of the invading
army
and all their bloodstained
clothing
will be destroyed by fire.
- 6 A child is born to us!
A son is given to us!
And he will be our ruler.
He will be called, "Wonderful"
Counselor," "Mighty God," "Eternal
Father,"
"Prince of Peace."
- 7 His royal power will continue
to grow;
his kingdom will always be
at peace.