

Table Talk

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



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Editorial

I am studying for the ministry at Gettysburg seminary. I am endorsed and will be certified by the synod. I was required to do C.P.E. I will receive a call from a congregation. I am studying for a Master of Arts in Religion.

What's a M.A.R.? What do they do? Why do they have to come to seminary for that? Why do you need C.P.E.? Aren't you just going to be a glorified Sunday School teacher? All of these questions and more have been asked of me over the past two years.

There is ignorance in our community toward lay ministry. This should be of concern to us all. When we leave this "learning on the hill" we will be entering the life of the parish. The life of the parish cannot exist without the ministry of the laity. As students here we tend to mist over the laity. Subtle jokes and comments directed toward the "nonordained" may be all in fun, but sensitive feelings abound in the parish. I am not the voice of experience, but I do know the importance of good clergy-laity relations.

We should begin thinking seriously about the ministry of the people of God. No doubt, as seminary students, we have thought long and hard about our own calling. Let us recognize that the laity also have callings, whether they be a D.C.E., computer analyst, or a plumber. Let

us also begin here, in this community, to dialogue with students and members of the church with different callings. We are not any better than anyone else. Just because we are "on the hill" doesn't mean that we should be lofty.

Maybe I do have a "bug up my sleeve" because I am studying for the lay ministry and I feel we (the silent minority) do not get the recognition we deserve. I am concerned about the ministry of the laity. Lay people need to develop skills and confidence in ministry, whatever their "professions" may be. Hopefully we will all recognize how important each and every one of God's children is in the body of the church.



Meet the Chaplain

One of the newer faces "on the hill" this year is that of Chaplain Robert W. Koons. Called to the Seminary in 1982 to work part-time in the field office, Pastor Koons was called as part-time chaplain in the summer of 1983.

Originally from the Altoona area, he is a graduate of the Central Pennsylvania Business College and worked for four years in offices and in Civil Service. Then, at the age of 22, he became a second career student at Gettysburg College and graduated from this seminary in 1946. Upon graduation and ordination, Pastor Koons was called as assistant to St. John's Church in Hagerstown. There he met his future wife, Grace Bowman, when they collaborated on an Interdenominational Vacation Church School. He laughingly says, "Our romance developed over the back of a heffer."

Mrs. Koons has a Master's Degree from Columbia University and at the time of their courtship was preparing for the position of Dean of Students at Manchester College in Indiana. They married in 1949. In 1950 Pastor was called to Zion, Sunbury, and in 1960 returned to Gettysburg as Pastor at Christ Church. Here he became pastor for over 30 ordained persons, many of them his former professors. He says they were demanding and supportive in his ministry. He was then called to Lynchburg, Virginia and then Winchester, Virginia. In 1982, after 36 years as a pastor, he retired to Gettysburg with his wife.

Their 35 years of marriage have blessed Pastor and Mrs. Koons with three children (Stephen, Philipp, and Ann) and two grandchildren.

Pastor's retirement activities, continuing concerns and commitments began earlier in his ministry. His membership in the Gettysburg Interfaith Peace Mission is a reflection of long standing commitment to social concerns and civil rights movement. His part-time work as chaplain here is enhanced by not only 36 years of ministry, but also continuing education experiences in human

relations, and group process; what Pastor calls C.P.E. type experiences. He had C.P.E. while in seminary.

Pastor Koons sees his ministry as chaplain falling within five areas of focus.

1.) Community Worship involving weekly planning sessions with Pastor S. Folkemer and chapel worship leaders. First time communion classes have started.

2.) Pastoral Care involving the facilitation and coordination of pastoral care for students, staff and spouses. This includes being one of those available for pastoral care and counselling.

3.) Personal Worship involving encouraging use of small chapel for private devotions, and providing bibliography, and/or some books for devotions. Pastor also encourages the formation of prayer groups.

4.) Social Action including membership on the Social Action Committee with attention to Peace concerns, work with elderly, environmental concerns, and highlighting opportunities for volunteer service in the Gettysburg community.

5.) Coordinating efforts with local churches and the college chapel including planning and participation in joint worship and fellowship events.

Retirement for Pastor and Mrs. Koons is a busy time which includes seminary choir and concerts and plays. In his "spare" time Pastor enjoys refinishing furniture, gardening, swimming, and birding. He may also be seen bicycling all over the county and has the ambition of covering all the county roads in Adams county.

Pastor and Mrs. Koons---we welcome you back to Gettysburg and are very happy that you have chosen to share your retirement years with us. Your ministry here is a blessing to us all.



The Love of Jesus and the Love of the Neighbor, a series of two essays published by Crossroad, 1983, and stocked by the Bookstore, was my first introduction to the voluminous work of Karl Rahner. The first reading of these essays left me with a rather negative impression of Karl Rahner and his brand of contemporary Roman Catholic thought and piety. However, upon a second reading, the cause of my negative impressions were becoming clearer. You see, Rahner was dealing with an issue with which I was unfamiliar and thus, was unable to handle. He was dealing with the relationship between and individual believer's piety, his faith relationship with Jesus, and the church's inherited dogmatic assertions from high Chalcedonian Christology. As I was struggling to make the appropriate connections between these two diverse expressions of the faith, I was beginning to sense that Karl Rahner was having the same difficulty.

He brings the reader through a very technical discussion of Christology in which he explains the correct (Roman Catholic) understanding of the communicatio idiomatum and the Chalcedonian "dogmas of unity and distinction" while at the same time entering into Christological polemics against monophysite and "modernist" tendencies only to conclude by dismissing the whole discussion. "If I am really convinced that in Jesus, God has personally bestowed himself upon me...then I have really embraced and covered the whole of Christology in this simple, modest notion." (p. 37) So, from this statement, Rahner lays out his program showing how it is possible to love Jesus.

"It is God's love which makes our love possible at all. Theologically speaking, the radical character of love for Jesus Christ is made possible only by the anticipating force of love itself... in loving Jesus we love an actual human being, a real person. We seek him, we think about him, we speak with him, we feel his nearness, we have the perception, the sensation, that our life is very substantially conformed through him." And yet this conformation includes a darker side.

"One who loves Jesus loves someone whose destiny he or she seeks to share in this love...he or she surrenders himself or herself to Jesus' destiny of death. He or she is prepared to commit everything with the dying Lord to the incomprehensibility of God - the whole world and the self - quietly, unconditionally...."

The Love of Jesus and the Love of the Neighbor is to be recommended to someone who would like a taste of current Roman Catholic piety and mysticism. Rahner is writing to a Roman Catholic audience who may have opinions about the cult of saints and a "Polish Marian piety" [!]. The second essay, which centers on the love for the neighbor, is primarily a commentary on the changing face of Catholicism in a contemporary world society. In this essay he tips his hat to the current world mission situation, Political Theology, and the problems of "quietism". Rahner concludes with an epilogue describing the mystery of the love of Jesus and the love of the neighbor in a way influenced by notions both romantic and mystical.

by Dale McMillen



BOOK REVIEWS

From without and within, Christian efforts to establish non-violence as central to an authentic response to the Gospel are criticized as utopian dreams, as dangerous to the continuance of church and of state, as shirking of responsibility.

Stanley Hauerwas, a Methodist and a professor at the University of Notre Dame, suggests otherwise. In The Peaceable Kingdom he writes that, "The peace Christians embody and seek is not some impossible ideal... ..it is not perfect harmony. It is not order that is free from conflict because it has repressed all rightful demands for justice. Rather the peaceable kingdom is a present reality, for the God who makes such a peace possible is not some past sovereign but the present hand of the universe. Such a peace is just the opposite of order, as its institutionalization necessarily creates disorder and threatens anarchy. In effect the peace of God, rather than making the world more safe, only increases the dangers we have to negotiate." (142) Not much comfort to people looking for placid security. It should, however, be quickly noted that Hauerwas sees joy, "the simple willingness to live with the assurance of God's redemption," (147), as central to Christian life and ethics.

For Hauerwas, not alone among modern theologians and ethicists, ethics is not a systematic exposition of what we do in life's most difficult situations. Rather, ethics is a narrative description of what we are, a description of the kind of people our history has made us and of the kind of life that necessitates. For Christian Ethics, and Hauerwas denies the validity of any universal ethic, the story of God's relationship with the people of Israel and with the followers of Jesus is the norm for what we are. Hauerwas quickly points out that the story is not a proscriptive ethical pattern, but that rather the efforts of a community to tell

by Bob White

and retell its story, and the efforts to live in authentic response to that story by individual and community acceptance of that story as its own are central to the continuing development of Christian Ethical responses to the world in which we Christians exist.

Of the church, the community of people living the story, Hauerwas writes that, "They must, above all, be a people of virtue, but the virtues necessary for remembering and telling the story of a crucified savior. They must be capable of being peaceable among themselves and with the world, so that the world sees what it means to hope for God's kingdom. Such a people do not believe that everyone is free to do whatever they will, but that we are each called upon to develop our particular gifts to serve the community of faith" (103).

This book is not a manual, it is as much concerned with theology as with ethics (Hauerwas states that the disciples are anyway inseparable). His chapter titles suggest much of the thrust and comprehensive nature of the book - "Christian Ethics in a Fragmented and Violent World," "A Qualified Ethic: The Narrative Character of Christian Ethics," "On Being Historic: Agency Character, and Sin," "On Beginning in the Middle: Nature, Reason, and the Task of Theological Ethics," "Jesus: The Presence of the Peaceable Kingdom," "The Servant Community: Christian Social Ethics," "Casuistry as Narrative Art," "Tragedy and Joy: The Spirituality of Peaceableness".

The book is carefully reasoned, carefully documented, greatly provocative, whatever areas of interest - theology, ethics, biblical studies, liturgics, pastoral care. Read this one, then talk about it.

S.A.P.

This is something that I am required to do by the constitution, so please don't think that I am trying to just simply bore you with a long piece of literary prose. I will probably still bore you, and I can assure you that this won't be anything close to literature.

This year has been a very good one thus far. I feel there are several things for which the students can be commended. I will mention some of the activities that have taken place, but this will not serve as a statistical report. The best thing that we can claim are three very energetic classes all with their own styles, but all growing together. We are also blessed with a superior faculty, people who have given of themselves, people who we love. In this regard I must mention our (student's) sense of loss, with the conclusion of Dr. Christa Klein's teaching responsibilities. We wish her God's blessing in her future, and thank her for the many blessings that she has given to us. Also in regard to the Faculty and Administration we must commend the work of Chaplain Robert Koons, for all of the hard work that he has put in, and the wonderful gifts of love he has reached out to us within this past semester.

On the athletic note, we can be assured of our athletic prowess, as once again, our team defeated Philadelphia in the Luther Bowl. Congratulations to all who participated!

In terms of social events, the community mostly centered around the 500th birthday of Dr. Martin Luther. We contributed to the festivities of the Luther Colloquium, and even held our own Luther birthday party. The birthday was a joint venture with the Faculty spouses, and was a huge success, so much so that another

event is already being planned for the spring.

In terms of organizational changes, there was a raise of Student Association dues. This was voted on by the Student Association, changing the dues from \$6.00 to \$10.00 a semester. This increase will cover the costs of the stolen coke and coffee shop losses, allow more programs, and leave the budget in the black for next year's Student Association.

There are probably many other things which I have failed to mention in regard to activities on campus. One thing that has occurred off campus is our participation in a newly formed organization, The Christian Theological Students Conference of the United States. We have two students serving on the Mid-east region's committee, planning its first conference which will meet here at Gettysburg on March 23-25, 1984. This is something that should prove to be very beneficial to all of our students, and we await the event with much excitement.

I feel that we are somewhat like the person who just got their first computer system. We are blessed with its wonders, damned by its frustrations of having to learn something new and relate in new ways, but learning and growing through the entire process. We have finally learned how to use the computer, and thus many more programs are being started, and we don't yell as much as we did when we first started. We are more relaxed and more comfortable. The computer has become more a part of us, and we a part of it. The future looks promising!

Report