

Table Talk

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



VOL. XXI, NO. 4

FEBRUARY 1986

CORE COMMITTEE:

"No free lunch"

Focus of attention at the January meeting of the Student Association Core Committee was on something seminarians rarely see, but which causes us the most problems: money.

Tom Bruner, the CPA with CPE under his belt, may need CPR after trying to balance the expenses with the income of the Coffee Shop. It seems the income is staying the same, while the amount of coffee and donuts being consumed is increasing.

It's sort of like President Reagan spending more money while not raising taxes: it does not work. The SA Core asks that everyone be mindful of the donation box on the counter when reaching for the next donut or cup of coffee. If you spill something into it, be sure it's something which will assure the continuance of this facility.

Final discussion was also held on the responsibilities of groups which are funded by the SA but are not official standing committees. The Core decided that each SA-funded committee or group other than standing committees shall express accountability and "facilitate communications," having a representative at each Core Committee meeting, and shall be subject to the same budgetary requirements as are standing committees. The representatives shall have a voice, but no vote.

-- Roger Steiner

Guidelines Set

In response to community questions concerning the disbursement of monies received through the weekly offerings, the Worship Committee has published guidelines for the Benevolence Subcommittee's decision-making, Mark Koltash, the committee treasurer, announced.

The guidelines are:

1. Recommendations will be based on requests received by the subcommittee. Written requests are required under normal circumstances.
2. Weekly prayer concerns, when applicable, will be considered as written requests to the subcommittee and treated as such.
3. Recommendations made each month by the subcommittee will be based on availability of funds and the nature of all requests received during that month.
4. Higher priority will be given to LCA-affiliated channels when similar requests are received.
5. The subcommittee, recognizing our role as members of the extended Gettysburg community, will, whenever possible, include local concerns in recommendations.
6. Recommendations will also take into consideration our response to the Lord's command, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation."
7. Consideration of precedents will help serve as further guidelines for current recommendations.

(continued on page 2)

Impressions ...

By Dieter Andresen, Kirsten Voss,
and Ernst Widmann

[Note: We present this month the third and final installment of the impressions of their visit to our campus and our country by German seminarians last fall. They focus this month on the role of the Church. We welcome your reactions to these reflections.--Ed.]

The Part of the Church

Another question arose: How do Christians in America deal with problems like these? What about churches, theologians, especially Lutherans, facing the incisive fractures in American society? We shared and enjoyed the pleasant life on the campus of Gettysburg, but at the same time we felt disturbed. The question was there: All this reading and writing and worshipping, what has it to do with the needs and troubles of people outside?

We heard the instructive address of Pastor Bob Kolum in Baltimore, pointing out the painful consequences of social change, the difficulties of pastoral work in a congregations consisting of different groups with totally different ways of life.

We saw the attempt of Pastor John F. Steinbruck at Luther Place Memorial Church in Washington to give the victims of urban migration a home in his church, thus exercising the Biblical concept of hospitality in a charismatic way.

We saw pastors in West Virginia practicing loving solidarity with their folks in the mountains, who are struggling hard for their subsistence. And we got the impression that all these pastors, often being isolated individuals with little support from their church, actually do what every pastor should do. They take over vicariously a

proper task of the Church.

Therefore, among all the meetings and lectures we joined at Gettysburg seminary, those dealing with the challenge of social disaster impressed us most. For example, the moving address of R. Hale on social life in the Appalachian region, the 'Bible Belt' and 'third world' of America.

Above all, the lucid report of Dr. Sites on the Pittsburgh events. What we found exciting with the initiative called 'DMS' was: there was in the beginning a more selfish interest of the Church, being embarrassed about her declining relevance to people's daily life. But what grew out of it was something prophetic: a concrete approach to the reasons of social disaster, which understandably shocked the official Church.

Again the question arose: Is charity the only way the Church can deal with these problems? Can we only use our hands and not our mouths to criticize also the causes and structures of social evil? Shouldn't there be public statements of Bishops or Synods to name things what they are, making people aware of their Christian responsibility?

We would like to hear from our friends at Gettysburg Seminary reacting to our questions. Despite these questions, we had a very interesting and enjoyable stay with you.

GUIDELINES

(Continued from page 1)

8. These guidelines shall be subject to annual review by the Worship Committee.

The Worship Committee would appreciate comments and responses to the guidelines, so that any problem areas or oversights can be taken into consideration.

Persons making comments or responses should forward their written suggestions, including their name, to Chip Koltash.

Letters

RE: THE UNCOMMON CUP

To the Editor:

In an editorial of the December issue of Table Talk, MNH challenges the decision of Luther-Northwestern Seminary to change communion practices by 1) asserting that hygiene is not insured by the use of individual glasses, and 2) implying that the use of another communion practice besides the common cup fails to "maintain the integrity" of the sacrament. Neither of these points provides a sufficient empirical or theological foundation to warrant opposition to the choice of Luther-Northwestern Seminary.

First, while it is not certain whether AIDS can be transmitted in this manner, it is certain that the virus of the common cold and flu can be transmitted by the use of a shared drinking glass. If proper care is taken to boil and sterilize communion glasses, the anxiety about communicable disease can be alleviated for all concerned. Hence, Luther-Northwestern's choice is not based on "irrational hysteria," but sound judgment.

Secondly, to imply that Luther-Northwestern is failing to "maintain the integrity" of the sacrament by using a practice other than the common cup is to make a judgment that smacks of legalism. Everyone knows that the bread of the Eucharist is indeed "one bread" no matter whether it is white or wheat. So too, the wine is of "one cup" no matter whether it is dispensed from a plain chalice or a pouring chalice. To attribute integrity to one practice over another is to thwart Christian freedom and to needlessly invite division. Luther warns: "But in all these matters [of the mass] we will want to beware lest we make binding what should be free, or make

sinners of those who may do some things differently or omit others.." [Luther's Works, vol.53, pp.30-1]

Thus, regardless of the tableware they use, Luther-Northwestern celebrates the sacrament with just as much integrity as any other community where the Word and faith are present.

-- Gilson A. C. Waldkoenig

[Editor's reply: Mr. Waldkoenig and we are using the word 'integrity' in different senses. We certainly intended no judgment on the efficacy of the sacrament as celebrated at Luther-Northwestern and many other places in the Church.

Rather, we employed 'integrity' in the sense of integration, the wholeness of the symbolism: the sacrament was instituted with "one bread, one cup;" why change it? We will grant that a pouring chalice better preserves the unity of the symbol than do pre-filled glasses, but we don't see any cogent reason for it.

The argument comparing the difference between chalice and individual cups with the choice between white and wheat bread is arguing apples and oranges. No, there is no difference between wheat and white bread for the Eucharist (though we'd prefer a hearty wheat!). There is a difference between pieces broken off one loaf and either cubes or wafers, and we would apply the same objection to the latter practice.

We stated our own personal preference, under that very freedom Luther insisted on, because we think the symbolism of unity is of some importance in building up the Body of Christ. It was the timing of Luther-Northwestern's change that seemed to us unfortunately responsive to the AIDS scare.

We do hope that when Waldkoenig discovers that altar guild member who "boils and sterilizes" the communion glasses he will inform the Guinness Book of Records.]

IN SEARCH OF ONG

I am only a first-year student, but my learning far exceeds my humble status. Besides, I am Lutheran. Thus I have much to offer Table Talk readership in terms of theological, biblical, ontological, phenomenological, eschatological, and especially scatological matters.

My most recent scholarly studies have helped to fill the many vacant hours I face after tossing off coursework--the hours between approximately 2:35 am and 6:15 am. One must do something to ward off evil thought. So, I have spent those vacant hours delving into the deeper meaning of Ong.

Briefly, my methods have been form-critical, source-critical, tradition-historical-critical, rhetorical-critical, redaction-redaction-critical (also known as double-redaction critical), hyper-critical critical, davidical-critical, hermeneutical-critical, and cuticle critical. (For the uninitiated, this last is the extreme nail-biting variety.) My own high standards of scholarship, my Lutheran faith, and the grace of God have helped me to resist the temptations of hysterical-critical, fanatical-critical, and heretical-critical methodologies.

I hate to sound critical, but our education here at the Seminary is grossly inadequate when it comes to Ong. We are led to believe that he is only one person, though verbose, and that he speaks only for himself, though he certainly does that thoroughly. The pristine truth--and here let me say to Messrs. Gobbel and Ridenhour that there are a few pristine truths remaining; just ask any junior, only quickly!--the pristine truth is that Ong actually represents the present evolutionary stage of a long tradition of cultic tribal life, traces of which can be detected in much of the popular literature, hymns, sayings, and

names of those 18th, 19th, and 20th century A.D. 'Apiru, known as Americans. (An exhaustive definition of 'Apirus can be obtained from Mr. Dozeman. For a less tiring definition, try "upwardly-mobile, rowdy troublemakers.") My research is not conclusive yet, but it points in that direction.

Textual corruptions over the centuries have made the study of Ong more difficult by sometimes distorting the spelling of the word. We thus have to look for the presence of the word Ong in strange and exciting places, knowing that although scribal errors were sometimes inadvertent, "copyists on occasion deliberately altered a text in order to make it conform with a theological or ethical judgment." (James King West: Introduction to the Old Testament, p. 21.)

Thus, attempts to bring Ong into conformity with the mainstream of thought may have involved deliberate misspellings of the word. Once this brilliant revelatory knowledge came to me, a whole new field of study opened up. The reader will have to decide whether this is a field worth plowing or if it should be left fallow for another generation. I don't mind dirtying my already fertile mind, and so I shall plunge head first into this truly lower criticism.

Ong seems to be somehow related to 1) the nature of being; 2) the very throbbing of the human heart and head and hand; and especially 3) the direction in which life's journey takes us. Evidences of this are everywhere ("ongni-present") but not always obvious, because that devil, textual corruption, often has hidden the evidence from view.

Related to being: "you be ong to me", "ongtology", "I think I'm ong to something."

Related to heart and mind: "with a (s)ong in my heart", "gentle ong my mind", "What's ong your mind", and "ongychophagia". (For the uninitiated, which at this point

includes even the author, this important concept comes to us from cuticle-critical scholars. The spelling has been corrupted to "onychophagia." Look it up.

Direction of life: "ong the road to Mandalay," "Go ong", "to go ong and ong and ong:", "ongward and upward:", "right ong".

One could stoop to even lower criticism than this, so I will. Can we learn more about the essence of Ong by rearranging the very letters of the name? Gon would be the opposite of "presence"; Nog would be a drink, and possibly worth pursuing; Gno would be the beginning of gnosticism, and so perhaps we should abandon this line of reasoning.

It is approaching 6:15 am, and this study does not hold up by light of day.

Let me leave you with one more pungent thought. Is it possible that Ong is really an acronym for Ongtogeny Necessitates Gobbel? (Cf. "Ontogeny Recapitulates Phylogeny.") This would shed a whole new light on the subject and perhaps herald the advent of acronymological-critical scholarship, which you can do with as you please.

For the uninitiated, there will be an initiation rite sometime next month. Watch for time and placew in the next issue of Ancient Near East Texts.

--Beth DeVan

TABLE TALK

Table Talk is published monthly by students at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, Pa.

Deadline for contributions to the March issue will be Feb. 28, although they may be placed in the Table Talk box at any time.

Editor: Muriel N. Reichler
Staff: David Eck
Roger Steiner
Art: Jean Grube

Music Line

The face of rock seems to be changing. In 1985, compassion was in fashion and artists seemed to be freer to express their political, social and religious beliefs.

We saw Live Aid and Farm Aid, where artists gathered together to raise money for the poor and the hungry. There was Steve van Vandt's anti-Apartheid protest song, "Sun City," and Sting's political pleas in his solo album "The Dream of the Blue Turtles."

Dionne Warwick and company put out the song, "That's What Friends Are For" to benefit AIDS research, and U2's social and religious passion was as strong as ever in "The Unforgettable Fire."

This year we hailed the blue collar worker, as Bruce Springsteen stormed across the nation on a phenomenal tour which included a plea for fans to contribute to local food banks. John Cougar Mellencamp did likewise on his tour, while lifting up the virtues of small town life.

It was also a good year for Christian music, as Amy Grant caught the media's eye, appearing in magazines, newspapers, and on TV specials, while her album "Unguarded" was heard on stations across the nation.

The heavy metal band Stryper also caused quite a stir with its unique blend of righteous rock, while Mr. Mister recorded what is probably the best religious song of the year by a secular artist, "Kyrie."

What a year! The causes for these new trends in music aren't as easily identified, but they are trends that I hope will endure. I guess we'll just have to wait and see what 1986 brings us.

Keep on singin'!

-- David Eck

Poetry

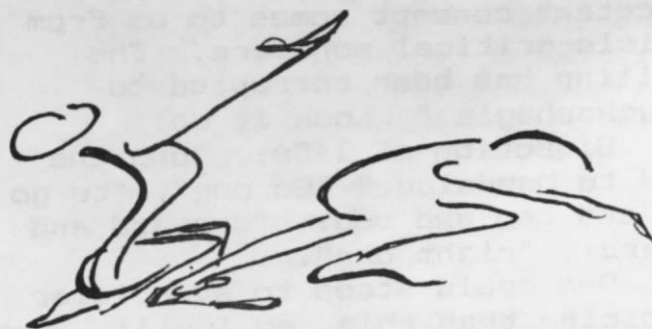
SONNET TO JOHN ABERLY

[Dr. John Aberly, for whom room 206 is named, and whose portrait hangs on its west wall, was for many years a missionary in India before becoming president of this seminary. He was one of my professors and later I became his pastor during the closing years of his life. Beloved and respected by his students and all who knew him, he was honored by letters and tributes on his 80th birthday in 1947. Among those was this sonnet which I wrote for the occasion. I hope it will give you a small glimpse of him and will help connect you at a personal level with some of the earlier history of the seminary.]

The classroom walls recede on
every side--
(Make room for his great soul to
roam once more
Where distant-visioned eyes can
see the tide
Bear Christ's evangel safe to
India's shore,
Where ears that love the music of
a word
Hear symphonies of vowels in Telugu,
And praises unto God, the blessed
Lord,
Are sung in Eastern liturgies anew.)

Then once again the walls become
concrete:
"You see, love always wears a crown
of thorns..."
While students see in him the
Paraclete
And learn theology that life adorns.
To East and West an envoy eighty
years,
He plies his path, and lo, the
King appears!

--Robert W. Koons



DELIVERANCE

Where is my redemption, O God?
Have I been forgotten?
Have I been cast aside?
Is my sin so great that even you,
O Lord, cannot look upon me?
Hear my cry!
Listen to my voice!

I am weary
and can walk no further.
I am crushed
and cannot move.

My soul longs for peace
but I see it not.
My soul longs for hope
but I find it not.
My soul longs for faith
but I have it not.

Can you restore my brokenness?
Bind up my wounds?
Heal my sickness?

Wash me
that I may be clean once more.
Embrace me
that I may know your love.
Restore me
that I may better serve Thee.

For you are my God
and I am your servant.
Do not forsake me
For only in you
can I find my deliverance.

--David Eck



THE DAISY GAME

Everybody knows
 this silly little game.
 Everybody plays it
 and it's still the same.
 The petals are picked
 and they all fall down,
 Just to be followed by the stem and
 the crown.
 But here's a sad story
 where the rules tried a change:

His heart was on fire
 and his head spun around As he
 picked and he plucked
 and they all fell down.
 He was up and down
 with every other tug;
 He was left with the stem
 and its golden crown.
 The daisy wheel turned
 and the last petal fell.

She loved him not or
 she loved him true,
 In the daisy roulette
 the option's two.
 The odds are high
 when your heart's at stake
 But holding the stem
 with its golden crown
 Was the stem of life
 which turned him around.

He had picked and plucked
 without much strife
 To the stem and crown
 with its seeds of life.
 He planted and he watered
 but they still wouldn't grow,
 And it seemed like the roots
 were frightened to show.
 The petals drew him in,
 while the seeds threw him out.

He said, "That's okay,
 they can take their time.
 It's been long enough,
 and I must climb.
 The next daisy wheel
 which I happen to see
 Won't be picked or plucked
 quite so easily,
 For I won't let it shed
 what it needs to grow.

"And maybe some day
 I'll circle around
 To find that daisy
 blooming all around.
 But until that time
 I'll wish it love.
 Now, with my head held high
 and my tears all shed,
 I'll say goodbye
 and take another step."

--Roger Steiner



KYRIE

I didn't mean,
 I didn't choose to turn,
 to walk away;
 I only thought
 to shield my heart
 from pain.

I thought that I
 could count on you,
 that you would always
 be there.

I did not mean
 to drive you out
 the city gate
 to bleed upon
 a distant hill.

Kyrie eleison.

--Muriel Heichler

OUR SPONSOR

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Ms. Proper

Dear Ms. Proper:

This may be a fine point, but is there a difference between the meanings of 'liable' and 'likely'. They seem to be used interchangeably, but I suspect there must be at least a shade of difference.

Wanna B. Right

Dear Wanna:

It's not a fine point at all; the two words have totally different meanings, and their confusion is something that tasks Ms. Proper's patience.

To be liable is to be legally obliged, answerable under law for an occurrence. Likely, on the other hand, simply means seeming as if something would happen.

An amorphous 'it' can't be liable for anything. Thus it would be meaningless to say, "It's liable to snow today," for there is no entity which could take legal responsibility for the snow. However, given the evidence of a leaden sky and a chill wind, one might opine that "It's likely to snow."

Dear Ms. Proper:

While addressing Christmas cards I wondered about the proper form of address to use when sending a card to a bishop and his wife. My initial reaction was The Reverend Bishop Doctor Joseph Jones and Mrs. Ann Jones. This seemed more than a little cumbersome, so I considered shortening it to The Reverend Bishop Doctor and Mrs. Joseph Jones, but that looked sexist.

I referred to Webster's Twelfth Collegiate Dictionary, which had a list of possibilities for the bishop alone. They were listed by denomination, but did not include Lutheran. My favorite was The Most Reverend Father in God, Joseph

Jones, by Divine Permission L. Bishop of the See of Someplace.

I consulted some acquaintances and the only suggestion they gave was Bishop and Mrs. Joseph Jones. What is the proper form?

Also, I know the traditional method when sending a letter to a pastor and his wife is The Reverend Mr. and Mr. Joseph Jones, but what is the accepted method in a society that is more concerned with a sexist attitude? What about when the roles are reversed? Mr. and the Reverend Mrs. Joseph Jones is obviously wrong, but Mr. Joseph and the Reverend Mrs. Ann Jones doesn't seem proper either. Should the use of Ms. rather than Mrs. be based on my preference for it when I don't know the preference of the Ms. or Mrs. in question? Sending Christmas cards should be easier than this.

Sincerely,
The Reverend Seminarian in
Doubt

Dear Rev. Sem.:

It's nice to know that time-honored plays for getting ahead still are in fashion. Ms. Proper is wondering what damage she has done her nascent professional life in failing to send Christmas cards to bishops!

But if 'twere done, 'twere best done correctly. Unfortunately, the title "Bishop" is so new to Lutheranism, and borne with such obvious discomfort by most of its incumbents, that no etiquette has developed. Such modesty would be becoming if it didn't make for dis-ease on the part of others who wish to treat the dignity of the office appropriately.

Ms. Proper once knew an Anglican worthy who went by the mellifluous title of The Venerable Geoffrey Evans, Archdeacon of the Aegean. Alas, Lutheran bishops eschew such nomenclature, which perhaps reflects our denominational lack of consensus on a concept of ministry.

The book on Lutheran ecclesias-

B. PROPER (Continued)

tical etiquette has not yet been written, so we are left with current practice as our social arbiter. Both Seminary and Central Penn offices address mail to "Bishop and Mrs. Joseph Jones," which seems to raise no hackles in families of the Bishops' generation, still by and large traditional.

When it is the female half of the couple who is a member of the clergy, the form of address the secretarial powers-that-be use is: "The Reverend Ann and Mr. Jones," which seems to Ms. Proper reverse discrimination. The situation can only become more complicated: pity the poor Minnesotans, who have a bishop with a wife who is also ordained and a parish pastor!

Ms. Proper ventures to offer an interim solution until our gender-equality skirmishes have been put to rest. Her preference is to address the two halves of such couples separately, : The Reverend Ms. Ann Jones and Mr. Joseph Jones. We trust that feminists would not object to the equivalent: The Reverend Mr. Joseph Jones and Ms. Ann Jones.

This also restores the courtesy title "Mr." or "Ms." preceding the Christian name, which unaccountably has disappeared in popular usage.

There is no fathoming who might be affronted by use of "Ms." or "Mrs." As a rule of thumb, a married woman over 70 might prefer to be addressed as "Mrs.", while those married women younger than that will probably accept "Ms." with an indulgent smile.

All this is very complicated, isn't it? Perhaps Ms. Proper is better off confining her Christmas card list to friends, after all.

Dear Ms. Proper:

I think the word 'eschew' is such a classy one, but I'm afraid to use it, because I am not sure how to pronounce it. I've heard several variations.

Hessie Tate

Dear Hessie:

Bless you for hesitating to use a word you don't know how to pronounce! Would that all speakers had such scruples!

Eschew means to avoid, shun, or abstain carefully from. The Oxford dictionary lists es-CHEW as the correct pronunciation. EsKEW, often heard, is incorrect. So hesitate no longer, Hessie. Now that you know how to pronounce it, don't esCHEW it to use it.

DEPARTMENT OF DUBIOUS TASTE

We read in Christian Century (January 22, 1986) about a new theme park scheduled to open next year in Oklahoma: "Testament Way." Visitors will be able to enjoy a simulated ride on the River Jordan. There will be a daily Noah's Ark Parade, with mechanical animals.

According to the Century, "a brochure heralding the park urges prospective visitors to 'hear, see, and feel the emotion of Jesus giving the Sermon on the Mount or rebuking the moneylenders!'

Main attraction will be the Calvary Pavilion, "in which a lifelike robot 'will actually portray Jesus' passion and death on the cross.'"

No comment.

FEBRUARY CALENDAR

- | | | |
|----|--------|--|
| 4 | 7 pm: | Internship Orientation Night |
| 5 | 7:15: | Community Meal (Refectory) |
| | 7: | Holy Communion |
| 7 | 7:30: | Outer Limits (Lounge) |
| 10 | 12:15: | Task Force on Inclusive Language |
| | 1:30: | Academic Policy Comm. |
| | 3:30: | SA Core Committee |
| 11 | 10am: | Social Action Comm. |
| | 6pm: | Senior Class Potluck (Coffee Shop) |
| 12 | 8pm: | Ash Wednesday Holy Communion - College |
| 17 | 2: | Student Search Committee |
| | 3: | Internship Matching Workshop |
| | 4:15: | Colloquy, Faculty and Student Search Comm. |
| 18 | | Internship Matching Workshop |
| 19 | 2: | Student Search Comm. |
| | 4:15: | Colloquy, Faculty and Student Search Comm. |
| 25 | 9:30: | Alumni Council Meeting |
| | 1: | Long-Range Planning Committee on Assumptions |