

# Table Talk

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



VOL. XXI, NO. 5

MARCH 1986

## SEMINARY PLAYERS TO PERFORM

As a break from mid-term study, Seminary Players will present an evening of varied fare Thursday and Friday evenings, March 13 and 14, in the Aberly Room theatre (206 Valentine).

Two one-act plays are scheduled for performance by this local drama group. The evening will open with a performance of "Sacrifice to Virtue," by Warren Kliever, featuring Diane and David Hewitt.

Following this will be a rendering of "Moses! Moses!", a farce about you-know-who, written by Prof. Norman J. Fedder, of Kansas State University. Linda Hostetter brought us this play. Prof. Fedder is also author of a biographical musical about Harry S Truman, "The Buck Stops Here!" recently mentioned in Newsweek.

Taking part in this play will be Mark Anderson, Terry Arble, Gary Bachman, Don Baker, Arlyn Eisenbrandt, Jean Grube, Muriel Heichler, Linda Hostetter, Paul Milholland, and

Elizabeth Stines. Mark Anderson is director. Those who remember Seminary Players productions of last year will not want to miss this event. Those for whom this troupe is a new experience are in for a treat.



## Core Committee

Unfortunately, official minutes of the Core Committee meetings are not usually available for timely inclusion in Table Talk. Our reporter gleaned the following items from the unofficial record:

The campus project to gather books for the South African Seminary almost foundered on the rocks of high mailing costs until the Core Committee voted to appropriate up to \$250 for that worthy endeavor.

Among committee reports, the Family Life committee announced an Easter dinner for those who will be on campus for that feast day. Social Action committee was planning a lecture for Feb. 20. The Athletic committee purchased six ping pong paddles, a basketball, and a volleyball. Partners will sponsor a study break for midterms.

Glenn Miller is accepting applications for supply preaching coordinator for the 1986-87 academic year. Applications should be in by March 10.

Only five of the twelve groups supported by the SA attended the meeting.

The only new business concerned the raising of coffee prices in the coffee shop by ten cents. Sorry about that, but a 35-cent cup of coffee is still a bargain, compared to outside prices.

Pres. Lindsay Rhodenbaugh reminded the committee that elections for next year are coming up in April.

-- Roger L. Steiner

## IT'S THE DREGS?

dregs (dregz) n. 1. the particles of solid matter that settle at the bottom of a liquid. 2. the most worthless part (the dregs of society). 3. an unlikely combination of seminarians coming together to make some likeable music.

On March 21 at 8 pm, David, Roger, Erwin and Jan (The Dregs) will present their premiere concert at the Refectory.

The band is composed of two veteran rockers and two newcomers, and has been playing together for four months. Their music is an interesting combination of styles and sounds, drawing from rock, pop, jazz, new wave, heavy metal, rap and Christian sources.

"I really like the combination," says Dave Eck, the band's guitarist and lead singer. "So many times secular and Christian music have been kept in two separate camps, and that's rather unfortunate. I think our music is a refreshing mix of the two."

Come out and hear The Dregs in concert. It promises to be an evening of fun, excitement, and great music.

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 TABLE TALK

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

Opinions expressed are those of their authors, and do not represent official policy of the Seminary or of its Student Association.

Deadline for contributions is the 28th of the month preceding publication.

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

## A CAUTIONARY TALE

by Roger L. Steiner

On a Wednesday morning in February, Jesus was with his disciples in the town of New Oxford, near the region of Gettysburg, when he decided to visit the Seminary. So he said to two of his disciples: "Go into the dorm parking lot of Gettysburg Seminary. There you will find a tan, four-door Pontiac in space 44. Find the owner, get the keys and bring it to me. If he asks why, tell him the Lord has need of it."

So the disciples went to Gettysburg Seminary and found space 44, but did not see the tan Pontiac as Jesus had said. Instead, they found a small blue car, and did not know what to do. So they left in confusion.

When they returned to Jesus, he rebuked them, saying: "Where is the Pontiac?"

And they answered him: "Do not rebuke us, Master, for someone else was parked in space 44."

At this, Jesus said to them: "I'm sorry. I guess I'll just have to change my plans again for those who choose not to follow the law, but still want the gospel. Cursed be that blue car in space 44. May it rust by morning. I will still go to Gettysburg Seminary, though, so they may hear the Good News."

Turning to his disciples, he said: "Please go back to the Seminary, and there, in a parking space marked 'Dean', you will find a Mercedes-Benz sedan. Find the owner, get the keys, and bring it to me."

His disciples replied: "What should we do if another car is there?"

Jesus answered them: "Come back to me and we will go to Philadelphia. For if they cannot understand the value of simple laws, such as assigned parking spaces, and are not happy with what they have, how will they understand the value of God's Law, and be happy with the Good News I bring to them?"

Ms. Proper



Dear Ms. Proper:

We heard some strange usages in J-term. Such words as "administrate" and "resolvemnt" were strange to me. Are they correct?  
Puzzled Sr.

Dear Puz:

One wonders: is it ignorance or an attempt at virtuosity that drives speakers on any given subject to create new words where perfectly adequate ones already exist. An administrator administers programs, and problems find their resolution. There is no need to cobble up the kind of jargon you heard.

We also winced at a few other strange confusions of words in the transitions course, from people who ought to know better. Examples are defuse instread of diffuse, inerrant for inherent, and a (sing.) crises (pl.)

As long as a few of us still care about the English language, we must fight a rear-guard action against those who are too lazy or too ignorant to be correct.

Dear Ms. Proper:

Are "imply" and "infer" synonyms? I hear them used interchangeably, but there must be some difference.

Confoozed

Dear Con:

No indeed! "Imply" and "infer" are not synonymous. A speaker may imply a certain meaning, while the hearer infers what he thinks the speaker was saying.

"THERE IS NEITHER MALE NOR FEMALE IN CHRIST JESUS; LET'S GET IT TOGETHER"

On Wednesday, April 16, Quest will sponsor an informal presentation and discussion, in which pastors and lay people from nearby congregations will speak about their experiences and viewpoints on sexism in the life of the parish. The presentation will be held at 7:30, in a location to be announced.

Quest is a support group of students concerned with dealing with the issues of inclusivity in seminary and in parish life. They invite everyone to attend their meetings on Fridays at 10 am in the Faculty Lounge. And mark April 16 on your calendar for their special event.

-- Dale Selover

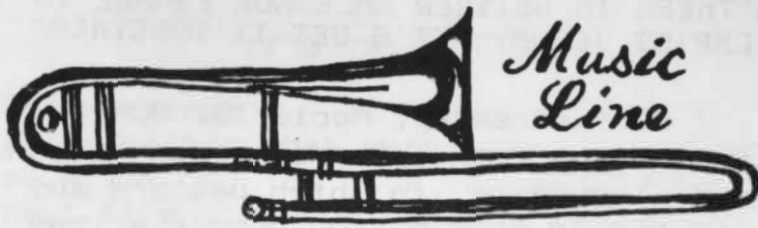
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BACKWARD, TURN BACKWARD...

According to an article in the Washington Post, February 22, the theological commission of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod not only has reiterated its position against the ordination of women, but also has come out against any leadership participation of women in the public worship.

In a report entitled "Women in the Church," the commission finds that "The idea that God desires man to be the head of woman and woman to be subordinate to man is rooted deeply in the Old and New Testaments."

The report goes on: "Just as the wife should not be the 'head' of the house, so a woman should not be the 'head' over the household of God." Neither, they say, according to the Post, "should women be allowed to read the Scriptures in worship services nor assist in the distribution of communion, to 'avoid confusion regarding the office of the public ministry and to avoid giving offense to the church.'"



If you've been paying attention to the music world lately, the Parent's Music Resource Center (PMRC) has been causing quite a fuss. The group proposes creating an album rating system similar to the current system of rating films. The PMRC took up the issue with the national PIA and the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA), and as a result, a great percentage of RIAA members will voluntarily add either a parental warning or a lyric sheet inside the shrink-wrap of those albums which contain specific sexual content or which glorify violence or the use of drugs or alcohol.

But the issue has not remained unchallenged. One of the most outspoken opponents was singer Frank Zappa, who, in a U.S. Senate testimony, stated that "very young children do not wander unescorted into a record store with \$8.98 in their pockets. Usually there is a parent in attendance. No one is forcing them to buy 'Sugar Walls!' The parent can always suggest that the \$8.98 be spent otherwise."

What does this writer think? Well, as a musician, youth worker, and record buyer, the issue of album ratings raises a few questions for me:

1) Who would rate the albums? Who decides whether something is sexual or not? I would hope that a self-righteous organization like the PMRC wouldn't be in charge.

2) Would a rating system encourage artists to "spice up" their albums for fear of receiving a "G" rating? We've seen this happen many times in today's film industry.

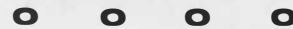
3) Would the system make it easier for teens to do their record shopping, so they wouldn't buy a 'nice' album by mistake? Doesn't it call attention to those albums that

you would want youth to avoid?

These are just a few of the questions that come to my mind. I admit that there is a problem with the amount of "smutty" music that is on the airwaves, but ratings are not the answer.

As parents, pastors, and youth workers, we should be better informed on what our kids are listening to and take a more active role in helping them decide what to buy and what not to buy. Isn't the decision better left in our own hands?

Until next time,  
David Eck



#### WHAT OUR COLLEAGUES ARE WRITING

Have you ever looked among the journals in the Library to see what issues are important to our colleagues in other Seminaries?

At the initiative of the editor of Southern Seminary's Southern Apology, an exchange of publications with all the other Lutheran Theological seminaries in the United States and Canada is being organized, so soon we should be getting copies of all of them. Ask Sarah Mummert where to find them.

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#### OUR SPONSOR

Publication of the 1985-1986 Table Talk is made possible by a generous grant from Aid Association for Lutherans. Our thanks to AAL!

### A continuing commitment

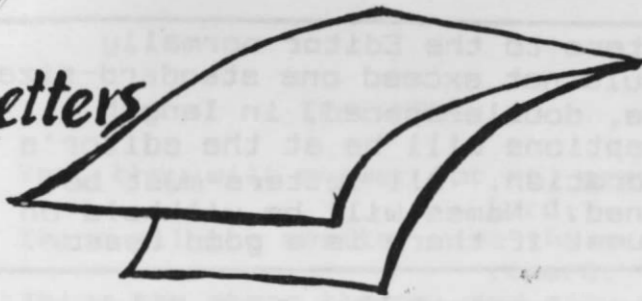
...that's what AAL's symbol stands for. It's a commitment enabling Lutherans and their families to aid themselves and others. AAL does that through benevolence programs and fraternal benefits, including life, health and retirement insurance. So look at this symbol and think "commitment." Then, think AAL.



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## Letters



## A VIEW FROM OUTSIDE

To the Seminary Community:

With the New Year, I began a new pastoral call, the Bendersville Lutheran Parish. Coming here, I realized I would be leaving behind a great blessing in my years of ministry: the local pastor's group (SE Delaware Dist. Lutheran Parish, SE Pa. Synod) which met every Tuesday morning for sermon preparation, mutual support, continuing education, and common worship. From discussions with fellow LCA and other pastors, it was a rare blessing that few enjoy.

Anticipating this loss, and knowing that a pastor needs to be a hearer as well as a speaker of God's Word, I resolved to attend a seminary service once a week. This has worked out to be alternatively the Wednesday Eucharist and Monday preaching office. Fortunately, the quality of the services has changed little since my years here in the mid-seventies. Unfortunately, two observations--both confirmed by conversations with students--have also changed little.

The first is the general poor attendance by students at chapel. It is hard to fathom this, since in just a few years these same students will as pastors be encouraging and expecting regular worship attendance by their lay people. Seminary affords a great blessing which for almost all pastors is never repeated or even approximated: daily common worship.

One should not lose this opportunity which is so important for strengthening one's own or each other's faith and preparation for future ministry. Nor should one be unmindful of Paul's warning (I Cor.

18) that the absence of one person from the community's life weakens the whole. Thus, those who absent themselves from worship hurt not only themselves, but others as well.

Further, it cannot be said that the faculty and staff are setting a good example. In my visits I have noticed only six members who regularly attend chapel, though students tell me one or two others who I've not met also come quite often.

But not much has changed since my seminary days; indeed, those who I regularly see now were also the regulars ten years ago. It is lamentable that those hired to assist students in preparing for pastoral ministry in communities of worship fail to set a high standard for the students to emulate.

It was said of Mahatma Gandhi that, as busy as his schedule was, he set aside one day a week for prayer and meditation. Not even kings could interfere with this weekly sabbath. But of course, we are too busy to do this, or even, for some, to spare a few minutes around the noon hour.

But should we be?

Rev. Daniel U. Biles, III

## MORE ON COMMON CUP

To the Editor:

It is not often that I feel the need to write a letter to the editor of a publication. However, under the circumstances, I feel that it is necessary that I use my freedom of voice before that is taken from me (or, at best, used for me). I refer to an editorial which appeared in the 12/85 issue of Table Talk and the printed response to a letter which appeared in the 1/86 issue. The editorial, letter, and the editor's reply were all concerned with the use of the common cup in the Eucharist.

First of all, let me say that Table Talk, to a certain degree, is a voice of this Seminary and its position as an official voice of the student body will not be discussed or



challenged here. One point which I am challenging, though, is the use of that voice.

An editor of a publication must accept the responsibility, knowing that the "news and views" published will be considered by many to be an accurate reflection of the (majority of) student body. This responsibility is highlighted by the self-description printed across every Table Talk front page.

Second, I feel compelled to question the editor's insistent use of the pronoun "we." This pronoun is used once in the editorial in an unsubstantiated reflection of the views of this community. This pronoun is also quite generously spread throughout the response to the letter.

The response, in actuality, is a defense of the editorial which is signed by a single individual. This defense never employs the pronoun "I." So I ask, who are the people that are represented by this plural pronoun? Are they the members of the publications committee? The worship committee? The Student Association? The faculty? The administration? My sources tell me that none of these groups has taken an official stand since the issue has returned to the limelight. If Table Talk is the "news and views of the Student Body," then I must be, from the editor's perspective one of the "we." Thank you, but no thank you. I make enough statements without having someone else making them for me, especially without my consent. Even in public prayer, I have the option of not saying "Amen."

Third, I wish to take a stand next to Mr. Waldkoenig. Although he and I have both learned from the editor's vocabulary lesson featuring the multiple definitions of 'integrity', I don't think we were in the minority. While discussing the editorial (especially the sentence in which 'integrity' is used) with several members of this community, not one

Letters to the Editor normally should not exceed one standard-size page, double-spaced, in length. Exceptions will be at the editor's discretion. All letters must be signed. Names will be withheld on request if there is a good reason.

person suggested that I consider an alternate and not so common definition. This is not surprising, considering the sentence gave no indication of a preferred definition.

I remind the editor that whether it is in print or in the pulpit, once we release our message, we have no control over the meanings which other people will assign to them. Therefore, our messages need to be as clear and exact as we intend them to be.

Fourth, as a member of this community, I am embarrassed by the editorial attack on Luther-Northwestern Seminary and the qualified individuals who were enlisted before a decision was made. The embarrassment is only made worse by the ignorance which supported the attack. The editor's inaccurate insinuation that the decision to "abandon use of the common cup" was founded in fear of contracting AIDS was a clear case of poor reporting, and in itself "may only be adding to the irrational hysteria surrounding the disease."

Further, I am unaware of any facts or credentials held by the editor or anyone else involved with this publication which would give them the authority to challenge the information on hygiene provided to Luther-Northwestern by Dr. George Michaelson, a retired University of Minnesota public health officer. I would hope that before Table Talk attacks any of our sister seminaries (or anyone else) again, that all attempts be made to secure complete facts first. I would also hope the community at Luther-NW, which also receives this publication, did not take the attack too seriously.

Finally, I wish to challenge the integrity (def: firm adherence to a code of moral values) of any publi-

(continued on page 9)

# Poetry

## TESTAMENT

Yea, thou wilt answer for me, gracious  
 Lord:  
 Thine all the merits, mine the great  
 reward;  
 Thine the sharp thorns, and mine the  
 golden crown;  
 Mine the life won, and Thine the life  
 laid down.

-- Inscription on a tombstone in  
 the churchyard of Trinity  
 Episcopal Cathedral, Columbia,  
 S.C.



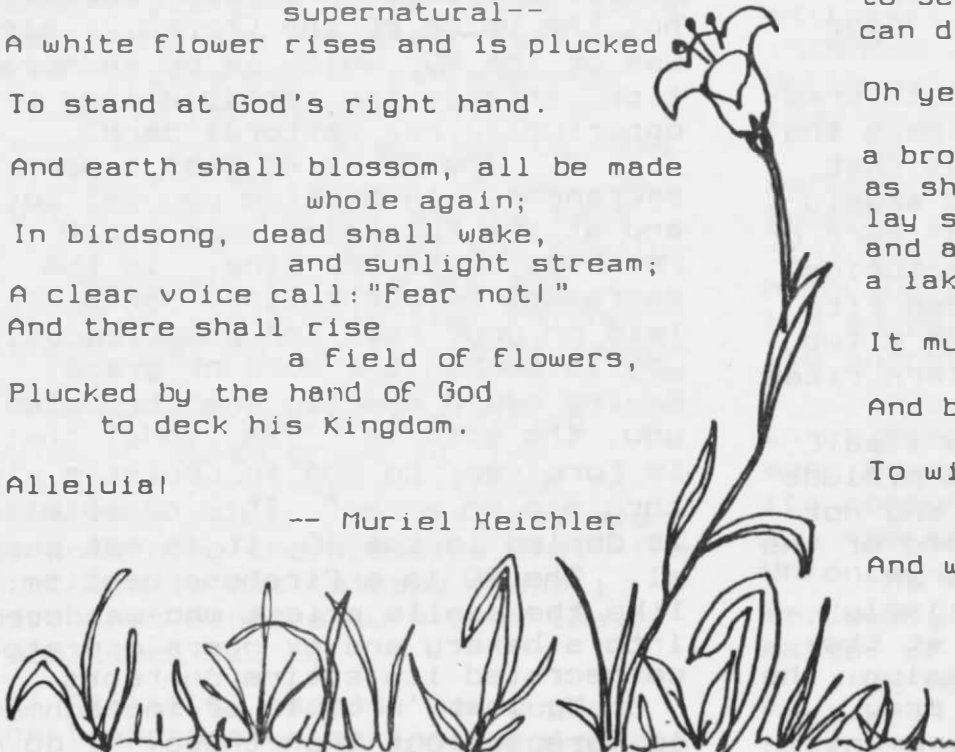
## FIRST FRUITS

From bloodstained earth, a riven veil,  
 Thunder, and stirring of old bones;  
 From darkness, and the fear of things  
 supernatural--  
 A white flower rises and is plucked  
 To stand at God's right hand.

And earth shall blossom, all be made  
 whole again;  
 In birdsong, dead shall wake,  
 and sunlight stream;  
 A clear voice call: "Fear not!"  
 And there shall rise  
 a field of flowers,  
 Plucked by the hand of God  
 to deck his Kingdom.

Alleluia!

-- Muriel Reichler



## DEATH

On the unfamiliar couch among family  
 she sat  
 in silent fragility.  
 Was this the same dear, sweet lady  
 every Sunday morning I would see?

Did I know this face?  
 Was there not a trace  
 of her former tranquility?

I hugged her, kissed her,  
 and then touched her hand.  
 I said nothing,  
 hoping she would understand.

She cried as I kissed her; I felt  
 her tears.  
 She did not seem much older than I  
 in years.

Death has its way of uniting us all,  
 young and old, great and small.

In death we are all peers.

-- Eileen Zuber

## PREMONITION OF MY MOTHER'S DEATH

In her from whom life sprung  
 to seed another born  
 can death reside?

Oh yes, and in my heart beside

a broken stream I watched  
 as she who moved my bones  
 lay still, almost a photograph,  
 and all her love misplaced  
 a lake not yet discovered

It must be hard to look upon  
 the one in whom you grew  
 And be so ripped from her life  
 as to cry

To wildly shake a fist into  
 the air  
 and curse the night  
 And wonder how a God could  
 ever die.

-- Tim Craven

## IMPEACHING THE "BRIEF ORDER"

by Todd Murken

I do mean this as an impeachment, not a verdict. I present these articles for discussion, and will be disappointed if there is none. I ask you to help me understand this matter.

First, let me say that I know the Brief Order [for Public Confession] (BO) can be comforting. The intention is good: exhorting us to examine our actions, acknowledge our sin and sins, and our need for forgiveness, and to reassure us that in Jesus the Christ there is forgiveness. This much might be said of preaching, and is well and proper. My questions come when these intentions are embodied in a regularly performed ante-liturgy. To wit:

1. The BO is liturgically awkward. It is a corporate action concerning individual matters: a public profession of private sin. Corporate confession of corporate sin is commendable if this community asked God's forgiveness for its indifference to the town of Gettysburg. But the BO is no such confession. In it, you and I stand together and say together that we have sinned individually, and we are absolved en masse. (Note that even the language is strained: "our whole heart.")

2. The BO is not apostolic practice, but an innovation. Perhaps the liturgical awkwardness betrays that such a rite of confession and absolution cannot be--and never was--part of the Liturgy. The first 15 centuries worth of Masses had no prefaced rite such as the BO, nor did Luther's two Masses. Nor do Roman and Eastern rites to this day.

3. The use of the BO is itself awkward. The BO is done as a prelude to the Service of the Word. Why not at another time, say at the end of the service? Because it would be an anticlimax? Does it not similarly dampen the joyous enthusiasm at the beginning of so great an occasion: the gathering of God's people to pray, praise, and celebrate his sacraments? The BO is especially inappropriate

to festive occasions, in part because:

4. The BO is dull. Compared to the drama of moving from Old Testament promise to fulfillment in Christ in the lections, or all the song and motion and dialogue of the Eucharist which are so life-like, the BO looks cerebral, abstract, perhaps a bit Calvinistic.

5. The BO discourages private confession by attempting to offer a substitute. The Augsburg Confessors "taught among us that private absolution should be retained and not allowed to fall into disuse," which it has among us, unless the BO is indeed considered an adequate substitute, which I do not think it is.

6. The BO is not a confession of sins, but that we have sinned. Nonetheless, if there is never any enumeration of sins, I fear that the confession may lose its participation in reality. If the Church is to be a school for sinners, if we preach, with the apostles and our Lord, repentance, then is not the regular practice of specific confession at least helpful, if not necessary? ((A silent 'to God' enumeration is surely a good thing, commended by Luther in the Large Catechism, but this confession calls for a likewise silent 'from God' absolution, not the voice of the Church.) Also, use of the BO, which is no enumeration, entails the terrible loss of opportunity for pastoral care.

7. The BO is at best a poor sacrament. In Baptism you get wet, and at the Eucharist your mouth receives bread and wine. In the sacrament of absolution, hands are laid on your head and unambiguously to you is spoken the Word of grace. Having heard exactly what troubles you, the Word is: "Yes, Todd, that too is forgiven; go and in Christ's victory sin no more." This consolation is denied in the BO; it is not personal. The BO is a firehose baptism; or like the senile priest who wandered into a bakery and ex opera operato consecrated its entire contents.

My last 'article of impeachment' is more serious than these. I do not offer it as my conviction, only as my



fear, and ask you, sisters and brothers, for your help in finding God's ordinance.

8. The 80 may be contrary to the Gospel. Taken at its word, the most ruthless corporate executive, a child abuser or impenitently malfeasant official are all forgiven on the spot, simply by virtue of their presence within earshot. But is this apostolic? Is this the preaching of our Lord? Consider the following.

The third Gospel especially is filled with this motif. Jesus seeks out and eats with tax collectors and sinners. Prevenient grace...But the story continues. Levi leaves his tax booth. Zacchaeus returns to those he has cheated. The lost son returns to his father. It is in her weeping that the sinful woman is forgiven. "I have come to call not the righteous, but sinners to repentance (emphasis Luke's).

"There is more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents..." The summation before his ascension: "The Christ must suffer and be raised on the third day and repentance (lit.) into the forgiveness of sins be preached in his name."

Article 12 of our evangelical Confession states: "It is taught among us that those who sin after Baptism receive forgiveness of sin whenever they come to repentance...True repentance is nothing else than to have contrition and sorrow, or terror, on account of sin, and yet at the same time to believe the Gospel and absolute amendment of life and the forsaking of sin should then follow, for these must be the fruits of repentance..."

One of Bonhoeffer's scathing examples of cheap grace is "the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance." It does not seem to be something the apostles did. The love of God is not "sloppy agape"; rather, that sinners turn from their sin and live.

I hesitate, because my proposal at least approaches making forgiveness conditional, whereas in fact there is

now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Still, I think the harshest words of Amos apply to us when we use the 80 without the intention to change.

So, sisters and brothers, what do you think?

\* \* \* \*

#### LETTERS

(continued from page 6)

cation which finds need to respond to criticism with insults. I refer to the editor's suggestion that Mr. Waldkoenig inform the Guinness Book of Records of any practice of boiling communion glasses. If Table Talk feels the Guinness Book needs to be informed, then the editor should take on the responsibility personally. Mr. Waldkoenig's home congregation is located in Uniontown, Pa. I'm sure that he will provide you with any names, addresses or telephone numbers that you will need. The altar guild at his home congregation does, indeed, boil their communion cups.

Mark "Chip" Koltash

Note: The "editorial we" is a time-honored journalistic usage. The editorial in question was by no means intended as an "attack" on Luther-Northwestern Seminary, nor do we think they would read it that way.

We fail to understand how our reference to the Guinness Book of Records could have been construed as 'insulting.' It was intended as a humorous touch to lighten the tone of the exchange. Apparently, it failed in its purpose. This we sincerely regret.

In a long and varied experience in churches, we have honestly not ever found a congregation which boils its communion ware.

We commend the altar guild in Uniontown, which obviously takes seriously its responsibility in the matter of hygiene.

We hope that Mr. Koltash will feel his interests protected in future by the disclaimer in our masthead.

Editor.

## CALENDAR FOR MARCH

March 7	7:30 pm	Music, Gettysburg!: Peter Orth, pianist
March 13-14	7:30 pm	Seminary Players: An Evening of Theatre: Aberly Room (206
March 14	6:00 pm	Senior Class Potluck, Coffee Shop
March 17	3:00 pm	Rev. Larry Johnson, "Lutheran Youth Encounter", Room 206
March 21	7:30 pm	"Dregs" Rock Concert, Refectory
March 21-22		Spirituality Retreat with Dr. Bengt Hoffman, Camp New Dawn