

# Table Talk

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



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## STUDENT PRESIDENT SPEAKS

It's hard to believe that the semester is already nearing its conclusion. The semester has been filled with much excitement, and I look forward to even more next semester.

I have chosen not to bore you with a report or events of the Student Association standing committees or related groups. You can read that information in the minutes from our past Student Association meetings as provided by our secretary, Joel Benson.

Instead, I would like to give my thanks to everyone who has helped to make this year progress as smoothly as it has so far. Thank you for your help!

And I would like to take this opportunity to address a couple of specific issues related to the Student Association and life on campus.

To begin with, I am concerned that portions of our Student Association constitution may no longer meet some of the needs of our community since the community has changed over the past few years. Therefore, I would like to encourage everyone to read the Student Association constitution as printed in the Student Handbook. If you have any concerns that you feel should be addressed in regard to the Student Association constitution as it now stands, please make me or any Student Association officer aware of your concerns.

Secondly, at our Nov. 9 meeting an extremely important issue was brought before the group. There was a motion from a member of the Student Association to recommend to the faculty/staff/administration/board that the seminary community have a day of observation on Monday, Jan. 18, 1988 in remembrance of the national holiday honoring the life and work of the great civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. The motion called for a day off from classes and a recommendation that a special service might occur on that day to remember the life of Martin Luther King, Jr. The vote was six for, six against, with two abstentions. To break the tie, I voted against the motion. And I feel that it is appropriate for me, at this time, to express my opinion on this issue.

(continued on page 3)

Sportsbeat

by Lans E. Alexis

Luther Bowl 1987 -- Gettysburg 28 Philadelphia 34

How can I put this delicately? It is after all a seminary paper. A high ranking source said, and I do not quote, "We got stuck, shafted, ripped, they gagged us with a yellow flag -- in short, we were robbed of the Luther trophy!" Is the team angry? Did we sulk the rest of the afternoon? Did we say bad things about their mothers? Of course not; we forgave them. (Actually, this reporter had a beer and started thinking of the sermon he had to write on love that evening.)

What's the scoop? Why must we forgive our brothers from our hearts? It was a close game. A team that hadn't practiced since Mt. St. Mary's humiliated us a few weeks earlier did really well. We only had a bunch of linemen and a quarterback who runs more than Martin Luther. We have nothing to be ashamed of; in fact, our receivers and secondary really gelled through the course of the game. In fact, because they made such an effort at getting out at 7:30 on a Saturday morning, let's list the team (look, Ma, I got my name in print!): Skip Balko, Doug Swank, Dan Breda, Greg Berger, Martin Russel, Paul Sutter, Barry Baughman, Jeff Gowman, Jay Serafin, Joel Benson, and your intrepid reporter. And thanks to those great fans, too innumerable to mention (because I didn't catch some of the wife's names).

But enough of this triviality -- what really happened?

It was bad calls, all the way.

Point one: The refs had specifically explained at the beginning of the game that when a player catches the ball, but has lost a flag by accident or by having it pulled off beforehand, the offense gets the ball where the catch was made. But when Paul Sutter made just such a reception, it was ruled incomplete. This has a bearing on point two.

Point two: Gettysburg had tied the game with less than two minutes to play. Philadelphia drove downfield. The wide receiver with the shirt that said BIG BIRD on it dashed down the sideline, accidentally losing his flag in the process. He therefore should have been ineligible to catch the ball. Bird begins to trip over his own big feet (I saw it, and I cannot lie, by god). Jeff Gowman steps over him in order to intercept the pass. I would think that he had the position on the ball. But No-o-o-o-o-o-o! Jeff got called for pass interference, and Philly got the ball first and goal inside the ten. They score, they win. Boo hiss!

Point three, a minor one: They called me -- me of all people -- for pushing the one we call "the House." It would take a bulldozer, or Dan "Wrecking Ball" Breda, to push the House. I tell ya, no respect at all!

So we lost, but we took comfort in the fact that we are all justified, and that Barry Baughman gave a really good shot to the Bird!

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President's Report, continued from page 1)

I readily identify myself as a "weak" Christian. Given a day off, this is what I would probably do: sleep late and spend the rest of the day at the mall shopping. I feel that this is an inappropriate way of observing this day. I would much rather see the students having a day off from class so that we may have an opportunity to hear a special speaker who might come to campus to address racial concerns, social ministry concerns and the like. Having the day off from class is simply not enough, in my opinion. So more can and should be done to address the concerns that Martin Luther King, Jr. raised - concerns that are still concerns in our society and for our ministry. For me, spending the day being reminded of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s life and ministry would be a more appropriate means of observation than spending the day in bed or in the mall.

This does not need to be a dead issue. In fact, it is my hope that we, as a seminary community, can come up with some appropriate means of recognition of this great civil rights leader and preacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. If you have any opinions that you wish to express related to this or any issue, please contact any Student Association officer or come to the next Student Association meeting, which will be held on Monday, Dec. 14, at 4:00 p.m. This meeting will be open to all members of the Student Association - that is, it will be open to all students on campus and off campus.

An agenda for this meeting will be posted at least one week prior to the meeting. Any student who has some item to be included on the agenda is asked to contact me before Dec. 6, 1987 for the purpose of including it in the printed agenda. Other items may, of course, come from the floor at the meeting on Dec. 14.

Good luck on those final projects and preparations for finals and remember to express your opinions on any issues you feel are important.

May God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit bless us now and forever.

Lester Spies,  
Student Association president

To Table Talkers,

I was very impressed with Ians Alexis' list of topics on the World Party presented last issue, but I think I've got him beat. What follows is an alphabetized litany of images evoked on "Bucky Fellini", the latest Dead Milkmen album:

art fags, atomic ferns, badgers, "Ballroom Blitz," blood orgies, Book of Love, boring bisexuals, bowling balls, camping, chemical waste, cows, dancing, "Dazed and Confused," Depeche Mode, deserts, dioxin dumps, dip, Disney World, drunk Eskimos, Ecstasy, felt paintings, franks'n'beans, God, Graceland, Hardee's, health spas, "Heartbreak Hotel," heaven, hell, hiccups, "I am the Walrus," "I Love Lucy," intellectuals, Japan, jellyfish, The Jungle Room, Casey Kasem, K-Mart, knuckles, The Komminands, L.A., leather whips, Love Me Tender shampoo, LSD, lunch, Gavin McLeod, MDA, Edwin Meese, "Moody Blues," Mormons, Naked Truth, nitro burning funny cars, Richard Nixon, nuns, owls, painting, "Papa Don't Preach," FCP, the pill, Planet X, poetry, Portland, powertools, Elvis Presley, Public Image, Ltd., R.C. Cola, Ron and Nancy Reagan, rocketships, San Antonio, Satan, Charlie Sexton, shopping malls, Nancy Sinatra, skiing, The Smiths, Patti Smyth, Bruce Springsteen, statues, "Sunday Slumber," surfing, "Sweet Maryann," Tacoland, Texas, Thailand, "The Theme from S.W.A.T.," towels, Stevie Ray Vaughan, VCRs, Andy Warhol, weasels, woodchucks, and Yuppies.

Just thought you'd like to know.

Scott M. Douglas



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Minutes of the Student Association October 12, 1987

The first meeting of the Student Association for the 1987-88 academic year was called to order by President Lester Spies at 4:30 p.m. The prayer was led by that wild and crazy Jan Davis. Lester welcomed everyone and thanked all for their willingness to serve and the work they have done so far. We all introduced ourselves to one another and it was a real warm sensitive time of sharing for all. The meeting continued after a short hugging session with the treasurer's report. Mary Brady told us how much money we had and we all thanked her for that report, gave her support for her work, and approved her report.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Lecture: Bob Lewis says what he has been doing so far is letting people know about the college lectures. He also said the group is trying to figure out who they can get to speak for this year and will have a report soon. Some questions were raised by seniors about who was here last year and nobody was real sure so we just moved on. Thanks Bob!

Quest: Margarethe reported that the group is working on a statement of purpose and should have it ready by the next meeting. They are meeting on Wednesdays at 6:30 in the Schmucker Lounge.

Family Life: Mike McQuaid reported that they will be offering babysitting for Wednesday night eucharist services. They are also working on some community activities and hope to have some planned real soon. They are also going to send a letter out to incoming students welcoming them.

Partners: Mike also reported for this group because Carol, his wife, asked him to. Now isn't that special! This group meets every Thursday in Schmucker Lounge; look for announcements in the Redactor. The meetings are open to all.

Publications: Lans said that things are going well and they hope to have regular issues of Table Talk this year. Obviously they are doing well - this is the second issue.

Athletics: Martin congratulated the middlers on a perfect losing football season. Martin also reminded those who are interested that there are still more games to come. He also said that there would be volleyball and basketball this year.

CLASS REPORTS

Seniors: they are busy doing DPLs.

Juniors: OK

Middlers: they are working on stuff for Colloquium

OLD BUSINESS

Lester brought up the fact that the sexist language in the constitution of the association has not been corrected. He said that it would be corrected before next year's printing of the constitution. Lester appointed an all-male group to do this job (no he didn't - just joking).

NEW BUSINESS

Bob was volunteered to do the parliamentary job; he accepted and quickly told Lester he was out of order.

The meeting time was changed from 4:30 to 4:00 so that it did not conflict with family times for eating and being together.

The issue of Martin Luther King Jr., Day was brought up and the question was asked why we don't have the day off. The seminary last year had a commemoration service and it was expressed that this was not enough. It was agreed that we needed more student input on the issue and that it would be discussed again.

Lester brought up the fact that President Stuempfle will be having sessions dealing with the role of internship supervisors next semester.

The issue of the budget was brought up and we decided to wait until next month so Mary could gather up proposals from the different groups.

Bob moved that we adjourn at 5:30 and there was rejoicing among the peasants.

MINUTES OF THE STUDENT ASSOCIATION NOVEMBER 9, 1987

The meeting was called to order at 4 p.m. by President Lester Spies. There were 18 members in attendance.

The secretary's report was read and accepted without revision. The treasurer's report was tabled due to the fact that Mary could not be at the meeting.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Lester reported that he and the class presidents gave reports to the board of trustees and they were graciously accepted. Lester also felt that the Colloquium went well. Lester reported on the picking of the committee for the liturgics professor and said that the persons have all been chosen.

CLASS REPORTS

Middlers: the banner got done just in time for the Colloquium.

Seniors: some seniors are still working on DPLs (you better get them done). Two synods have had their interviews and all the seniors passed with flying colors (liturgical colors of course).

Juniors: the junior class will be hosting a sherry party Dec. 4. Look for the announcement in the Redactor.

STANDING COMMITTEES

Partners: They will be holding elections for new officers soon - so says Carol.

Family Life: They will be hosting a Thanksgiving Day meal for those who are here. They will also be hosting an Advent community meal Dec. 2. Look for announcements in the Redactor.

Publications: Lans is happy with how things are going so far and so are we.

Social Committee: They reminded everyone of the Polka Fest and of the free beer that will be available.

Lecture: Bob gave a very confusing report and I was not able to understand him, so ask him and if you understand come and tell me.

Quest: They are planning to have four wine and cheese parties with a faculty member to lead a discussion on inclusive issues with the whole community invited. The first one is scheduled for Dec. 9 from 6:30 to 8:00, place unknown. They are also looking into possibly going to a conference.

Athletics: Martin reminded everyone of the Luther Bowl. He also reported that he purchased two ping pong paddles. Thanks a lot Martin for your outstanding efforts.

Social Action: They have been doing something but nobody knows what they are doing.

OLD BUSINESS

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day was brought up and discussed. A motion was made by Mark Baldwin and approved that the Wednesday eucharist Jan. 20 be encouraged to be a commemoration service. A second motion about encouraging the administration to let us have the day off was defeated.

BUDGET

Lans moved that the fiscal year of the association be from Aug. 31 to Sept. 1 of the succeeding year, and this motion was approved. There was much discussion about the individual budgets of the committees, and there were a lot of good points brought up. I'm not going to type them here though. After this, most of the committees gave up some of their budgets so the association could get closer to balancing. This was the original reason we began discussing the budget - to cut things. This discussion was fruitful and the association's budget is back in line.

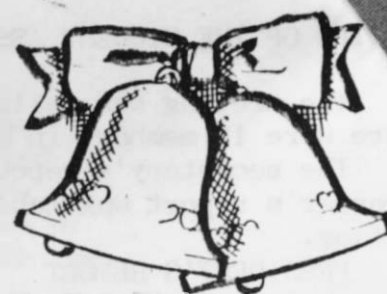
The meeting was adjourned at 5:37 and the next meeting will be at 4:00 Dec. 14 in the LLR.

Minutes by Joel A. Benson, secretary.





# COMMUNITY CALENDAR



December 2	Wednesday	5:15pm	Advent Community Meal (Refectory)
		7:30pm	Advent Eucharist (Chapel)
December 3	Thursday	7:30pm	Partners (Schmucker Lounge)
December 5	Saturday	1:00pm	Wedding of Katherine Cartwright and David Knodel
		6:00pm	Wedding of John Yost and Mindy Orndorff
December 7	Monday	7:30pm	Social Action Seminar: Chemical Dependency, or Sex, Drugs and RocknRoll: 2 out of 3 ain't bad (Schmucker Lounge)
December 9	Wednesday	6:30pm	Quest (Schmucker Lounge)
December 14	Monday	7:30pm	Partners (same)
December 18	Friday		Go in Peace, Have a Merry Christmas!
January 4	Monday		Return in Anguish, Happy New Church!



## OPINION *and* REFLECTION

JUDGE NOT

By Sandy Carlson

Most people would agree that one should be a "moral person" in order to be a good pastor of a congregation. The shepherd must, after all, stand as an example before the flock. Unfortunately, seminarians and clergy are as susceptible to sins as other people. In today's world, it is even more difficult to discern between right and wrong since the Bible has no clear answers for some of the "grey areas" we find ourselves in today.

Pastors need to be extra-critical about what they accept as right and wrong in these grey areas since they serve to influence a congregation of believers. They must read God's directives, pray and finally reach into their hearts for a moral decision. Some clergy, after going through this process, have decided to divorce; some drink alcohol; each has certain areas of her or his life that s/he had to either admit in her or his life or reject as a stumbling block. Only God knows the hearts and minds of his people; only God knows if these pastors are acting in his will or their own.

In Romans 14:14 it is written "nothing is unclean in itself; but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean." This shows how the whole idea of "morals" or "ethics" is subjective. The Ten Commandments serve as a good guide for ethical decisions as well as Jesus' condensation of the Ten: love God and our neighbors as ourselves. We are forced to look into our hearts to decide what is right and wrong for us. While drinking may be a sin to some people, others have no problems with it. There are Christians who vehemently condemn divorce while others have found reasons to justify it. There are so many areas that call for answers within ourselves; we need to remember that in everything we do, we should glorify God. If that is best served by drinking, or divorce or abstaining, so be it.

If we stand in judgment of a sister or brother in Christ and decide his or her morals, we take God's authority from him. Only he knows the truth of a decision. We need to guide fellow Christians, but if we judge we put ourselves into the crowd which called for stoning the adulterous woman. Jesus' response to them bears repeating here: "Let the one who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone."

God Talk: One Person's Opinion  
by Lans E. Alexis

In this issue of Table Talk, we once again open up the can of worms that is God talk. Other pieces on these pages take issue with the inclusive language service as those persons experienced it. I will not defend their points, but I will add my own opinions to stir up the can some more.

Point number one: I love my sisters in Christ. There is nothing I want to say in this piece, nor do while worshipping in chapel, nor wherever we may interact, that will cause us to be unequal partners in being baptised, called members of Christ's Body. To do so would be sin; Though it may happen, this is not what I want.

Two: While we have made it a point of our worship policy that no human is to be excluded in our use of language in our chapel services, the issue of how we talk of God has not been agreed upon in stated policy. Many worship leaders have assumed so, leading to argument, confusion, and ill feelings. Though discussion of the issue is healthy, I believe this community is not, at this time, engaging in a healthy discussion. Time will tell, and I urge groups involved to make this a priority -- to create a healthy, loving, forgiving environment to "talk God."

My two cents: for the sake of practicality, one must use pronouns at times simply to avoid awkwardness. For example, "God has come to God's people and set them free," is a little awkward. In proper English, one does not say, "Jane has come to Jane's people and set them free." A possessive pronoun is called for -- his or her. Some choose to keep "his" in our original example, some choose to say "her" for God; If not in this specific case, then in other God talk. One could take the example and direct it toward God, but this is not true to the text of the Benedictus.

I want to make the case that because we are stuck with an inadequate English language, we will, at times, have to err on the side of saying "his", especially in cases where God is possessing us, his people.

I believe the doctrine of the Trinity speaks to this issue. The Church confesses God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. As Lutherans, we confess Christ as Savior, the one who justifies us before God. Jesus called God "Abba," Daddy -- he is a product of his culture. He was born into a culture that may not have heard "mommy." Jesus is a man -- that too is particular to the time that God chose to appear to us. If it were today, Jesus might be a woman, or a Latin American, or a black South African, or an American-Asian orphan living in the streets of Saigon. Jesus is God -- that is how God revealed himself. When one tries to get around Jesus to search for God, he hides himself even further in the person of Christ. We do not find an embodied God, but a disembodied spirit, which Luther called Satan. Jesus is the Holy Spirit -- it has never been proven that the Bible separates the two. In putting together all these statements, we run up against the male image of the Trinity. I have stated before that the Spirit was once given a female identity, but I am still unsure how to resolve that question. We have Jesus is God is Spirit: he, him, and his.

One cannot de-sex God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit. God revealed himself in a body. The circumstances of an imperfect, sinful world made that body male. What one does with that in his or her theology is of utmost significance. How one deals with that in various pastoral situations is also crucial. How we as a community may have to deal with it in our chapel services is to live with the inadequacies of human language.

How I trust God in this powerful, divisive issue to keep us in his Truth is by proclaiming with St. Paul that "there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for [we] are all one in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:28, NIV)." Pax.

## On Our Liturgy

By Robert W. Jenson

I had hoped to avoid the controversy about the "inclusive" texts and translation now used in our chapel, but find I cannot responsibly do so. The decision by the worship committee to promulgate these texts and guidelines has had its predictable result: we no longer have a common liturgy. When the authorized texts of our denomination are used, and the rest of us say, e.g., "him," we hear voices crying "God." When the altered texts are used, there does not seem to be so much of the opposite phenomenon. I, at least, will not thus violate our commonality. But what this means is that I am reduced to silence, since neither can I speak these texts.

The texts are perversions in two ways. It is the first which fully silences me.

First. The texts are simply not Christian -- or for that matter, Jewish or Muhammedan or otherwise monotheistic. In a language like English, it is not possible to pray or proclaim a monotheistic faith without the use of pronouns. For "God" is not a proper name, it is a common term. A sentence like "God sent God's Son" does not, therefore, establish that the Son in question is the son of the first God mentioned; for all the sentence shows, it mentions two different Gods. Indeed, the most natural interpretation of the sentence would be that it praises one or another Valentinian aeon-manipulation.

It will, of course, be replied that we all understand that this is not the case. But why do we understand that? Because in fact we have the original text, "God sent his son," in mind. But what is then achieved by having the altered text in our mouths? Moreover, this understanding will remain only so long as the work of "inclusive" rewriting does not succeed. Once the authentic texts have truly been replaced in our minds, our prayer will be straightforwardly polytheistic or gnostic.

Second. The altered texts are for the most part perversions of biblical texts -- for which Lutherans ought to have more respect. And "perversions" is the right word, for the shifts to which the revisers have been driven, in attempting to avoid the pronouns which are essential to English translation of the texts, regularly alter their fundamental character. I will mention only two cases.

The device used to sanitize Psalm 95, the Venite of the Matins, is the recasting of its praises from the third-person to the second. But it is not accidental to the form of most of the Psalter's "hymns," that they are not in the second-person but precisely in the third. And therefore it is not accidental to the theology of these hymns that they use this indirect mode of address to God, a mode which ascends to address God only after the entire assembly has been swept into the address.

Friday, Nov. 20, we had a psalm-revision in which "he" and "his" were avoided, without endless repetition of "God," by free use of the Tetragrammaton, "JHWH," -- at which points we were supposed to say "Jahweh." Now, since where the Tetragrammaton actually appears in that same psalm, it is represented by "the Lord," this is absurd. But worse, there is good reason for the normal Christian custom of representing the Tetragrammaton in liturgical use with "the Lord:" respect for our Jewish sisters and brothers, for whom such utterance of the sacred name is blasphemy.

It may be thought that further effort will find more successful devices. There is no ground for such hope. For what has driven the revisers to these lamentable tricks is that they are embarked on an impossible task. There is no way to be Christian or otherwise monotheistic in English without pronouns.



Kyrie Eleison

by Pastor Daniel V. Biles

Bendersville Lutheran Parish

"Our Lord Jesus, you have endured the doubts and foolish questions of every generation. Forgive us for trying to be judge over you, and grant us the confident faith to acknowledge you as Lord."

It was an ironically fitting prayer to conclude a recent Matins service at the Gettysburg Seminary. The service had been executed -- in more ways than one -- in accordance with the canons of the latest "reine Lehre" in the Church, inclusive language. For in its travesty of text translation, it was demanded that God's revelation in the past as recorded in Scripture conform to our modern egalitarian standards. The office of Morning Prayer was indeed something about which one can only ask the Lord's forgiveness for our sinful pride and his endurance of our foolishness.

As a case in point, I take the first line of the Benedictus. Its first line in the RSV reads, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he has visited and redeemed his people." The LBW makes slight changes in the text to adapt the words to music. But since both are, according to the pure doctrine of inclusive language, an offense to our notions of equality between the sexes, the text was changed in the service to: "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who has come to our people and set us free."

What is wrong here? Simply that the text has been made to say something different than what it says in Scripture. "His people" in the Greek text and RSV translation clearly speak of a people who belong to God; this is not at all clear in the inclusive language translation. The very use of "our people" suggests that somehow we exist independently from God and that God exists to serve us.

Furthermore, it is not at all clear who "our people" are. Does this denote the Church? or just our congregation? or our race, culture, or nation? Are Jews included in our people? Does this mean Christians of every time and place? The term "his people" in the text points us beyond ourselves to the universal nature of the people whom God has chosen as his own. In the end, "our people" fails its own test of inclusivity; it is restrictive, self-centered, ambiguous, and fails to speak of the whole people of God.

Again, the author(s) of this service were simply inconsistent. The Lord's Prayer began: "Our Father," -- undeniably male terminology for God. Yet throughout the preceding portions of the service, the congregation had been forced to go through cumbersome and convoluted acts of linguistic calisthenics, all to avoid the dreaded third person singular masculine pronouns. Why in one instance do we freely address God as Father or Son, and yet draw back in horror when referring to the same God as "he," "him," or "his." Have they become as unmentionable in worship as the name of God, YHWH, was for the people of the Old Testament?

Finally, what the translations of the Benedictus, or the Venite, or the Psalm or Lesson used in the service amounted to were not translations of the texts, but sermons from the point of view of how they should have been written. In the end, the Matins service became one progression of confusion between the Word of God, and what is proclaimed today. It was no wonder the officiant gave no homily, for the service itself had become one long sermon on what the inclusive language enthusiasts propose the message of the Scriptures is for us today.

Admittedly: The Bible was written in a patriarchal society and thus was inevitably influenced by its language. But if the language of the biblical authors appears to us as sexist or male chauvinistic, then the proper place for dealing with such issues is in preaching and teaching. There is difference between translating a text and doing a sermon on it, and one must respect the former -- including the parts which are "offensive" to us -- in order to properly do the latter -- i.e., preaches the Gospel of justification -- the Gospel itself will more than adequately and clearly address the issues in the text

which we find "offensive" to our modern sensibilities. At least, it will certainly do so in better ways than semantic gymnastics.

This last comment leads directly to what is the greater danger in the inclusive language invasion of the liturgy, distraction from our basic task of preaching the Word of God to the actual concrete situations in the lives of members in our churches. Frankly, not once after reading scripture in a Bible study or worship service has a member in any of my parishes -- both here and in Philadelphia -- come to me and expressed offense that the reading of Scripture was not done in "inclusive language." Can it be that this simply is not an issue for the people in the pew? That it is just one more instance of people contriving issues of what they think people are bothered about or need to be aware of, but which they in fact are not and could care less about? Can it not be that the use of masculine pronouns for God (and in other instances) simply is not one of the burning questions of their daily lives? Might it not be that their lives are focused on more important and fundamental concerns? Might it not be that what they seek from a Bible study or a sermon is God's Word addressed to their actual hopes and fears?

Now, I get a rebuttal from people when I suggest this. I am told, "But inclusive language is an issue people need to become aware of and enlightened about." All of which is nothing more than subtle contempt for our members and arrogant presumption on our part that we think we know beforehand what "the people" need to become enlightened about. It is just a current version of the hubris I saw and was afflicted by in the mid-seventies when I was in seminary. Then there were two hot issues. One was politics: trying to show how wrong the U.S. had been in Vietnam, being anti-Nixon, how the Republican party was captive to the devil and how right the Democrats were, etc. The other was liturgical reform, this being the years leading up to the advent of the LBW. The implicit message to seminarians was that we were being sent out as knights in white armor into the parishes to set right what everyone else -- pastors and laity -- had screwed up. Now the hot issues are inclusive language and quota systems. And the white knights are still being saddled up to go forth in the cause of right to set things right.

A professor I once had defined the Gospel as the unconditional promise of the triumph of Jesus' love, spoken to the concrete hopes and fears of its hearers. The inclusive language issue is nothing else but a distraction from concentrating on this basic task of preachers. We do not focus on people's actual fears and hopes; rather, we presume to know ahead of time what people need to hear and become aware of. We do not focus on the promises of the Gospel, but are bound in a linguistic legalism in which we have to become more concerned with saying things right than saying the right thing, and very uptight that we might slip-up and say things the wrong way.

How should one deal with issues of sexism in the parish? Not by setting out beforehand with a contrived agenda about "becoming more inclusive," which is then forced upon people as a mold they must fit into. Deal with sexism when and where it arises in the actual exercise of ministry. In my parish experience, for example, the issue most blatantly reared its head over having, first laypersons in general, and women in particular, as communion assistants. In both occasions the situation was resolved so that sex as a basis for assisting in the distribution of the Supper was eliminated. This enabled people to grow in their understanding of the Gospel, and in using biblical and confessional criteria, rather than principles drawn from outside the Church, to resolve disputes.

This little essay has simply tried to present one parish pastor's reactions to the inclusive language service of Morning Prayer used at Gettysburg Seminary. If it causes future pastors to take some time when they get out into the parish to learn about their people and understand what is really bothering them, instead of setting out beforehand with a set of contrived issues about what someone thinks people are concerned about, or ought to become enlightened about, so much the better. Where the Seminary wants to go with this issue now is up to the Seminary. Perhaps an open debate on the matter, between professors of dif-

erent views, might be in order. I understand such things used to go on in the Church. It seems appropriate that people who are called to be teachers of those who will become preachers and teachers in the Church would do such things, for the benefit of students and the wider Church.

In the meantime, Jesus, please endure with your Church a little while longer.

#### DIVORCE AND THE CLERGY

(Name of author withheld at request)

One of the issues troubling the Church nowadays is divorce, specifically divorce of the clergy. The Central Penn Synod and Gettysburg Seminary have chosen to take a hard line against divorce and would like to steer divorced people out of a clerical vocation. They (I presume) take their stand on the scriptural injunction against divorce (e.g. Mt. 5:31f.; 19:3ff.), on a theology of monogamous marriage in which "the two have become one flesh" so joined by God, and, I suspect, a lurking consequentialist fear that the Gospel may be brought into disrepute by the goings-on of its professed servants.

Alas in reality the Central Penn-Gettysburg line comes into direct conflict with the reigning ideology of the E.L.C.A., the theological "pearl of great price" and summum bonum, which is, of course, the dogma of inclusivity. The ideology of inclusivity claims not only that men and women are equal partners in the ordained ministry of the Gospel, but should be numerically equal as well; and the Church should move ahead (not, malgre Justice Frankfurter, "with all due speed," but right now) to do just that, enforcing itself with a quota system requiring 50 percent women on boards, commissions, etc., to be followed ad litteram sine glossa.

Now where the rub comes is that divorce is not an equal opportunity phenomenon among the ordained and the ordinand. It is rather one that occurs among women far more often than among men. And one that affects women particularly after they have enrolled in seminary. This phenomenon holds true not only at Gettysburg but at all mainline seminaries of which I am aware. A prohibition against divorce in the clergy or those seeking ordination is one that is aimed at women, because it will strike with more frequency at women. Quite probably it will ensure that women remain numerically inferior in the Lutheran clergy and quite possibly, and indeed logically, be seen as discriminating against women.

So what is to be done in this conflict between theological desiderata? For the time being the Church cannot have a prohibition on divorce and an inclusive clergy at the same time. One thing that the seminary should do immediately, if it is serious about upholding both marriage and inclusivity, is hold a mandatory pre-session for married enrollees that will explore with them what it means to be married and pursue a clerical vocation. That (especially for male spouses) it means subordinating one's own career for the duration of seminary, that it means financial and emotional difficulties for the short term. In any case the sessions need to bring up the potential frictions in the marriage before the pursuit of ordination begins.

I hope this little piece is provocative enough that it can initiate informed discussion on this difficult issue.

Question

by Jon Vogel

Old man, old man,  
 What do you see?  
 Do you see your grandson looking at you?  
 What does he think, when he looks at you?  
 Does he see age and death,  
     or wisdom and life?  
 He gives you joy, and hope for the future,  
     what are your gifts to him?

Young man, young man,  
 What do you see?  
 What do you think of the world around you?  
 Is it yet a place of hope and challenge?  
     of struggle and victory?  
 You see the man before you,  
     so wise and strong.  
 How can he be beaten?  
     He is the Man, the one you turn to, when the challenge  
     grows too great.  
 Keeper of wisdom, giver of strength.  
 Guardian  
 Protector  
 Father.

Young man, young man,  
 As you grow old  
     continue the cycle,  
 Do you find what is meant to be in this world?  
 The challenges to be faced,  
     the victories to be won.  
 As you change from boy to man,  
     Do you see the pride in an old man's eyes,  
     as he watches you grow?  
 Do you grow strong, under his guidance,  
     under his love?  
 Strong fathers, tall sons,  
     the pride of one, the strength of the other.  
 Do you find your love in the world?  
     the companion  
     the partner  
     the friend?  
 The one with whom you will share your life,  
     raise strong children,  
     watch them grow, share their joy.  
     grow old with, become one with.

Little boy, little boy,  
 What will you do?  
 The circle is broken,  
     the old man is gone.  
 Where do you go,  
     with your joys and your fears?  
 The terrors that grab you,  
     the victories that you win.  
 Gone is the wisdom, gone is the strength.  
 How can he know what you have done and become?  
 Where is the pride that should have shone in those eyes?



"Dad! I made it! I'm here! What do you think?"

Little boy, little boy,  
What will you do?  
The circle is broken,  
the old man is gone

August, 1987

A Psalm of Carol  
by Carol Gesalman

I sing your praises among your gathered people;  
I shout your name from the highest rooftops.  
To learn your will is my greatest desire;  
To walk in your ways, my fondest wish.  
Yet my heart is troubled, Lord.  
My rest is uneasy.  
My mind screams to know my past  
Yet my whole being flees in great fear.  
Where are you, O Lord, in my mental agony?  
Where are you when my demons roar?  
Do not forsake me, O Lord! Be with me!

You are my Strength and my Redeemer.  
Without you, I shall be consumed  
In the ragings of my mind.

May 13, 1986

Lovesong for Counselees  
by Pastor Kristine K. Franke

(Chorus:

Hey baby, I wanna' actuate our dyad;  
in a very real sense, get intimate.  
Let's flesh it out,  
Come on and flesh it out.

1. This is how I'm feelin', baby,  
and I'm hoping you can hear me  
cause we gotta dialogue,  
all the experts tell us so.  
I wanna' contract with you  
to be involved. (Chorus)
2. Some people may wanna' play serial monogamy,  
but in contra-distinction to them,  
I'm tired of episodic couplings.  
Do you get my message, baby,  
and can you apply the appropriate meaning?  
Let's engage in mutual give and take;  
let's establish some quid pro quos. (Chorus)
3. You and me, we can instigate a new encounter,  
we can relate through creative engagement.  
I'm hoping we can share  
our respective individuation.  
We just gotta' impinge our affection on one another.  
I'm sure our complimentarity will be enabling. (Chorus)

*Even  
More  
Poetry*



Please, Have Thirds  
by Scott M. Douglas

Early morning, I rise to run.  
A brief jaunt - energy to spare.  
Far off, a child shivers.

Later morning, I sit to eat.  
"I'm starving."  
Push myself away from the table.  
Far off, a child shivers.

Afternoon, I run again.  
More than an hour's excess.  
"When I run I feel His pleasure."  
How much pleasure - unable to swat away flies?  
Far off, a child shivers occasionally.

Night, I lie in bed.  
Long-neglected shirts parade past my bed.  
I tear off name tags like "Kedebe" + "Abebe"  
And put mine on while dreaming of obscure situations.  
Far off, a child tries to shiver.

All day, I look in the mirror.  
A young cadaver stares back.  
I invoke Cain's protest.  
The Cadaver again stares, now with the wrath of God in its eyes.  
Far off, but all too close, a child has ceased to shiver.

A letter to the poetry page

Howdy folks,  
How ya doin? The last Table Talk I saw looked good. Keep up the good  
work. Try not to study. Pray and exercise. here's a poem, love,

just me, TC

Modern Furniture  
by Tim Craven

She came young from the bars to sit in her Father's house  
to think about her Mother, who died today.

She sat on the plastic couch  
we prayed

Her subterranean river faith-tear  
pulsing beneath her blue jean clothes  
cracked through her cigarette earth-eye  
momentarily reminding everyone in the room  
that mystical Jack Daniels romance  
is no match for that relentless, two-fisted Christian baptism:

death/resurrection/Marlboros