

# Table Talk

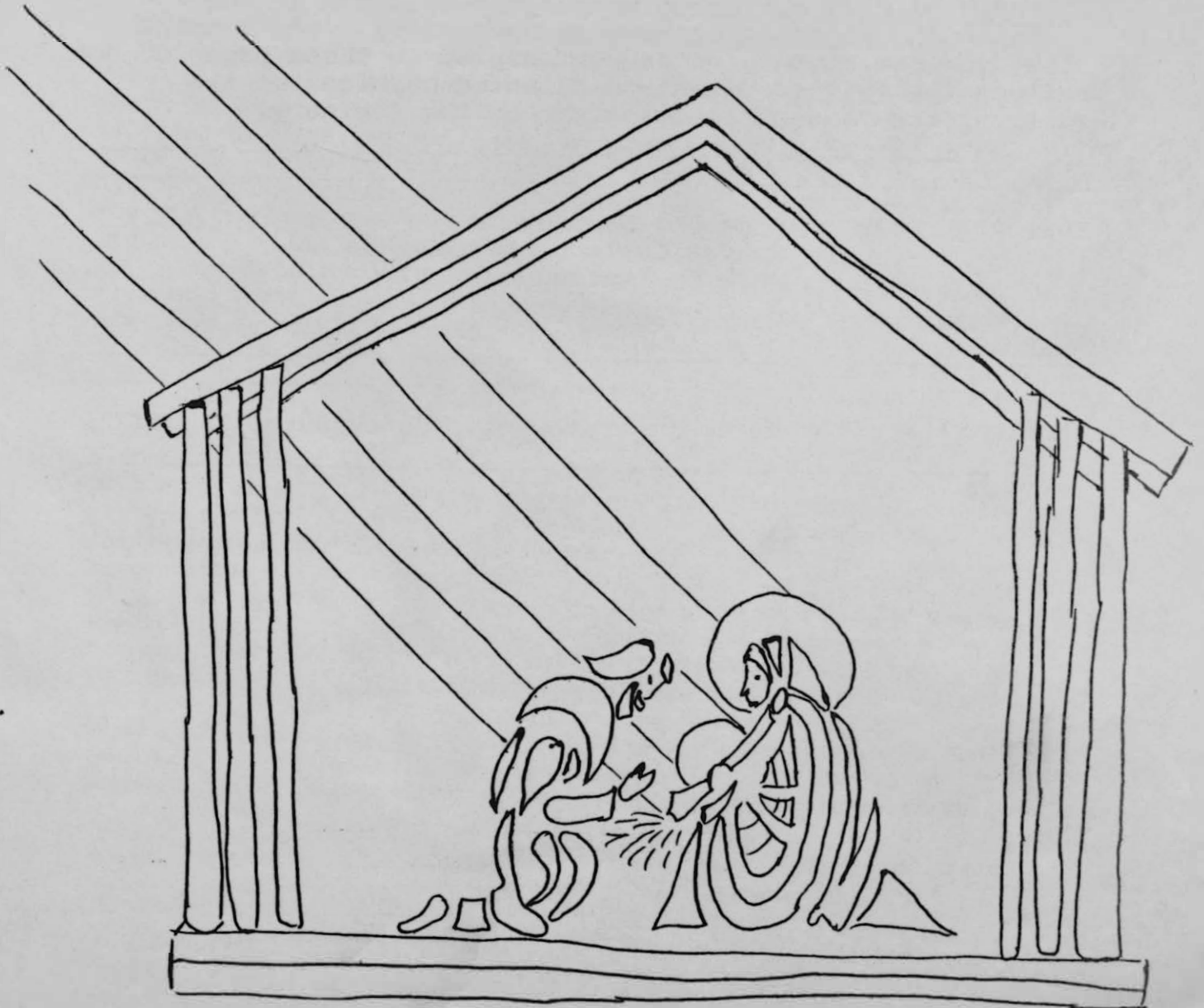
*News and Views of the  
Student Body of The Lutheran  
Theological Seminary at Gettysburg.*



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FROM THE EDITORIAL STAFF:

If you wish to express your views in Table Talk, please do so. We ask that you type and double-space your manuscript so that it will be easier to enter into our computer. Proposals for monthly columns are also welcome. Poetry and art will be considered, but our primary emphasis will be placed on letters, religious epics, UFO reports, and feature articles. Nothing will be published without the author's name. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact one of the staff.

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TABLE TALK is published monthly by students at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg. The twisted views and demented opinions photocopied on these pages do not reflect the twisted views and demented opinions of the editors, the Student Association, or the Seminary.

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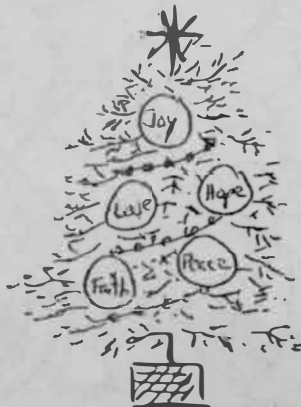
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TABLE TALK, 61 West Confederate Ave., Gettysburg, PA, 17325

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# From The President's Desk

Whatever other reactions readers might have had to the last issue of Table Talk, no one could deny that it had thematic unity! The question of inclusive language, especially with respect to worship, is obviously one that provokes responses both diverse and strong.

The church must take seriously the report of many women that they experience a sense of exclusion when confronted with some of the traditional language of worship. At the same time, I must confess dissatisfaction with what the church generally and our own community specifically has yet been able to offer as alternatives. Most experiments, at least those with which I'm familiar, seem incapable of producing liturgical texts which are at once linguistically inclusive, theologically consistent and aesthetically satisfying.

Anyone who has struggled to make such translations of received texts knows the stubbornness of the problems. Sometimes, for example, we find ourselves dealing with names or titles such as "Father" and "Lord" which are so structurally embedded in the Judæo-Christian tradition that they cannot be wrenched from it without also tearing away something from the tradition's witness. Or, as another example, to use "God" twice in the same sentence in order to avoid the masculine pronoun "his" or "him" is often, at one level, syntactically awkward and, at another level, may suggest that two deities are at work rather than one. One is led to the unhappy conclusion that human language -- perhaps especially the English language -- is simply unequal to all that we ask it to accomplish by way of inclusivity.

Though inclusivity of language in both worship and preaching is clearly a question with which the church must continue to struggle, we have just as surely moved to a point where there should be no remaining issue with respect to our speech to and about each other. All of us by now should have had our sensitivities sharpened to a point where terms which exclude (e.g., "man," "mankind," unnecessary "hes" and "hims") are unacceptable. Even less tolerable is language which demeans or turns members of the other sex into objects or makes them the target of jokes no longer funny. In spite of vigilance, all of us have unfortunate lapses into such patterns. But at least we are now aware that they are indeed lapses which drop us below a standard to which we are all accountable.

What is true for human communication generally has, of course, special force within the community of Christ. Neither gender nor race nor any other gift of human differentiation is eliminated by baptism into Christ. All distinctions, however, are incorporated into and transcended within the Body of Him in whom "there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor ~~female~~" and who makes all one. Our language, so central to both selfhood and community, should be instrumental to our unending effort to bring that unity to expression.

By PRESIDENT HERMAN G. STUEMPFLE

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INTERNATIONAL STUDENT PROFILE



MEET ANKE SOHRT

By April Alexander

Anke Sohrt was born on May 23, 1966 in Busum, West Germany, a town on the North Sea. When Anke was six her family moved to Eckernfoerde on the Baltic Sea. She lived in Eckernfoerde until she went to the University of Kiel and the University of Heidelberg to study for the ministry. Anke studied for two years in Kiel and for one in Heidelberg.

Currently, Anke is spending one year here at Gettysburg. She is in the MAR program. When asked why she wanted to study in America she said that it seemed to be a perfect time to go and live in another country. She currently has few responsibilities --such as a career and children-- and it seemed like a perfect time to study abroad. Anke also wants to learn about the differences between the churches in this country and the ones back in Germany. She sees many worship ideas that can be shared.

Anke has an older brother who is currently studying computer science in Salt Lake City, Utah. She also has a sister who is studying biology in Germany.

Her father and her grandfather are ministers. Her father is very proud that she is studying for the ministry. Anke stated that she always wanted to do what her father does. However, she does admit that at one time she considered teaching as a career.

Schooling in Germany is very different than it is here. For those who are going into office type positions such as secretaries, bank tellers, or other office jobs, schooling is on a ten year system. For those on an academic track, high school is a 13 year system. There were no majors, but Anke did have to take courses in German, English, and math.

Once high school is completed, German students must take an exam called the "ABETUR" to get into the university. With this one test, their entire future is determined. Needless to say, Anke passed hers!

Once in the university, Anke was finally able to specialize in theology. The system over there is set up like an independent study. Anke had to take five disciplines including: Old Testament, New Testament, Church history, systematic theology, and one non-theological discipline. This would include psychology or sociology. In addition, in the theology field, Hebrew, Greek and Latin are required.

Anke observes that here in the United States exams seem to be "used" excessively as teaching tools. Unlike American universities and seminaries, in Germany there are no exams until the end of the four years of study! Instead, after this program is complete she will have to take her

comprehensive final exam and write an exegetical sermon. In addition, she also has to do a major thesis paper and take a series of small written and oral exams.

Those of you who have been able to hear Anke perform on her flute know that it is a real pleasure to hear her play. She told me that she started playing the flute in about the fifth grade. She was about ten or eleven years old at the time. Anke says that she wishes that there were more opportunities for her to play her flute within the school setting. Anke also plays the trumpet. In her family, music is very important. Her family is a leader of a brass band. She stated that each member of her family was taught to play instruments. She adds that her mother has recently taken up the bassoon!

Anke said than in Germany she has more access to public transportation that she does here. She is not use to having problems getting around from place to place.

She also notes that meals are very different here. Not only is the fare different, but the serving times are different. In Germany the main meal of the day is served in the afternoon --not in the evening. She says that it took some time to get use to evening meals here.

Anke did want to let people know that after finishing theology studies at the University she has to complete a two year practical education in a parish setting. This is similar to our internship program. Also, attending the university is free and the only expense is housing.

In a future issue we will discuss the differences that Anke sees between the Church in Germany and the Church here in the United States. []

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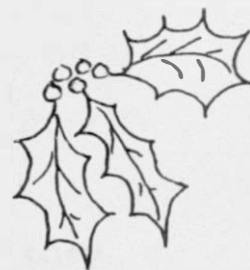
A TOTALLY A-POLITICAL NON-CONTROVERSIAL SEASONAL TID-BIT

#### A LUTHERAN CHRISTMAS IN MINNESOTA

By Mark D. Isaacs

I'm alone now, but it wasn't always that way. I can remember a time when I was a part of a real Christmas --a country Christmas-- back when I was a kid living in Minnesota. In those days, my folks lived in "the Cities" in one of those post-WWII cracker-box houses. It was a nice house, but that is not where Christmas was. Christmas was out in the country --out in rural Minnesota.

My Grandparents lived on a small farm 1 mile west and 3 miles south of Hazel Run (pop. 129). To get there we had to pile into my Dad's new sky blue 1955 Chevy. Somehow, my folks would load my sister, my baby sister, the presents, the diaper bags, the Christmas cookies, the suit cases, and several other tons of assorted family stuff into the Chevy. At last we were ready for what at the time seemed to be the

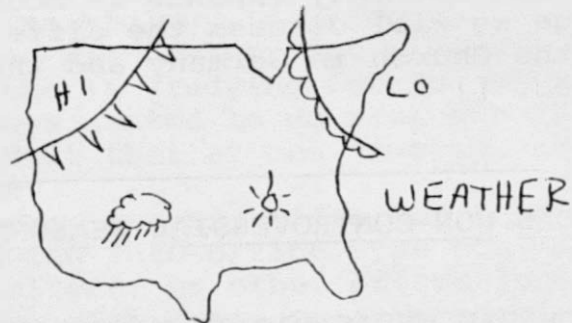


longest journey in the world. The world and I were both smaller then; "the farm" was less than 125 miles away!

About 4 miles down the road my sister would start her usual chorus of "are we there yet?" The only way to preserve the sanity of the family was to either give her something to eat, or to wait for her to get car sick. Of course, if she got car sick --the worst case scenario-- the smell would set off a chain reaction and I would get car sick too. In nine out of ten trips to Hazel Run a mass wave of car sickness was a required part of the trip. Somehow my folks endured!

During the trip, my usual place was on the ledge of the back window. It is a little known historical fact that in the glory days --prior to mandatory seat belt laws-- an entire generation of American kids grew up on that shelf in the rear window of the 1955 Chevy.

Usually, being Minnesota, there would be a major snow storm while we were trying to drive out to "the farm." For Dads, driving in snow is always a catastrophic event. For a kid, blizzard runs are wonderful. During snow drives I would sit forward on the hump and look out the front window into the rural blackness. I would quickly fall into a trance with millions of hypnotic snow flakes coming endlessly toward the windshield. To this day, when I close my eyes, I can still see the procession of flakes drifting toward my Dad's '55 Chevy. I thought it would never end.

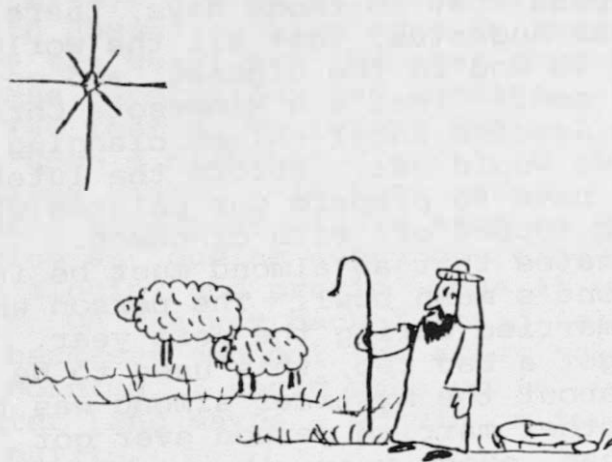


Finally, the glorious moment arrived when we would pull up the long driveway at "the farm." How can I describe my Grandparent's farm without getting all sentimental? It was sort of like a hybrid of the Walton place, a Norman Rockwell painting, and a five-and-dime Christmas card. The white snow, the clean crisp air, the lights of the 100 year old farm-house, and the promise of warm welcome. That's a Minnesota Christmas!

When you are a kid, walking into Grandma's house is always a health hazard. Even during normal visits Gram would grab a hold of you and start squeezing until the blood vessels began to pop out of your forehead. During Christmas, she would squeeze twice as hard. If you were lucky enough to survive this brutality then the aunts would start in on you. Then, if there was anything left, Grandpa would grab you and give you one of his famous "whisker rubs" with his lethal face full of nubs.

Finally, with all of the mushy stuff out of the way, I was free to do the really important things; like running down to the barn to see the cows. No matter how cold it was outside, the cows always made the barn warm and cozy. It was only here that one could behold the mystery of how Grandpa and Uncle Dale got those pails of milk out of those cows [twice a day]. And sometimes, if you were really lucky, you got to see Grandpa's pigs over in the other barn.

Standing in Grandpa's barn you could not help but to imagine the Baby Jesus sleeping in a pile of straw. When you are an adult, the prospect of this seems awful. When you are



a kid, you think that Jesus was lucky! For this reason, they never let me sleep in the barn with the cows.

Meanwhile, back in the house, Grandma is in her flowered apron working in the kitchen. [In every known photo of Grandma she always has the same apron on.] Ordinarily, she is the world's greatest cook --but not tonight. Tonight is Christmas Eve and, according to Norwegian-Lutheran tradition, she must cook and serve LUTEFISK!

It is difficult to describe lutefisk to those who are lucky enough to be born as non-Lutherans without getting theological. After Adam's fall God cursed the ground and commanded that "man must live by the sweat of his brow." The other curse [left out of all non-Lutheran translations of the Holy Writ] is that each Christmas Eve all Norwegians must eat lutefisk to atone for the previous year's sins. Typical Minnesota-Norwegian sins include things like playing too much Rook, using too much Copenhagen, not voting Republican, drinking hard cider by accident, or telling too many Swedish or Iowa jokes.

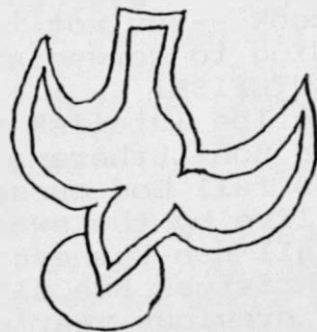
Stripped of its theological meaning, lutefisk is a cod fish that has been dried like a board. Then, to bring it back to life, it is soaked in lye. When the remains are cooked it smells like a dead fish that was dried and soaked in lye.

According to the Book of Concord there are only two kinds of Lutherans. There are the true saints who wrap their lutefisk in cheese cloth before boiling, and those heretics that bake their lutefisk in the oven. If it wasn't for the spirit of Christmas uniting these two rival factions a civil war would have broken out in Minnesota years ago. In fact, that is how North and South Dakota were formed!

With the smell of lutefisk lingering in the air [it stays until April], Grandma would have us all sit down around her huge table. She would then open her well worn out Bible [she had seven kids] and read the Christmas story --Luke 2: 1-14. "And it came to pass that in those days, there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed ... Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." That's a Minnesota Christmas.

Finally, with Swedish angel-chimes clanging endlessly in the background, we would eat. Before the lutefisk treatment however we would have to prepare our palates with a hearty bowl of rice mush topped off with cinnamon.

Tradition dictates that an almond must be inserted --at random-- in someone's mush bowl. The person who gets the almond will get married during the next year. In the days before marriage got a bad rep, this used to be good news! The funny thing about the mystical almond was that neither Grandpa nor any other married person ever got "the mush blessing." Instead, every year, the mush almond would miraculously appear in Aunt Ruth's bowl. Even as a kid I suspected that Grandma somehow rigged the almond in still another desperate attempt to get Ruth to move out.





Finally, after we suffered through all of the lutefisk and Christmas cookies we could stand, we entered the living room to behold a huge Christmas tree decorated with hundreds of tasteless old fashion decorations. In Minnesota, to compensate for the severe winters, everyone gets to open their presents on Christmas Eve. And, this year, there were hundreds of presents under the tree. I can't remember what they gave kids before they had electronic games, but I don't ever recall going away empty-handed.

Then, after all of the presents were opened we would pile into cars and go off to church for the midnight candle-light service [at 9PM]. Prairie churches are wonderful. They are always at least 100 years old. The floors creak, and every stained glass window depicts Jesus doing something religious --like tending sheep or walking on clouds. In addition, over the altar there is always a huge painting of Jesus walking out of the tomb with Romans running away in terror.

On Christmas Eve the Hazel Run Lutheran Church was always packed with Christmas decorations and candles --hundreds of candles. It is a law that on Christmas Eve all Lutherans must sing "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear," "O' Little Town of Bethlehem" and "Silent Night" --in that order. It is also a law that the Pastor's wife must always sing an octave and a half higher and twice as loud as everybody else.

With all of the singin' and prayin' done it was time to go back to "the farm." On the way back I would fall asleep sandwiched in the backseat amongst the other relations. Somehow, the next morning, I would wake up in my foot pajamas in bed with my sister [and maybe a cousin or two] under a heap of home-made quilts.

On Christmas day the entire branch of the family would get all dressed up and go over to Great Grandma Knutson's huge house in Clarkfield. Hundreds of relatives, from as far away as South Dakota, would gather for a full day of eating and laughing and kid comparing and kissy-face attacks from strange relatives. For a kid this is a disgusting spectacle. To get away from it I would scramble upstairs to the third floor, where my Mother couldn't find me, to talk to the cousins and second cousins about the third cousins. What a great time!

After this wondrous all day fete I was put to bed upstairs at the house back on "the farm." Through the heat duct cut in the floor I could hear the adults drinking coffee and talking about "the old Johnson place" and the prospects of higher corn prices for the next year. Sooner or later the conversation would drift into a formal listing of local folk who got killed in car accidents during the previous decade. It sounds morbid, but for Norwegian-Lutherans death is nothing to fear. Instead of sadness it means a joyous eternal escape from lutefisk. Finally, I would crawl under the quilts and smile knowing that I was safe and warm and a part of the best family in the world.

When I was six my folks moved out East, and a few years

later, saying that he "doesn't for a minute regret the decision," my Grandfather quit farming and moved into Hazel Run. As time rolled on I've moved far away to my own place. My Minnesota relatives are scattered all over the nation in un-Christmas like places like California and Florida. Like the rest of them, I'm getting by. I'm paying my VISA bills, traveling in a circle of shallow upwardly mobile friends, and driving a trendy car. And, I'm living alone. We didn't know it then, but the real Christmas was a Minnesota Christmas. []

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DECEMBER

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4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

A Calendar of  
Events




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December 22 - January 3  
 January 4  
 January 13  
  
 January 16  
  
 January 29  
  
 January 31

CHRISTMAS BREAK!!!!  
 J-Term classes begin  
 "Cry Freedom" showing with  
 K.G. leading discussion,  
 7 PM  
 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.  
 Commemoration  
 Music, Gettysburg! The  
 Baroque Bunch 7:30 PM  
 Close of J-Term

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IS JESUS LORD?

By Sandra Carlson Alexis

Once again language has caused a stir within the seminary community. Did a male student call a female student a "girl?" Did a professor mention the word "he" in referring to God? No. This time the uproar is about referring to Jesus as "Lord" or rather changing "Lord" to "Savior."

Of course I am referring to Pastor Robert White's letter which was recently published in Table Talk. In this letter he criticized Pastor Janet Peterman, our Pastor-in-Residence this fall, for not using "Lord" in the service at which she presided.

"I don't deny the use of 'Lord' in church," Pastor Peterman told me in a recent interview, "I spoke the word several times in the service and the assistant used 'Lord' as well." Pastor Peterman referred specifically to the use of "Lord, in your mercy" as part of the prayers.

"I do not deny 'Lord' for Jesus," she repeated, "but I deny the use of any one title for Jesus." Pastor Peterman maintains that narrowing the title for Jesus to "Lord" stresses the maleness and such narrowness can make maleness an idol.

The word "Lord" is part of our language and language is not "pure and clean" Pastor Peterman asserts. Now "Lord" carries with it much more than the reverent use in the Hebrew scriptures. History tells us that "lord" is associated with the feudal system; "lord" is someone who "holds power in an oppressive way." One must look at the connotations of the word in today's world and be sensitive to the exclusive use of a potentially negative word in our worship service.

One of the dangers of the Church is for it to become so rigid that it becomes idolatrous. Pastor Peterman referred to the example we find in Jesus who fed people on the Sabbath and was rebuked for not keeping the Sabbath. "Jesus overturned a calcified Jewish tradition," Pastor Peterman continued. "The Church cannot be so calcified that we cannot hear those who feel excluded."

Another reason for varied use of "Lord" in the worship service is because of the traditional reverence for that word, Pastor Peterman suggested. When "Lord" is used in the Hebrew scriptures, it is a replacement for the Tetragrammaton -- the letters YHWH, or Yahweh. "The name of the Lord was revered and held in awe but not spoken," Pastor Peterman said. Part of the reason she chooses to replace it occasionally is in respect for the original meaning of "Lord."

The last paragraph of Pastor White's letter was particularly condemning of Pastor Peterman's change of Jesus' title. "He implies I'm apostate -- fallen away from the Church," said Pastor Peterman. "From the tone of his letter, there is the underlying presumption that you can only be part of the Church if you feel a certain way." Such assumptions can lead the Church to a "too narrow conception of itself," she concluded.

Wouldn't it have been easy for her simply to have left the word as it was? Wouldn't that have prevented all this controversy?

"I have often been asked why I'm bringing something up," admitted Pastor Peterman. "I have a great love of tradition, but I have also felt the pain of exclusion. We cannot, because of that word, exclude others in the language of the Church." []

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AN UNPAID COMMERCIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

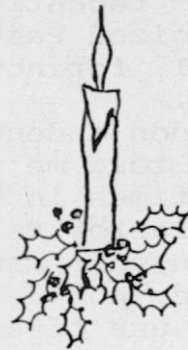
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday

By Mark Baldwin

On January 16, the seminary community will devote one day to a commemoration of the life and witness of The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Classes will be suspended to enable students, faculty, and staff to attend this observance. The commemoration has been organized in response to concerns voiced over the past year by students and faculty members seeking ways for Gettysburg Seminary to take part in the national observance of Dr. King's birthday. The day is designed to help us appropriate Dr. King's prophetic vision in our future work as Lutheran pastors and teachers.

Keynote speaker for the day will be The Rev. Dr. Nelson Trout, former bishop of the South Pacific District of the American Lutheran Church. Dr. Trout will draw on his own experience in the civil rights movement to discuss Dr. King's relevance for us today. As of this writing, at least one other educational forum is planned for the day dealing with black church music and its relationship to the civil rights movement. Our commemoration will include a celebration of the Eucharist.

In agreeing to suspend classes, the faculty stipulated 1) that students must help organize any Seminary observance of Dr. King's birthday and 2) that students should attend the observance if possible. The first condition has been met. A small group of students, led by the Social Action Committee, has cooperated with Pastor Nelson Strobert to plan the events scheduled for January 16. Moreover, the Student Association



has earmarked funds to help offset the expenses associated with the commemoration.

It's now up to the rest of us to meet the second condition. I encourage my fellow students to support the Seminary's commemoration of Dr. King. It promises to be a moving remembrance of a man whose powerful witness to Christ will inspire generations to come. [ ]

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MORE FASCINATING READING [Part II]:

The Student Association Minutes

By Roger L. Steiner

The Student Association met once in November at the regularly scheduled time and set up the budget for this year. No other significant items of business arose.

On December 5, 1988, the Student Association held its regular meeting and was called to order at 12:25 PM. President Joel Benson reported that the presidential search committee will begin the interviews in January with 30 people being considered. The search committee for faculty replacements of Dr. Jenson and Dr. Stroup has been selected and will possibly start interviewing in February.

Lynn Miller gave the only class report. Seniors had just sent in their dossiers to Chicago, and were at this point anticipating the call/endorsement procedures of December and next semester.

The Athletic Committee reported that the football season was over with the Gettysburg-Philadelphia Trophy in President Stuempfle's office. Paul announced that he had to resign from his chairperson position as he won't be on campus next semester. Middlers need to elect a replacement. Volleyball

and basketball will be coming up soon.

The Family Life Committee began discussion concerning the use of apartment one in the bottom of Heiges Hall as a day-care facility. As of the meeting, the seminary does not officially use this apartment, and it would be ideal for the kids' afternoon naps. A motion was made that the Student Association request President Stuempfle's support for the use of this facility as a day-care room. Motion passed. The committee also reported that there may be an Epiphany dinner.

A new item that came up in discussion was that "Skip" Balko is graduating, and as a result, the Middler Class needs to elect a new person to be in charge of the Health Fund. This should be done soon.

The Lecture Committee had nothing to report.

Publications Committee reported that Table Talk was late due to mechanical failure of the offset printer. There will be an attempt to have another issue out before Christmas break. Other items were discussed concerning Table Talk.

The Social Committee is planning a joint venture with the Family Life Committee.

Recycling is going well according to the Social Action Committee. There will be a February and an April pick-up next semester. A recent hymn-sing went well and may lead to one-to-one visits at the retirement home. K.G. Molette will be showing "Cry Freedom" on January 13th with discussion to follow. Then, on January 16th, the seminary will honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. with a day of lectures and worship. The Student Association encourages all students to attend these events. Finally, the director of the Interfaith Conference spoke to this committee at one of its meetings.

There was no old business brought forward.

Two items of new business were discussed. First of all, Chicago Seminary students and faculty are requesting a gathering of student representatives from the various Lutheran seminaries to debate issues arising over the "Statement on Sexual Conduct" given to all seminarians. There is much talk at the Trinity, Chicago, and Pacific Northwestern seminaries, and they would like to hear our views. The Student Association has decided that Gettysburg will send a representative with a statement from us. Therefore, classes will need to meet sometime early next semester to discuss this issue.

The second item under new business was an announcement that Quest would be meeting on Wednesday, December 7th, at 1:30 PM in the Coffee Shop. This led to some discussion on inclusivity.

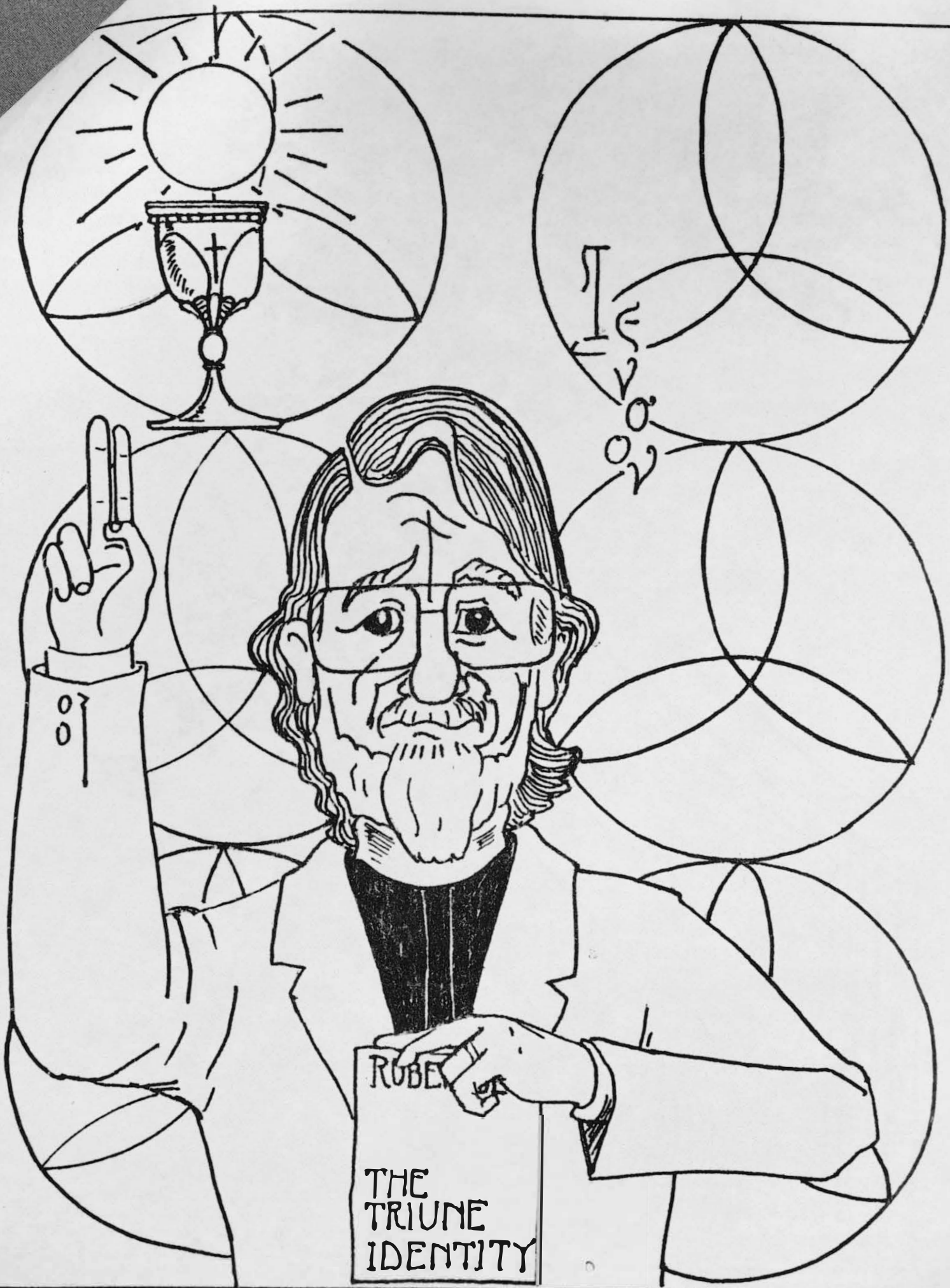
At 1:15 PM, the meeting was adjourned. []

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For those who will grieve the loss of Dr. Jenson to this seminary, Table Talk presents your very own "cut-out and color" icon of Dr. Jenson. (Icon courtesy of Scott Bryte, our resident anti-iconoclast.)

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RUBEN  
THE  
TRIUNE  
IDENTITY

Illumination