

Table Talk

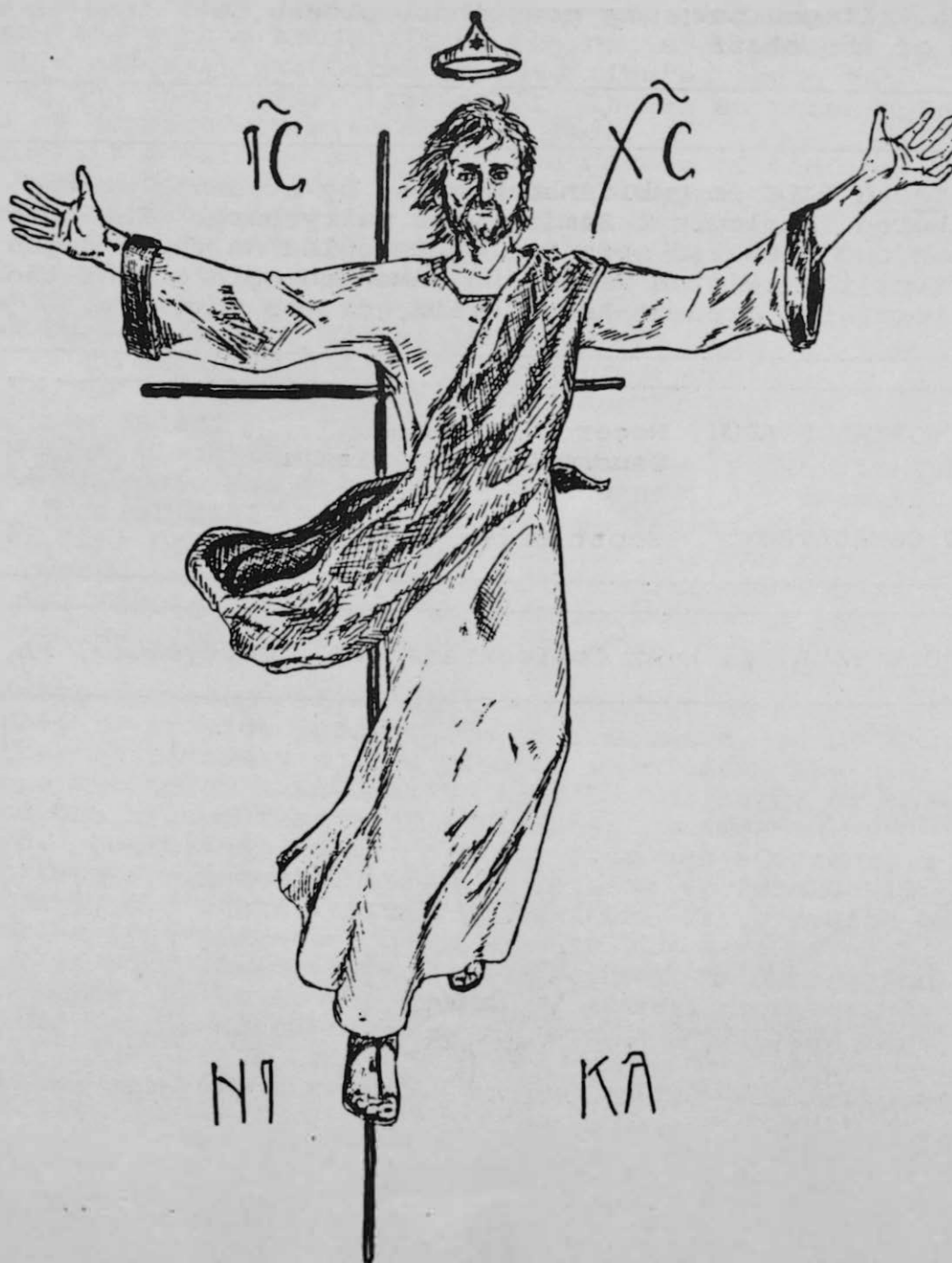
*News and Views of the
Student Body of The Lutheran
Theological Seminary at Gettysburg.*



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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.

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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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT:



CHURCHWIDE ASSIGNMENTS IN THE E.L.C.A.

By President Herman G. Stuempfle

Bureaucracy has a bad name these days and often deserves it. It frequently functions in ways that are rigid and impersonal, operating more with reference to policies than to persons. All institutional structures, not least church structures, can veer in this direction.

It's heartwarming, therefore, to experience a bureaucratic process which, at least to some degree, transcends such characteristics. That happened to me February 20 when I traveled to 8765 West Higgins Road as a seminary consultant for the ELCA's Churchwide Assignment Consultation. That's the church's counterpart (minus the salary scale!) to the NFL draft -- the occasion when anticipated seminary graduates are distributed among the regions of the church for first call. It was an encouraging instance of bureaucracy with a human face.

First, it should be said that the number of candidates desired by the bishops (458) exceeded the number of candidates available (301) by 157. Contrary to rash predictions made in the 1970's that there would be an alarming surplus of candidates by the 1980's, the reality is the opposite. The church urgently needs more committed and qualified candidates for the ministry of the Gospel. The shortage is at an acute stage for "underrepresented constituencies" -- African-American, Hispanic, Native American, and Asian.

It's also clear that vacancies are unevenly distributed across the church. Region II (the Southwest), for example, had only 15 first call vacancies, whereas Region III (Minnesota, the Dakotas, etc.) had 86! Breakdowns for specific synods were not available but traditionally have revealed the same unevenness. Western North Dakota has usually been as open for calls as South Florida has been closed.

Seminary representatives at the consultation were present only to provide information as requested, so we could watch rather objectively as the process unfolded. The way the bishops struggled earnestly to balance the needs of the church and the circumstances of individual candidates was impressive. Legitimate needs -- e.g., a spouse's career, a child's allergy, a parent's terminal illness -- were dealt with seriously and sensitively. Preferences as to region and synod were honored wherever possible. In the case of Gettysburg seniors, twenty-nine were assigned to the region of first choice, three to the region of second choice, and three to the region of third choice. None was outside that range.

Calls to specific ministries in the church are arranged

in different ways in various denominations. No system can either guarantee or exclude the influence of the Holy Spirit in its operation. My impression is that the ELCA is struggling to develop as just and humane a process as is humanly possible.[]

Events

UPCOMING EVENTS FOR YOUR ALREADY HECTIC SCHEDULE:

March 27-29	Presidential Candidate, The Reverend Dr. Walter H. Wagner, on campus.
April 3-5	Presidential Candidate, The Reverend Dr. Gerald Christianson, on campus.
April 8	Seminary Talent Show. 8:00 PM in the Refectory.
April 10-12	Presidential Candidate, The Reverend Philip D. Krey, on campus.
April 11	Attorneys McMahon and Beaver to speak to students. 4:30 PM.
April 15	Friends of the Seminary Day.
April 17-21	Pre-registration for Fall Semester.
April 21-22	16th Annual Symposium on Politics and Ethics: "The Environment: Caring for God's Creation." Held in Washington D.C. and sponsored by the Lutheran House of Studies.
April 21-23	Prospective Students Weekend.
April 23	Music, Gettysburg! Folkemer Conducts Folkemer. 7:30 PM in Seminary Chapel.
April 26	AAL Dinner for Seniors at the Dobbin House. 6:00 PM - ?

MORE FASCINATING READING (IV):

THE UNOFFICIAL MINUTES
OF THE STUDENT ASSOCIATION CORE COMMITTEE

By Roger L. Steiner

There was no meeting in March. How fascinating!! []

TWO FRIENDS FROM GERMANY

by Irene Dussaq

In this issue of Table Talk we have the opportunity to meet and become acquainted with Andreas Oswald and Hans Ulrich Kessler, two of our students who are from Germany.

Andreas, who is from Franconia, a region in Southern Germany, received his early education in the nearly one thousand year old city of Coburg. He then worked for a year with the mentally handicapped in Himmelkron also located in Franconia. Following this he spent three semesters at Augustana Ecclesial Seminary in Neuendettelsau in a setting very similar to the setting here at Gettysburg. He continued to pursue his theological education at the University of Munich for five semesters before coming to the United States last fall for a year of study here at Gettysburg Seminary. On his return to Germany, Andreas will study for another year and a half before taking his first examination for ordination.

Hans Ulrich is presently a resident of Bielefeld, a city of 300,000 in population, in East Westphalia, a region in the southern part of Northern Germany. His early education was received in three different locations: Dortmund, Villigst, and Bielefeld. Hans studied theology for four years at the University of Munster (the school of Karl Barth). While he was there, in addition to his regular course load, he tutored classes in Hebrew and Greek and was a Teaching Assistant to the Systematic Theologian. In 1987 he enrolled at the University of Munich, to continue his theological studies and arrived in the United States in January for a year of study here at Seminary. Hans, the son of a Lutheran pastor, is engaged to be married next year to Karin Neumann, who is also studying theology. She is presently taking her First Examination and will become a church musician. Like Andreas, he is planning to be ordained but he has also been selected by the Systematician at Munster to do graduate work in the doctoral program in Systematic Theology.

In Munich, Hans and Andreas are students in a community known as the Collegium Oecumenicum. This is where they met Steve Stahl, who is presently studying in Washington, D.C. and it is also where Eric Deibler, a Junior, will study next year. There are fifty students residing at the Collegium, half the student body being from Germany and the other half from foreign countries with the same ratio for male and female. Entrance into the Collegium for German students is by application, which is then voted upon by the existing student body and the administration. The German students are responsible for the orientation and integration of the foreign students into the community and to assist in acclimating them to the academic milieu at the university. It is a communal setting, where they live and share two meals a day together.

The students at the Collegium attend regular classes at

the university, but it also has its own program. Students are responsible for preparing morning devotions and one evening a week students have the opportunity to visit with a professor on an informal basis. Each semester the students travel to a major city such as Vienna or Cologne, the Alsace Lorraine or Southern Tyrol in Italy, where they can experience the German history, culture and language of these areas. There is no added expense to the students who make these trips as a part of their education.

One interesting facet of living at the Collegium is that the students share their campus with a facility for the severely mentally handicapped. It is sheer coincidence that such an arrangement exists and it is because the Lutheran State Church of Bavaria in Munich is involved in both activities. There are three houses on the campus for the mentally handicapped that accommodate for the living arrangements of both residents and staff. The close proximity allows for the students at the Collegium to interact on an informal basis with the handicapped as frequently or infrequently as they chose to do so. There are two times during the year, the Summer Festival and during Advent, when both institutions share a program of fellowship. In response to a question of what the value of such an arrangement was for them, both Andreas and Hans were quick to reply that a person develops a sensitivity and an acceptance of "whose they are", that encountering such persons in the wider community becomes less startling and more empathic. They were also quick to point out that having the opportunity to interact with the severely mentally handicapped on a daily basis was of far greater value to persons like themselves than it could ever be the other way around.

Two interesting notes about the State Church in Germany were shared with me the evening that I interviewed Hans and Andreas. One was that State Churches are permitted to collect taxes which are based income. That is to say that a percentage of the state income tax that you pay, based on your earnings goes to the church if you are a church member. You indicate this on the income tax form that you fill out. This in part accounts for the unique arrangement that exists on the campus where Hans and Andreas are students. The second note of interest was how the State Church functioned in the area where Hans comes from, an area that is predominantly Protestant. Here the State Church is a unified one, which means that both the Lutherans and the Calvinists share a common administration, a consistory. However each local congregation is either Lutheran or Reformed. They have altar fellowship according to the Leuenberger Concordia of 1972.

When asked to compare or contrast the system of theological education in Germany and here several major differences were noted. First there is the matter of finances. The system of taxation in Germany allows for a student to pursue an aca-

democratic career unencumbered by the heavy financial obligation that we have in this country, as long as the student can support him/herself. This allows for the student to study for as long as is needed to prepare for a chosen profession. Secondly, the system of examinations is altogether different. In Germany, in the area of theological studies you are required to write five papers - one each in the areas of Old Testament, New Testament, Church History, Systematics, and Practical Theology and one sermon. You indicate when you are ready to write these papers and they are usually thesis in length. If you wish to be examined in any of the disciplines, to measure your progress, you may request to do so and it is the professor's responsibility to provide this opportunity for you at any time during your academic career. Finally, when you are ready to be examined for your degree, you indicate this to the faculty and if you pass the examination you are awarded a First Examination degree. During these years the emphasis is on academics and not on praxis. The time for practical application is during your vicarage which lasts for two and a half years under the supervision of a pastor. You then take a second examination under the auspices of both faculty and church and then you are ready for call. The church does not actually become involved in the process until the student has completed the academic program.

A third major difference is that there is much less emphasis on the psychological profile of the individual seeking ordination. This comes into the picture only if there is an obvious problem. According to Hans the relationship between psychology and theology is very tentative in Germany. Psychology is seen more as an ideology rather than a science and therefore in the German system they are more trusting in the common sense of the people to evaluate a candidate for ordination. Andreas, having been here since last September has had the opportunity to see how our process works and he feels "that a great deal of stress is placed on the student in the endorsement process" and also sees it as a real interference in the student's academic studies.

Finally, no interview with our two friends from Germany would be complete without asking them what some of their impressions of America are. First I must admit that I was somewhat surprised by what they chose to share but in the process I learned some things about America that I had not ever thought about. Secondly as Andreas states, "the intentions of our provocative formulations is to get into conversations with American students". This is something that I sensed is very important to both Hans and Andreas as they see it as being a vital part of their education and, if I might, add ours too.

The first to speak is Andreas and he addresses the issue of taxes. He states, "I bring this up because it was such an important issue in your political campaign. I have come to

appreciate and value the system of taxes that we have in Germany. It is a good thing if the rich people pay more. The idea that the higher your income, the higher percentage of taxes you pay is good because it allows for those of lower income to participate in the advantages such as health care, university education and cultural activities. There is more social justice if you have equality."

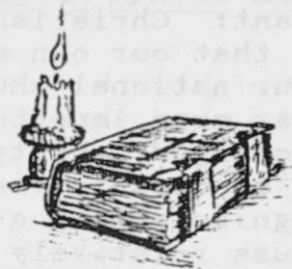
Hans: "My first impression of America was that Americans are more extroverted. I received a very enthusiastic welcome and I thought to myself - wow - I have only been in America a couple of days and already I have ten maybe fifteen really good friends. For me this was unusual because in Germany this kind of reception is usual only after you have known someone for awhile. You make it very easy for newcomers to feel welcome but difficult for establishing deeper relationships. Because everyone is so kind it is hard to know who is really interested in you. Americans try to be nice to each other and be inclusive. Therefore in order not to offend they will hold back on what they think on a particular issue rather than arguing or discussing it to get at the truth. Holding a different opinion has nothing to do with the issue of respect for a person, to be able to share and discuss differences is a sign of friendship." When I responded, "You are right" Hans said "please print that because everyone that I have said this to has said the same thing." He finds this strange. Andreas agrees.

Andreas: Symbols of patriotism are very strong in this country. The flag has a great deal of meaning - for us in Germany the flag is a piece of material with colors on it. But what does it mean to live in this society if you are poor? And doesn't society have a greater responsibility than just honoring the flag? Often it is the poor who attach such sentiment to the symbols and this does not make sense." What Andreas is referring to here is that he and Hans had the opportunity to visit the School of the Art Institute of Chicago over spring break and they witnessed the demonstrations that took place over the American flag that was laying on the floor and that it was mainly American War Veterans and what appeared to be poor people that were doing the protesting. From their background Hans and Andreas see potential danger in this because "it forgets people". "Patriotism can become nationalism as a form of arrogance if it is unreflective."

Hans: "Americans have an unbroken relationship to their history. A feeling of national identity which German's don't have and cannot have because of the experience of the Third Reich. Germans look at their history much more critically than Americans do. On a recent visit to Washington the Capitol building was pointed out to me. And on the building is the statue of an Indian (native American) looking east and welcoming the Europeans - the story of Thanksgiving. But I

could not help but think that Americans are not conscious of what historically was done to the Indian. I don't know if you have it or not, but I can't see it."

It is apparent that our friends have posed some very weighty issues for us to think about and respond to and they are eager to hear what we have to say in response. For the year that they are here, Gettysburg, PA. in America is their home. We have welcomed them and we have made them feel at home. It is because we have done so that they feel they can raise the issues they have and that hopefully their learning about America will be enhanced as well as our learning about their native land.



A CAMPUS EDITORIAL:

APATHY ON CAMPUS

By Sandra Carlson Alexis

Lately, I have noticed a lack of concern among students on campus. Besides the fading blast of steam the new students brought to the Seminary, I think most of the students are apathetic about what is happening on campus. Consequently, I don't really care about this article. That's about it. []



ECUMENICAL READING:

ECUMENISM?

by Jeff Milsten

The ELCA is not an ecumenical church. Until we have altar fellowship we, through our actions, declare to the world that we are somehow superior Christians. A most unchristian activity. We do invite Christians that agree with the creeds to join us in communion but we then turn around and proclaim that their ministers may not preside at communion. Let us make a decision, either they are all -both laity and ordained- Christians and should be treated as Christians or they are not Christians. We must not continue to hold conflicting stances.

As a national church we need to invite all denominations to join us in complete altar fellowship. Other denomination's ministers presiding at ELCA churches will clearly show our recognition of the holy catholic Church and the communion of saints. If other denominations do not respond in kind that is their decision. The ELCA must lead by example and put Christian unity first and foremost.

What is more important: Christian fellowship and unity or some theological beliefs that our own members disagree about and only God truly knows? Our national church declares that theological points are far more important than christian unity. This belief needs to be changed. Unity first, then our theologians may continue to discuss particulars but the recognition that we recognize others as Christians in practice is necessary before we discuss relatively -compared to our overall faith in God- minor differences. Altar fellowship, both participation and presiding, is the first step not the last step to Christian unity.

The Bible supports the provision that Christians are called to be unified and in this time and place altar fellowship, including presiding ministers not just participation, is the outward sign of Christian unity. A few verses will serve to support the above: John 17:20-23; Christ prayed:

"I do not pray only for these men but for all those who will believe in me through their message, that they may all be one. Just as you, Father, live in me and I live in you, I am asking that they may live in us and that the world may believe that you did send me. I have given them the honor that you gave me, that they may be one, as we are one - I in them and you in me, that they may grow complete into one, so that the world may realize that you sent me and have loved them as you loved me."

Again in Romans 15:5-6: "And may he who helps us when we refuse to give up, help all to be tolerant with each other, following the example of Christ Jesus, so that united in mind and voice you may give glory to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

And First Corinthians 10:16-18: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a very sharing in the blood of Christ? When we break the bread do we not actually share in the body of Christ? The very fact that we, many as we are, share one bread makes us all one body. Look at the Jewish people. Is not there a fellowship between all those who eat the altar sacrifices."

Which reversed shows that refusing to share the meal breaks fellowship and declares the other to be a non-Christian. We do this when we refuse to unilaterally recognize total altar fellowship.

A series of statements similar to Romans 15:6 "united in mind and voice" seems to some people to state that one must be completely doctrinally unified to call one another Christian. If one wants to take these verses to that degree instead of referring to the central idea of faith in God then I challenge you to find twelve people on this campus who will honestly and totally agree with you on ALL areas of Christian belief. []

WASTING SPACE TO KEEP THE NEXT PAGE COMPLETE, OR, IN OTHER WORDS, THE COMPUTER HAD A MENTAL BLOCK:

To prevent this in the future, please turn in "the article you've always wanted to write but never found time to" by April 21, 1989. Thank you. []

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Scott Bryte has graciously accepted the position of Art Consultant on our staff for the remainder of the year. Thanks, Scott! We also thank Mindy Yost for her time and talent in our previous issues. Thanks, Mindy! []

A LITTLE MORE BUREAUCRACY. . .:

The next page is printed by request of the Presidential Search Committee. Please read it in earnest and share it with family, friends, and neighbors. []

LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
GETTYSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH
CANDIDATE CAMPUS VISIT SCHEDULE

MONDAY: (March 27, April 3 and April 10)

Early afternoon Arrival and detailed orientation to campus if necessary.
Host: Donald N. Matthews, Librarian and Secretary of the Faculty.
Late afternoon Candidate preparation time
Dinner Hosts: Professors A. Roger Gobel and Richard L. Thulin
7:00-9:00 p.m. Faculty Colloquy (Library Lecture Room)

TUESDAY: (March 28, April 4 and April 11)

Breakfast (On your own)
8:45-10:00 a.m. Meeting with Student Body (Library Lecture Room)
10:15-11:30 a.m. Meeting with Dean Gerhard Krodel
11:45-12:00 Noon Chapel, Hosts: (3/28 and 4/4) Dean Krodel
(4/11) Chaplain Oldenburg
Lunch Host: Student Association, President, Joel A. Benson (Refectory)
1:30-2:30 p.m. Meeting with Treasurer and Business Manager, Glenn R. Hartzel
2:45-4:00 p.m. Meeting with Division II Faculty, Professor Eric W. Gritsch,
Chair and Division III Faculty, Professor Thomas E. Ridenhour,
Sr., Chair (Room 309)
4:15-5:30 p.m. Meeting with Division I Faculty, Professor Lorenz O. Nieting,
Chair (Room 309)
Dinner Host: Board of Directors Chair, the Reverend Dr. Richard E. Gelb,
Bishops of Region 7 and 8 who are present are also invited to
this dinner.
8:00-9:30 p.m. Candidate presentation to board, faculty, administration, staff,
students, bishops of Regions 7 and 8, and representatives of the
Philadelphia Seminary and the Alumni/ae Council, followed by a
reception. Topic: Visions of Theological Education at the
Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg. (Forum-Chapel;
Reception-Refectory)

WEDNESDAY: (March 29, April 5 and April 12)

Breakfast Hosts: Mrs. Waetina A. Coles and the Reverend Dr. J. Paul Balas,
Co-Chairs of the Search Committee
8:00-8:45 a.m. Search Committee Meeting (Board Room)
8:45-10:45 a.m. Candidate meeting with Search Committee (Board Room)
11:30 a.m. Candidate preach, EUCHARIST
Lunch Candidate and Search Committee
1:30-2:45 p.m. Meeting with the Reverend Dr. Robert G. Goehrig, Jr., Vice
President for Resource Development
Thereafter Candidate choice and departure