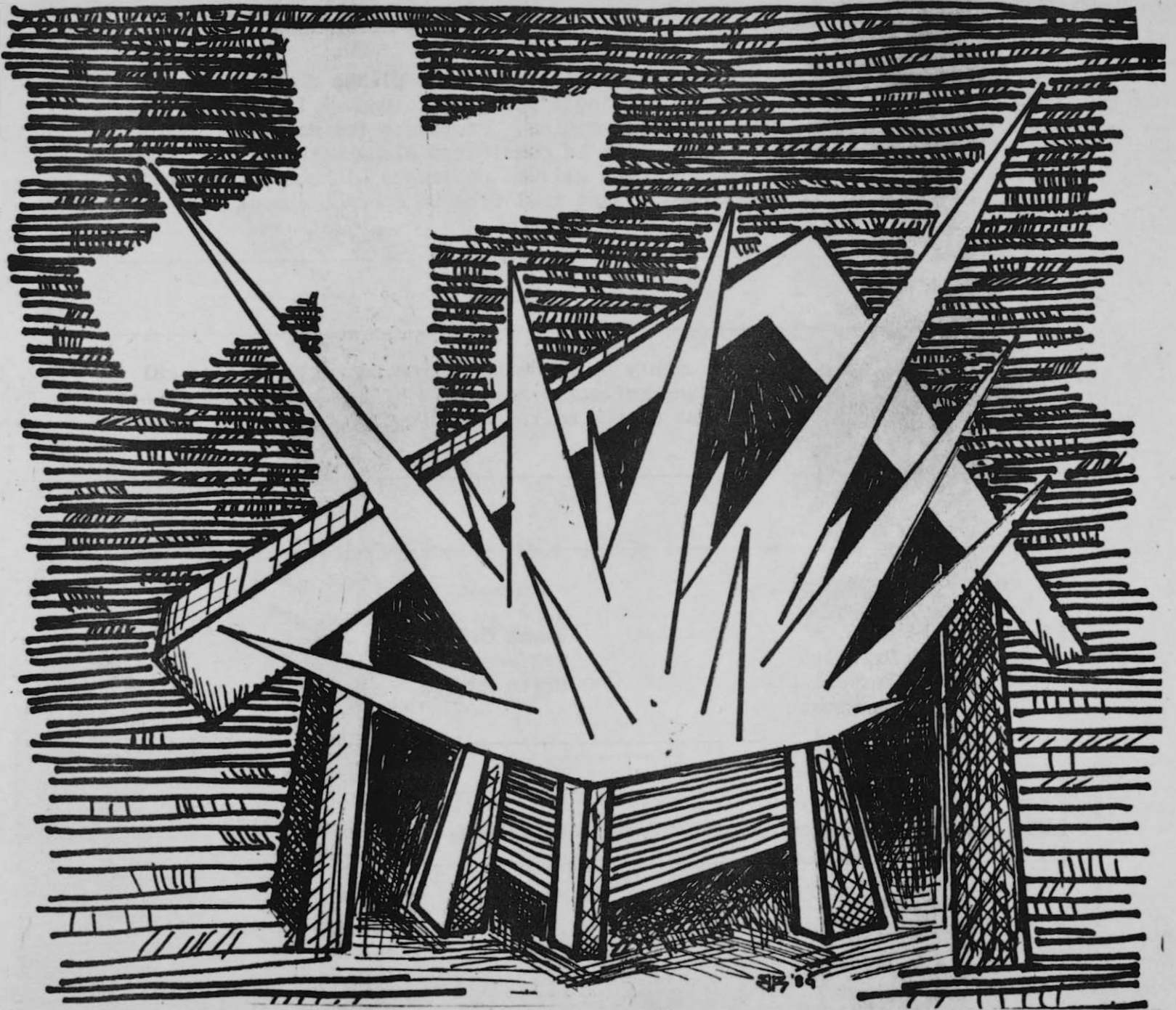


TABLE TALK

Volume XXV No. 3 December 1989



25 YEARS OF TABLE TALK

News and Viewpoints of the Student Body
of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

FROM THE EDITORIAL STAFF

If you wish to express your views in Table Talk, please do so. We request that you type your articles single-space in columns 3 1/2 inches wide and 8 1/2 inches long with justified margins. Proposals for monthly columns are also welcome. Poetry and art will be considered along with letters, book reviews 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. Opinions reflected are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the editor or editorial board, the Student Association, or the Seminary.

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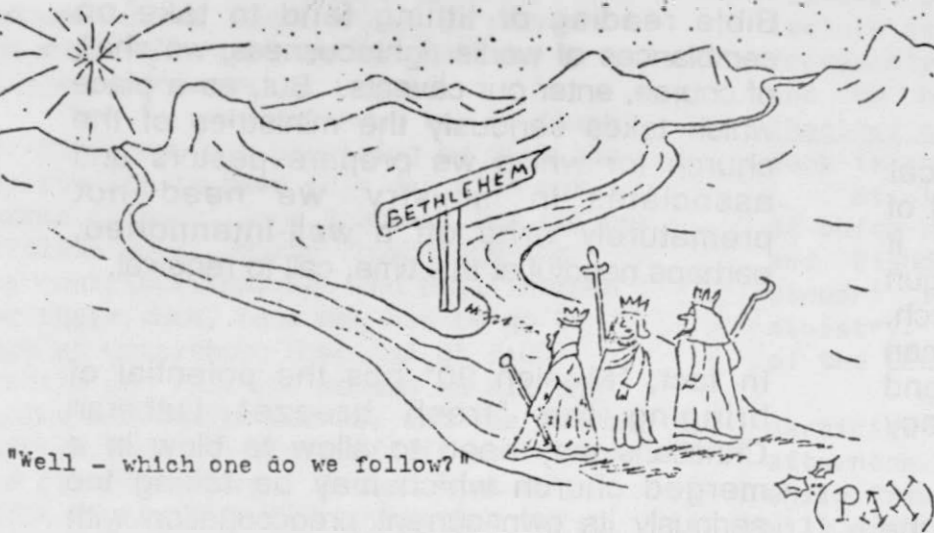
James Gilmore
Pat Hendricks
Brian Russow

TABLE TALK, 61 West Confederate Avenue, Gettysburg, Pa. 17325

Sample of the Past

FROM DEC. 12, 1977

FROM DEC. 9, 1964



FROM DEC. 12, 1983

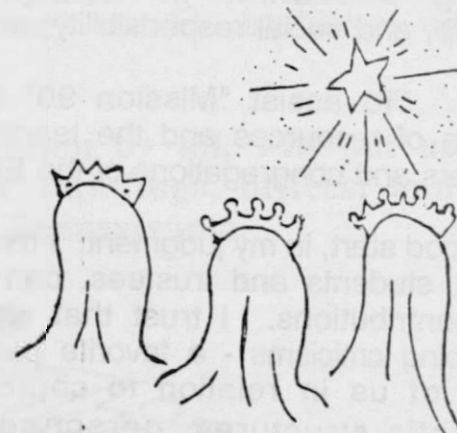
O Come, O Come, Emmanuel !



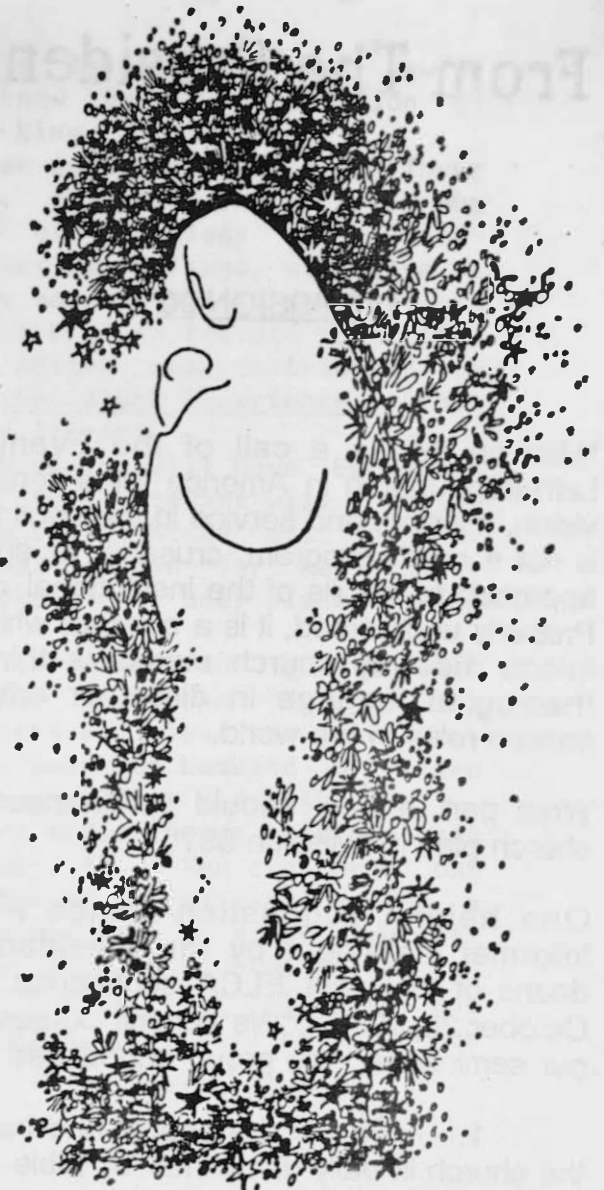
from Isaiah 9:

- The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.
- They lived in a land of shadows, but now light is shining on them.
- You have given them great joy, Lord: you have made them happy. They rejoice in what you have done, as people rejoice when they harvest grain or when they divide captured wealth.
- For you have broken the yoke that burdened them and the rod that beat their shoulders. You have defeated the nation that oppressed and exploited your people, just as you defeated the army of Midian long ago.
- The boots of the invading army and all their bloodstained clothing will be destroyed by fire.
- A child is born to us! A son is given to us! And he will be our ruler. He will be called, "Wonderful Counselor," "Mighty God," "Eternal Father," "Prince of Peace."
- His royal power will continue to grow; his kingdom will always be at peace.

FROM DEC. 9, 1964



Balthasar, I still say we're starting something with these gifts that's going to get way out of hand.



From The President

"MISSION 90"

"Mission 90" is a call of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for a renewal of vision, mission, and service in the churches. It is not a crash program, crusade, or shot gun approach to the ills of the institutional church. Properly understood, it is a concept which can inform the way church members think and theologize, engage in direct or advocacy service roles in the world.

What part, if any, should seminaries of the church play in "Mission 90?"

One helpful suggestion comes from an informal statement by the presidents and deans of the eight ELCA seminaries, issued October 28, 1989. "We commit ourselves and our seminaries," the group announced

1. To join the people and pastors of the church in daily disciplines of Bible reading and prayer;
2. To take specific steps to strengthen our seminary programs and continuing education in evangelism, stewardship, and social responsibility; and
3. "To assist "Mission 90" in the preparation of resources and the teaching of the ministers and congregations of the ELCA."

That's a good start, in my judgment. I think we, as faculty, students and trustees, can make positive contributions. I trust that we may avoid carping criticisms - a favorite past-time of some of us in relation to churchwide bureaucratic structures, personnel and programs and, instead, participate in the fashioning and implementation of the objectives of "Mission 90".

If there is a simplistic piety implied in some of the promotional material, we can, if we will, voice concerns and submit corrections. If evangelism becomes identified too closely with membership recruitment and strategies of church growth, there are appropriate arenas in which such an issue can be discussed. If daily Bible reading or tithing tend to take on semblances of works righteousness, we shall, of course, enter our caveats. But, as a place which takes seriously the ministries of the church for which we prepare pastors and associates in ministry, we need not prematurely write off a well-intentioned, perhaps needful at this time, call to renewal.

In fact, "Mission 90" has the potential of bringing the "fresh breeze" Lutheran Christians may need to allow to blow in a merged church which may be taking too seriously its own current preoccupation with institutional priorities.

I am reminded that the mass of the 90+ millions of unchurched in America cite as a chief reason for their defection their perception that "the church has lost the spiritual side of religion." "Mission 90" seeks to correct that. Thanks be to God!

- Luther: David L. Tiede, President
Daniel J. Simundson, Academic Dean
Carol J. Mork, Dean of Students
- Chicago: William E. Leshar, President
Ralph W. Klein, Dean
- Gettysburg: Russell Hale, Acting President
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James Childs, Academic Dean and
Acting President
- Wartburg: Roger W. Fjeld, President
Duane A. Priebe, Dean
- ELCA, Division for Ministry: Phyllis B. Anderson,
Director for Theological Education



A Very Happy Thanksgiving

Celebrating King

The day is over; but the memories linger, as does the food. There is enough food left over to do it all over again. In fact, that is exactly what we did. We at Heiges Hall had a koinonia Thanksgiving. With our new friends from Germany and our other guests, we numbered 23 at lunch and 20 at dinner. And still there was enough left to do it again tomorrow.

This is a round about way to thank Mr. Ridenhour for providing us with the opportunity to have this day with our German friends, Anne Brumback for all her tireless work, Joanne Trowbridge for her contributions, Meg and Phil Thorsen for their work, (and Meg had to go to work at Gettysburg Hospital at 3:00), Blackie and Phil for moving in all the tables and chairs for us, and the guests without whom the whole affair would have had little meaning. I also want to thank Family Life for buying the turkeys. It was a wonderful day.

Thank God from whom all blessings flow.

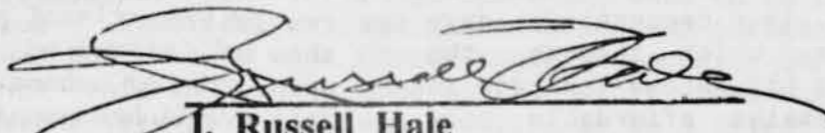
Phyllis Pelletier

NOTICE

Beginning December 1, 1989, the current NO SMOKING policy of the seminary in certain rooms and buildings will be extended to include all rooms (except private dormitory residential units), lounges, hallways, restrooms, offices and other public places within all buildings of the seminary. This policy will not affect areas or spaces outside buildings or on open campus.

The policy, for which we encourage cooperation by all, will put us in conformity with policies affecting most public buildings, offices, and educational institutions in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Thank you for not smoking.



J. Russell Hale
Acting President

Reserve January 15th and invite someone you know to our celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

Our three guests are all much loved and respected. Dr. Albert Fero, Jr., who is Professor of Theology and Cross-Cultural Studies at Chicago, will give a lecture in the morning at 10 am. He has represented the ELCA in travels to Africa, and he has edited and contributed to Theology and the Black Experience. This book is in our library.

At 11:30 am. we will have Eucharist at which Rev. Cheryl Stewart will preside and Bishop Sherman Hicks will preach. Stewart is well known for her campus ministry. Hicks is the only black bishop of the ELCA.

All three of our guests will participate in workshops during the afternoon. Hicks will lead one on racism, while Stewart and her husband Dr. Fero will discuss being black and Lutheran.

There are three things that you can do before January 15. You can check out the book edited by Fero; sign up for a work shop when the sign up slips come out; and attend the showing of two movies on campus. The movies Free at Last and Martin Luther King, Jr. will be shown on January 8 and 11.

-Viking Dietrich

CHILDREN

At evening Eucharist last Wednesday, I witnessed an event that epitomized one of the most valuable lessons this seminary offers. As I chased my two year old nephew down at the steps to the chancel, I saw Scott Gustafson casually toss his head to the other side and knew we were in for something. I can't quote him exactly, but was something like, "This is exactly what were talking about. Perhaps, just maybe the children are exactly why we're doing this." Spot on!

It seems this seminary has the potential to evoke from the ELCA a clearer sense as to the meaning of having children in the Church. Thank you Mr. Gobel. Already in the 1960's, Gritsch and Jensen caused a bit of creative tension with the idea of communing infants. We have heard theologies of the eschaton pulling us into the future and have searched the Scriptures for some understanding of what God holds for us in our futures. Now our seminary is ready, I think, to direct the ELCA toward the faces of our children.

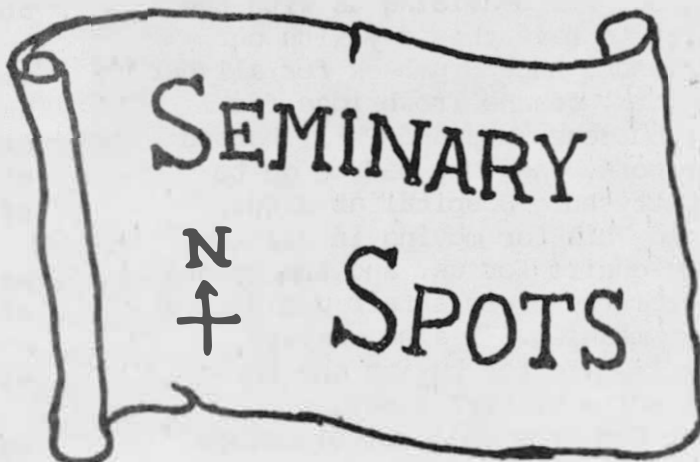
LTSG has had children as a part of the community for a long time. As the number of married students increases so does the number of children. It's all a very natural process. Gettysburg attracts incoming students who have children because of the rural quietude, the excellence of local schools such as Meade, the attitudes here toward children generated by our professors, and the facilities for children's activities.

There have always been many things for the children to do here. The YWCA and the fields and playgrounds around campus give the children space for their imaginations in both sun and snow. Often there has been a children's choir that has helped our worship. Chaplain Oldenburg, who got rave reviews from the children, prepared Eoin Dietrich, Katie Wagner, and Kathryn Gisick for their first communion. Best of all, there is a cooperative day-care program here, which through the efforts of students has become top rate in its care and remains affordable for student families. The Seminary has been to this day gracious in its donation of

space and funds and its commitment to improve the situation for the community's children.

I would suggest that the seminary bolster the school's facilities to train both M.A.R's and M.Div's for work with children in the church and boldly lead the ELCA into the future-- our children.

-Viking Dietrich



It occurs to me, as I huff and puff up the stairs to the third floor of Valentine Hall, that it has been almost two years since I was on the fourth floor. As a matter of fact, two-thirds of the current students might not know it used to be dorm space. Memories and echoes of the past are the only inhabitants now.

Here are some of the attractions of the seminary penthouse. There was never enough hot water for a shower. The rooms were small. Each room was equipped with a very sensitive temperature control device known as a window. On the other hand there are those neat slanty ceilings that give a room great character, and each room had quite a commanding view of a different aspect of Gettysburg.

The most unique thing that I found out about the fourth floor of Valentine is that they used to bowl in the hallway. The width and length seem ideally suited for the real bowling pins someone had requisitioned. Some of the pins still show up now and then, so keep your eyes open. As plans for renovating Valentine Hall progress, those old bowling pins are a sign of times gone by.

-Miriam Nicholson

"If it is against your will, it is rape."

The following article is printed anonymously in accordance with the eleventh and twelfth traditions of anonymous groups.

The group gathers and forms a circle. Each in turn introduces her/himself. Hi! my name is _____ and I am a survivor of incest. This is how I spend one night a week. Yes, I am a survivor of incest. Many people have difficulty listening to my story. It has taken me more than a decade to be able to admit that what I experienced was indeed rape and incest.

For those who are interested in the gory details, what happened to me amounts to a violent molestation and forced oral sex with a guy who was supposedly a friend. Prior to this assault I would have most likely described him as the brother I never had.

For many years I denied that this was rape because it was not sexual intercourse. As I have grown I have realized that it was rape because of the mix of violence with sex. Also I have realized that this act was incest because of the relationship I had had with my attacker before and after the rape. Now I have come to define rape as many rape awareness groups do, "if it is against your will, it is rape!"

As in the case of anyone who has been raped, I was ashamed and felt dirty. There was the physical pain from the bruises my attacker left and there was the psychological aftermath, which I am still exploring. Long term effects have included difficulty in dealing with my own sexuality and my sense of self-esteem. My understanding is that this is common among rape victims.

In addition, the fact that the rape was incestuous has left me having difficulty trusting people. This too I understand is common among incest victims. Incest victims also share a loneliness in not being able to look to the family for the love and support one needs to deal with a trauma. This loneliness and the

family dynamics are the usual reasons incest victims often do not get immediate help and sometimes never get the help they need. Silence prevails.

Why am I telling you this? As people preparing for the ministry we need to be reminded that there are many hurting people who may not specifically seek us. We need to be on the lookout for them and know how to minister to them. Rape and incest are just examples of pain that members may be silently suffering with. Generally accepted statistics of rape victims in this country are one in three women and one in ten men.

Both of our families, as well as myself and the guy who raped me were extremely active in church. Within a few weeks of the rape I spoke with both the senior pastor and the assistant pastor about pain and suffering. Both were extremely comforting and I thank God that they were both there for me. However, neither asked me why I was asking such questions. Perhaps they should have.

More recently I contacted Survivors, a self help group for battered women and victims of sexual violence. They got me involved in a general support group and then a group more specifically designed for victims of incest. For the most part the women in this first group were in immediate need. Many of them were fearful for their lives and the lives of their children. This group did not particularly meet my needs but it did teach me a great deal about pastoral care.

In this group of battered women I heard very little talk of God or the Church. That which I did hear was in a negative vein. Finally, I spoke up. After a meeting I asked this particular woman about her negative views. She sarcastically asked if I were some sort of religious fanatic. I explained how knowing Christ has gotten me through some very rough times and went on to tell her that I was a seminarian and interested in how the Church could respond. She called over some of the other women and told them I was studying to be a priest and wanted to

hear about their experiences in Church. I talked with these half dozen women for close to an hour. All had had bad experiences with pastors or priests.

All had at one point been at least marginally involved in a congregation and agreed that the Church had turned its back on them when they needed help. Priests and ministers did not believe them when they swallowed their pride and turned there for help. One woman told of how she showed up at the church office with a bloody nose and a multitude of other bruises and was told that she must have had some sort of accident and not remembered. Other women told stories of how clergy had told them to stay together no matter what, often citing the marriage vow of "till death do us part".

The woman I had first spoken with told me how she was raised in the Roman Catholic. She missed the Church but could not bring herself to go back because of the way in which the priest treated her. Throughout the years of repeated beatings she had received, her priest had advised her that there must be something wrong with her. At various times he had suggested she lose weight, wear sexier night gowns, take a cooking class, and read more. If she made herself more appealing her husband would be happier and the beatings would stop. This is not the Gospel! This is not the message victims of violence need to hear!

Since this initial discussion this woman has shared a great deal with me. She struggles with her faith and continues to read her Bible, noting that she finds the Psalms comforting. I have been encouraging her to go back to Church, either another Roman Catholic one or one of a different denomination.

Recently I was speaking with a friend who long ago had heard I had been raped. I'm not sure how it came up, but I mentioned that I was going to these meetings. He was very supportive. Yet, in his attempt to be caring he calmly asked if I were sure I had been raped. He continued, "I mean you said you were fourteen and he was fifteen, kids that age are curious, they play doctor, you know . . ." Yes I

know teens experiment but this was different. I cried as I told my story.

I talked of trust which had been violated and the violence I had experienced. I spoke of how my clothes were torn off and how my head was bashed into a wall. I explained of how I have difficulty establishing healthy relationships with men and the reoccurring nightmares I now experience. I don't think my friend had expected to hear all I had to say but he did listen and offer some comfort.

Later I thought of his question which prompted my outpouring. I was angered. He didn't believe me at first! I had to defend myself and I had done nothing wrong! It is no wonder that many rapes go unreported. More often than not the victim is then victimized again by the way she or he is treated. Yet, I could not stay angry at my friend for long, the question was asked in a caring way, and I am sure he meant no harm. I suppose he posed the question out of ignorance, not knowing what else to say.

If a parishioner whom you hardly knew came to you, would you ask the same question? I would hope not. Victims need to talk so please listen. While some may at first be seeking attention and pity they need to get beyond that. Talking does keep the issue alive but only by being alive can it be killed. It helps commit whatever has happened to the past, not the present. Literally it needs to be talked to death. Groups such as Survivors and Survivor of Incest Anonymous can be tremendous resources to pastors. We as pastors also need to proclaim the Gospel to these hurting people, who may be suffering in silence. We need to be able to articulate the presence of God in pain and anguish.

Poetry

A Morning's Thought

The sun is rising:
The first early streaks of light,
The promise of a new day,
God's re-creation.

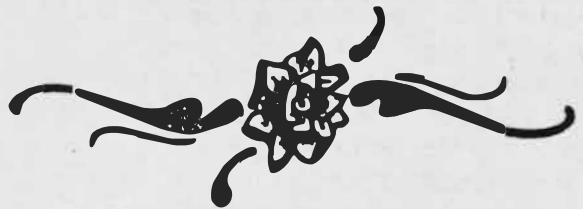
All that splendor and glory,
Created by you , O Lord,
And I, I but a small speck
In the vastness of the heavens.

And yet, you hear me!
You hear my cry of pain and sorrow,
You understand my fears,
You take them unto yourself.

I cry out to you, O Lord.
I cry out my questions,
My doubt, my fear, my hunger.
I cry out, and you hear my cry, O Lord.

You take my sins,
They're washed away in the new light.
You give me strength.
You tell me not to fear.

Walk in the light my child,
Walk in the dawn of the new creation.
I am with you,
Today, again, you are not alone.



Crashing forward, waves before me--
do I ride them,
or do I drown?
How am I to trust the motion,
lest I falter and go down?
But in thrashing arms about me
gasping,
struggling for breath I find,
if I only let the water
hold me,
forceful rushing of salty presence
carries me to holy ground.

Kris Bell

Poetry Contest: Deadline, Dec. 31, 1989

Open to every one; there are 152 cash and publication prizes. Grand Prize: \$1,000.

- To enter: - send up to six poems,
- each no more than 20 lines,
- name and address on each page,
- to the above Association
 - Dept. CT-90
- by December 31.

More information is on the library board.

Friendship

*The meaning of love--
A bond you will have until the end
And nothing ever pends.
Such power of the soul,
A long and lasting faith not to be sold--
Even when it's cold.
A gift of a lifetime to share throughout,
Give it all your heart.
So don't be scared to risk for this treasure,
And foresake it's pleasure.
Or you may never see a seal,
Of what's purely golden indeed.*

Julie Elizabeth Pourcho

Christmas in Morocco

8

The year was 1966 and I was about to face my first Christmas away from my family. Christmas is my favorite time of year and I was not relishing being in a Moslem country at this time. Word came that if anyone in Peace Corps wanted a big bash for Christmas, they could go to Pearl's in Marakesh. If anyone wanted a quiet Christmas they could come to Taza to Janet's and my house. Two decided to come to Taza, Jim and Bob. We met their train at 4:30 AM which was the only train that came to our town. This was Christmas eve.

About two days before this, an English IVS volunteer, Peter, who worked in forestry came and gave us a beautiful Christmas tree as a gift. The Moroccans thought we were absolutely mad putting a real tree in the house. We had no decorations so we proceeded to make them. Speaking as one who flunked everything from sand castles on up, I was pretty impressed with how those decorations came out. Other preparations were also underway. We made pies and cakes. We had even found cranberry sauce on a weekend expedition to Gibraltar. Among our purchases there we had included a can of cherries for a pie. Beside that we had about 3000 lbs. of squash, as least it seemed that way. The squashes in Morocco are huge and one buys a chunk of one. So in the middle of all this arrived our two guests.

Our turkey had been bought at the souk (native market) a few days before. He had been properly assassinated by an adult Arab male so that he would be kosher. I stuffed him and Jim and I carried him to the community ovens where we had made arrangements to have him cooked. We carried him to the man who immediately told me that he would have the bird all nicely cleaned out when we returned to get him. We talked for almost 30 minutes trying to convince that man that clean or dirty, that bird was exactly as we wanted him. When we returned to get him, neither Jim nor I were sure whether or not we would be getting a stuffed bird.

Meanwhile Janet was baking pies at a neighbor's. She decided that she would carry the cherry one lest something should happen to it. After all,

we only had one cherry pie. She was not about to trust Bob to carry that one. Of course that cherry pie is the one that got dropped.

Fortunately Christmas comes in the winter. We could use the back porch to keep things cool and there was a definite absence of flies (the national bird).

That evening we took gifts around to some of our friends and went caroling. There was a Catholic church in town and we brought the old priest some cheese and caroled. The Moroccans had no idea what we were doing. The French and the Spaniards had heard about caroling, but it is an English tradition. They had never experienced it. We attended the midnight mass. Bob was an organist so we supplied the music. Then we returned home.

The next day came quickly. We had to sleep fast. Judy (another Peace Corps volunteer) and Edgar (a French teacher) were getting married in two days so their parents were in Taza. Edgar's mother had lived in Taza before. In fact Edgar had been born there. He was a pied noir (blackfoot or a French citizen born in North Africa). So our Christmas dinner consisted of Peter, the Englishman, Juan and his wife, our laboratory director and his wife, (Spaniards), Edgar's family (French), Judy's parents (Americans, the Mejatti family (Moroccan), Jim, Bob, and Janet and myself. There were Moslems, Jews, Protestants, and Catholics. Edgar's mother who was Jewish said that she had been very moved. We sang carols. We swapped stories. It was magic.

What had made it so special? I believe it was a combination of things. But mostly it was a balanced Christmas. There was no commercialism. Stores in Morocco do not go crazy at Christmas time. We had to make it all, the food, the decorations, and even the spirit. We could take the time to remember what the season was all about. We became both Maries and Marthas. Oh, certainly I missed my family; but to this day, it remains my most memorable Christmas of all. The Christmas where I was too far from my family to get all wound up in the gifts, and close enough to get wound up in the love.