

TABLET

February '91

Volume 26
No. 4

May God Be
With You!



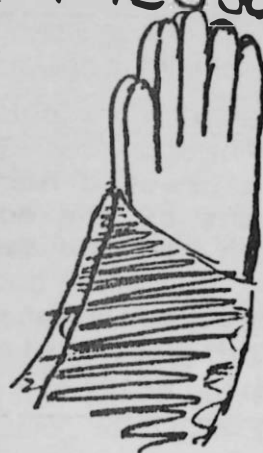
John 3:16 John 1:29
1 Thessalonians 5:17

John 3:16

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son to die for us, those that believe in him shall have eternal Life!



I Thessalonians



5:17

Pray at all times!

Let there be peace on earth.....

John 3:16



1 Thessalonians 5:17

Matthew 26:39

John 1:29

And let it begin with...

TABLE TALK is a public forum for news, viewpoints, and opinions of students and other folks from LTSG. Please feel free to express your thoughts and ideas. Poetry and artwork will be considered, along with letters, book and movie reviews, and manuscripts dealing with assorted topics. All articles must be submitted with author's name; however, upon request and in consultation with the editorial staff, name may be withheld in certain circumstances.

Please submit all material typed, and single-spaced. Please proofread all material submitted.

TABLE TALK is published monthly by students at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg. The views and opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the editorial staff, the student association, or the seminary.

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About the Cover: The cover is composed of drawings by junior high youth at Messiah Lutheran in Sykesville, Md. These drawings were included among their many letters to servicepeople in the Persian Gulf.



From the President . . .

OPEN TO GOD'S FUTURE

The approaching third millennium is prompting increased attention to questions about the future. For people of faith who believe that the future belongs to God and that God invites us to participate in shaping that future, such a focus is not unfamiliar. In fact, in the midst of our hectic daily routine, a baptismal understanding of discipleship prompts us always to devote some attention to the future into which God's spirit is leading us. This is something quite different from career planning to achieve a certain set of personal goals in life. It goes beyond concern for regional or synodical assignments, internship sites, or CPE settings. It is more a posture of openness to God's future. It reflects an awareness of the needs of God's people and the pressing issues in God's world as they relate to the specific grace, gifts, blessings, relationships and opportunities that God has given us. It means living, acting, and interacting within the framework of such questions as: Where is God's spirit leading me/us? What would represent the most faithful exercise of my/our gifts and opportunities at this time? What issues and concerns must be considered as we attempt to live and act in accordance with God's agenda?

Institutions of the church are confronted with similar questions as they consider the future. That is why this seminary conducted a long range study and is now involved in a planning for the 90's process. On the basis of these efforts, the board of directors at its April 18 meeting will be making concrete decisions about program, facilities, and funding to carry out its mission in the years ahead. We invite you to share your views and insights regarding what it will mean for Gettysburg Seminary to remain faithful to God's call and mandate as we move together into the future.

Among the issues and factors before us include: the church's need for more pastors and associates in ministry; the increased financial burden experienced both by students and seminary; the growing diversity within our society; new opportunities for global partnership in ministry; the increasing hostility of our culture toward Christian beliefs and values; improvements needed for our historic, but aging campus facilities; changing congregational expectations and needs for ministry leadership, etc. These circumstances force us to wrestle with questions such as: how can we more effectively call forth candidates for ministry? How can we create a more inclusive and diverse faculty and student body? How we can raise more adequate financial aid and general funding for this institution? What adjustments need to be made in curriculum and educational program?

How would you respond to these questions? What additional issues and questions would you raise for our consideration? Any thoughts or suggestions you share with me in writing before March 20, I will pass on to the planning committee. Following the next planning committee meeting, we hope to have concrete proposals to share with you. This could include a funding appeal to support the proposals. Thank you for your contribution to this effort to be faithful stewards of all the gifts and opportunities God presents to this seminary community as we move into the next millennium.

Darold H. Beekmann
President

Poetry

Bakerwoman God

Bakerwoman God,
I am your living bread.

Strong, brown, Bakerwoman God,
I am your law, soft and being-
shaped loaf.

I am your rising bread, well-kneaded
by some divine and knotty pair of
knuckles, by your warm earth-hands.
I am bread well-kneaded.

Put me in your fire, Bakerwoman God,
put me in your own bright fire.

I am warm, warm as you from fire.
I am white and gold, soft and hard,
brown and round.

I am warm from fire.

Break me, Bakerwoman God.

I am broken under your caring word.

Drop me in your special juice in pieces.

Drop me in your blood.

Drunken me in the great red flood.

Self-giving chalice, swallow me.

My skin shines in the divine wine.

My face is cup-covered and I drown.

I fall in a red pool

in a gold world

where your warm sunskin hand is there
to catch and hold me

Bakerwoman God, remake me.

-Alla Campbell-Bozarth

"Faith and Mystery"

3

Reverend Tim Craven February 3, 1991

It is important for intelligent, ethical and spiritual Americans to know that it is alright to not be certain whether or not the current war is just. Indecision on this issue by major church groups does not represent moral bankruptcy, but rather properly reflects the diverse message of the Scriptures which can be used either to support war or to oppose it.

A major emotional and spiritual need for Americans now searching for answers is to understand that mystery is a large part of faith in which struggle is normative and not symptomatic of ignorance or confusion. Many Americans are uncomfortable with the fact that as we live in this broken and fallen world, we do not often know the mind of God. It is shocking to even spiritual Americans that we cannot think or feel our way somehow, if not to omniscience, at least to be able to answer the question: "Is this war just?" Trying to be as intelligent as God was, and remains, the original sin.

Rather than praise renegade, independent religious groups, which too often worship the individual or the nation and tell people only what they want to hear, questioning pilgrims today at a time of war can be mature in their spirituality by coming to terms with the reality of mystery in faith. An encounter with the living Christ might make one stand up and shout but, in this world it is just as likely to make a person sit down and shut up!

The country's religious leadership, though divided, has not failed us. We all struggle daily with ethical questions in our nation's war policy, in our jobs and in our intimate relationships. This is what it means to be human. Rather than bless our will, whether it be inclined towards war or pacifism, we need to somehow obey the will of a mysterious God. Wise faith is not the answer to all of life's questions. Wise faith is the hopeful and Biblically faithful participation in the debate and the outrageously helpless and illogical belief that whether or not this war is just, God is in control and things will be alright.

UPDATE FROM SOCIAL ACTION

This is the first year LTSG has joined forces with the YWCA for the Red Cross Bloodmobile. The Red Cross representative, Janet Dewer, led the merger.

Sandy Carlson Alexis reports on the blood drive held on December 6, 1990. Fifty (50) pints of blood were donated as compared to thirty (30) pints collected at last year's drive. The seminary community was well represented which helped make this drive very successful. Everyone who gave blood and volunteered time is congratulated on this great success. Sandy expects the seminary community to team with the YWCA again next year.

Chaplain Oldenburg's wonderful celebration event of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day reminds us of a great ministry by a great man, which should in turn remind us as individuals of our own discipleship and call to justice and equality.

February is Black History Month. The Social Action Committee will present an evening program on our nation's Black history and heritage.

The Committee also encourages everyone in the community to continue to recycle. Containers for aluminum and glass are located behind the Powerhouse. And please consider as a needed volunteer in this effort to transport paper and cardboard to the Adams County Mission on Friday afternoon(s).

Brian C Smith, Chair

MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY REVISITED:

Our chaplain has said, "Mother Oldenburg's first rule of didactics was 'don't let school stand in the way of your education'"† and I believe had she known about it would have added - even in the middle of "J" term! Those students for whom Martin Luther King Day represented a desperately needed catch up day, or were otherwise committed, certainly missed an educational opportunity. Dr. Marcus Bruce of Bates College, guest lecturer, offered many insights into the life and work of Dr. King. Professor Barbara Ballard from Davidson College conducted a workshop called "Slave Voices", introducing those present to slave narratives as a literary genre. Drawing on his experience as White pastor of a Black congregation, Rev. Robert Gahagen provided practical guidelines for getting established in a new (perhaps first!) congregation. Within the setting of the Detroit Folk Mass, Rev. Joseph Donella of Howard University challenged the worshippers through his preaching. Indeed, those who were able to attend would agree that the day's events added dimension to their thinking.

There were, however, other missed opportunities as well. First, that of showing ourselves to be generous hosts. Our guests traveled long distances to be with us and this is uncertain terrain. We owed them a better response. Second, that of affirming our national church's call to diversity. We owe them more than a token gesture as they struggle with defining our mission. Lastly, that joy of getting to know people whose "experience could enrich our understanding of faith and life." We owe this to ourselves and the work we feel called to do.

Unfortunately, the subject of the day also brought us face to face with the reality that the sins of racism and prejudice are alive and well across America - even to our hallowed hill. It is impossible to share the church's vision for mission when so many of us are "color-struck". As we confess this, we once again admit the awful weakness of our human condition. Justice is required of us. We have been freed to love. Developing respect for and sensitivity to those who are different from ourselves (in any way) are strengths we can and must pray for. Sisters and brothers, being reconciled to Christ, let us be reconciled one to another.

Elinor Allison
Social Action Committee

*used with permission

I'm Too Busy To Write This But . . .

Is it apathy? Are we all too busy? I've been trying to understand why the students do not actively participate in some of the extra curricular lectures, workshops, and discussion groups on campus. Believe me, I understand when things pop up that get in the way but too often special events with incredible learning potential go poorly attended.

I know each class has its own concerns. While the incoming class of juniors is usually filled with energy and cameraderie, they don't tend to take advantage of the scheduled events. The middler class has lost that raw enthusiasm (perhaps due to endorsement committees and C.P.E. groups) but they usually make up the leadership positions on campus so some of them come to events. Most of the senior class is too preoccupied with senior exams their first semester and their "first call" the second to care about what's happening on campus. In short, each class has its own reason for not coming just like the people who said they could not come to the banquet because of household responsibilities in Luke 14.

I include myself in this group. I know I have skipped events when I thought I was too busy but I have learned a valuable lesson about time with the birth of my daughter. She keeps me so busy, it's tempting to say "I can't. I have to take care of Lara." But thanks to her, I realize how important it is to use my time constructively. Lara is my biggest responsibility now but I don't use her as an excuse to stay home. If I want to get to a special event, I take her with me (as many of you have noticed). When I have been able to attend a lecture or discussion group, I can honestly say I have never felt disappointed.

I have however been disappointed with my fellow schoolmates at times. On Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, I was embarrassed for the speakers who took the time and trouble to share with us -- and yet only a handful of students came. By my count, the faculty outnumbered the students! The Family Life film series has shown some excellent movies and offered well-directed discussion but again only a few of us have ever gone. Table Talk is a wonderful forum for airing views and comments but its publication is often delayed due to lack of submissions.

There is always something else to do. There is always an excuse but opportunities to learn are rare. I encourage us all to take the time for our own growth and for the unbuilding of this community.

Sandra Carlson Alexis

Life in a Left-handed Church

In CPE, Religion and Human Behavior, Synod interviews, and candidacy guidelines, it is asserted that the social sciences (i.e. psychology, sociology, anthropology, et.al.) are valuable disciplines in the life of the church. The only real justification for the compatibility of these disciplines with the function of ministry has been founded on the left-hand of God. The created order in its broken condition is filled with God's left-handed works. Although God prefers His right-hand, the source of all graces, He must regularly administer with His left-hand. From this left-hand comes the created order, flood, fire, famine, pestilence and even the sometimes mysterious rules that govern human society. Since everything that transpires in the world is in someway connected to God's created order, it is possible to apply human sciences to understand, predict, and perhaps even control the events in that creation.

It is not difficult in the face of such an argument to concede that the social sciences do indeed present themselves as valuable tools. In fact, the history of the church reveals a beneficial relationship. Augustine is said to be the father of Christian psychology, and Aquinas expanded that discipline and others in exciting new directions. The question I pose, however, has nothing to do with the profitable application of these disciplines. What I challenge is the present predilection of the church for these disciplines. I assert that the church catholic and more specifically the ELCA in these latter days is now left-handed.

To test my hypothesis Higgin's Road should conduct a survey of ELCA clergy to answer this question: "Do more clergy undergo regular intensive psychotherapy than avail themselves of individual confession and absolution?" I do not think that it is an irrelevant question. The answer to it should tell us something about our church.

Perhaps this survey could go further. When you are feeling burned-out from constant interaction with the broken world do you 1)take the sacrament of the altar, or 2)go to counseling? When you are feeling guilty do you 1)make confession and receive absolution, or 2)go to counseling? When you are feeling mortal do you 1)reaffirm you baptism, .or 2)go to counseling? When you are feeling lost in anyway do you 1)listen to the preached word, or 2)go to counseling?

It seems that the clergy and other professionals of this church have preferred the latter solution with growing frequency. Certainly there are cases in which counseling must be part of the healing process, but why does it appear that counseling has become the first and sometimes regrettably the only step to wholeness (if indeed there is such a thing as wholeness without God)? If a human being wants psychotherapy as the beginning point to resolve crises, the secular society can serve just as well; eventually psychotherapy will fail if God is not the foundation of the counseling. "Unless the Lord builds the house, their labor is in vain who build it."(Ps.127:1)

God has set the church in the world, but He has not made it of the world. The ministry of the church is founded not upon the left-hand of God which is death, but upon the right-hand of God which is life eternal. From God's left-hand comes the Law which condemns us; from God's right-hand comes the Gospel. God has given to the world all that is in His left-hand, and consequently we can from the position of the world use psychology, sociology, political science, et al. to make sense of the world and ourselves. To the church, however, He has given that which He has not given to the world: the sacraments and the Word. The world is incapable of preaching the justifying Word of God, destroying the interior Old Adam in baptism, renewing our strength in the Holy Supper, and absolving our sins by the laying on of hands.

I hope that I have made it clear that I am not advocating the abandonment of legitimate sciences which can aid us in our work. The charge is that the church is left-handed. The hope is that the church will return the crozier to her right-hand. I do not think that ambidextrousness is an option, because even left-handed actions must be founded in the right-hand. An action of the church which is not founded in the right-hand of God is not the authentic ministry of the church; when a church does not authentically minister we must ask whether or not she is the authentic church. God reserved to the church the salvific authority of His right-hand so that she might administer to His people the means of grace. The church may also avail herself of God's left-hand. If, however, the church founds her ministry in the alien works of God, she will soon find herself alienated.

--Matthew Lynn Riegel

To Dog Owners on Campus:

I love dogs. I fell in love with our dog Chewie the first time I saw him, and nothing makes me happier than seeing my daughter, Lara, smile or laugh at this shaggy thing running up to her. In short, I love dogs.

I even see a "call" to take care of animals as God gave Adam charge of the animals in Eden. The problem is that we're not in Eden any longer, and the grave reality that dogs leave messes has shadowed my delight in canines.

The point was brought up in the community gathering of last fall that some dogs were leaving messes in the wrong places around Stuempfle and Heiges halls, and especially in the courtyard and playground. There is no reason for this lack of consideration.

We as children of God have a relationship and a responsibility to the animals of this earth, but we have a responsibility and relationship to the families on campus as well. Please think of others. Let's walk our dogs in the approved areas away from where our children play and walk. If our pets go in the wrong places, please clean it up. Keep your eyes open, not to accuse, but to help those of us who have unruly dogs. We all need all the help we can get, because we all deal with dog dirt in one way or another.



Lans E. Alexis & Chewie

A letter from Pacific Seminary... to
Gettysburg. If you would like to
respond by signing a petition for Bill—
it will be posted on
coffee shop board.

2770 Marin Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94708

February 22, 1991
First week in Lent

Student Associations/Councils
of ELCA Seminaries

Dear Colleagues in Christ,

Grace to you and peace from God our Creator, and from Jesus
who sets us free!

As students of Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, we
write to you concerning the situation of one of our fellow students,
Bill Kunisch (2nd year, M.Div.), and the sequence of events that
has led to his Bishop recommending he be disciplined, and that a
"special meeting" of his Candidacy Committee be called.

On Dec. 23, 1990, Bill delivered a homily in his home
congregation in Michigan in which he suggested that St. Francis
Lutheran Church in San Francisco may be another example of God
working through the ordinary and unexpected. Bill received several
positive comments from members regarding his sermon. One member
(the Church Council President), however, contacted Bill a week
later wanting to know if he approved of St. Francis' ordaining of
a lesbian couple, if he thought homosexuality was a sin, how he
would counsel someone who is gay or lesbian, and if he was gay.
Bill shared with him his opinion regarding these questions, and
refused to answer his last question on the grounds that it was
inappropriate.

Based on his homily and this conversation, the Church Council
President, the pastor, and two other members of the parish met with
Bishop Holle (W/W Lower Michigan) to ask what their church should
do about Bill because his opinion "is contrary to ELCA policy".
These people were not acting on behalf of the whole congregation,
nor with the consent of the Church Council.

At this meeting, and without contacting Bill, Bishop Holle
recommended that they immediately stop supporting Bill financially
until they hear from his Candidacy Committee. Since then, the
Church Council at Bill's home congregation has met. They read a
letter that Bill had sent, and these four people told of their
meeting with Bishop Holle and his recommendation to stop Bill's
financial aid. They concurred with the Bishop's recommendation
and also decided that the rest of the parish not be informed of
this action.

Bill has since been asked to return to Lansing, MI on March
9th to meet with members of his Candidacy Committee and a
representative from the Division for Ministry to discuss his
congregations "deep concerns" regarding his "self-expressed views

on homosexuality.

As students we are concerned that Bill has not been treated fairly. Furthermore, we fear that the ELCA is setting a dangerous precedent by calling into question people whose views and opinions differ from ELCA policy. The "Vision & Expectations" document and social statements of the ELCA certainly do not have the same status as the Confessions. We find this threatening to clergy and seminarians alike, and to our freedom of conscience regardless of the issue.

Members of our student body are sending a letter to Bishop Chilstrom, Bishop Holle, the Div. for Ministry, the Candidacy Comm. in Michigan, and Bill's home parish in opposition to these events. It is our hope that you will share our concern, and add your voices in solidarity with ELCA seminarians throughout the nation.

We have enclosed a copy of Bill's homily, his letter to the parish, his letter from the synod, a chronology of events, and a copy of the letter we have sent from PLTS. Please feel free to copy parts of our letter for your use. We suggest passing it around as a petition, and that it be sent to people mentioned above before March 5th.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact:

Heidi Michelson
2770 Marin Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94708
415-526-0824

OR

Bill Kunisch
2770 Marin Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94708
415-843-2754

Thank you for your cooperation with us.

In Christ,

STUDENTS OF
PACIFIC LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

cc: Student Associations/Councils of
LNTS, LBPC, Trinity, Wartburg, LTSS, LTSG, LTSP

Hey, what's the noise about?

DO YOU KNOW YOUR EMERGENCY SIRENS ?

FIRE FIGHTERS ALERT SIREN

(A STANDARD WAVERING SIREN - 3 MINUTES LONG)

"RESPOND" - FIRE PERSONNEL ARE TO REPORT TO THEIR FIRE STATION



RESCUE PERSONNEL ALERT SIREN

(AN EXTRA LONG WAVERING SIREN - 3 MINUTES LONG)

"RESPOND" - FIRE AND RESCUE PERSONNEL ARE TO REPORT TO THEIR FIRE STATIONS



ATTENTION or INFORMATION SIREN

(A LONG AND STEADY SIREN - 3 MINUTES LONG)

"LISTEN" - FOR ESSENTIAL EMERGENCY INFORMATION ... TUNE TO YOUR RADIO (13.20 AM)



GENERAL WARNING SIREN

(A SHORT WAVERING SIREN - 3 MINUTES LONG)

"WARNING" - GO TO NEAREST SHELTER, TAKE BEST COVER IMMEDIATELY AVAILABLE



we cannot be so dead

'we cannot be so dead that in us life
does not attend sweet vestiges of joy.
morsel remembrances of love to live
when feasts of famine sit nearby

we cannot be so lean that as we turn
the wind of hopefulness can't flick our ear
and cause us to suspect that sometime soon
our hunger will subside

we cannot be so fat as to forget
the girth of Grace which binds us to our God;
so slow and sleepy to suppose the worst:
no protein soul!

for we are God's and by His name we live
just children big and short from Holy meals
we can be lean and fat as we are fed
but in us Christ we cannot be so dead!

Poetry

Table Talk 8
% Lutheran Theo. Seminary
61 NW Confederate Ave
Gettysburg, PA 17325

1300
298!
gosp.
gag.

70: