

In the name of the father, and of the son, and of the Holy Spirit.



TABLE TALK

February, 1992 ~ Volume 27 Number 4 ~

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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February 10th, 1992

A Continued Blessed Epiphany Season to You All,

In the interest of conservation I am moving my editorial comments to the "disclaimer page" for this month, so I don't need to add another full page! After the deluge of articles in December, followed by glowing praises for this publication, I was concerned that no one would submit anything for our February issue. Instead there were even more articles in the Table Talk mailbox. Thank you to all who took the time to write.

We have most of our usual features: the "SA Presidential Epistle," "Blast from the Past" which has moved back a century to the inauguration of Samuel Simon Schmucker, "Bookmarks," "Senior Sagas," "Middler Musings," and "Junior Jottings." "Around the Globe" is on a one month hiatus, allowing our foreign students some time to again settle on campus. We also welcome a new monthly feature, "Building Your Library," suggesting additions to our theological and devotional libraries.

Special articles for this month are Tamara Riegel's "The Body Myth" which discusses our society's need for females to have that "perfect" figure, and Thomas Jacoby's touching piece, "A Reflection on Evangelism," which looks at how we proclaim the good news among our friends. Look also for interesting opportunities during the rest of February and the beginning of March.

Good reading! On behalf of the Publication's Committee, I am Susan Folks.

SA PRESIDENTIAL EPISTLE

Poor church attendance is nothing new for Sweden. Much like their American counterparts, Swedish clerics have gathered periodically to discuss the problem. At one such meeting a few decades ago, the assembled clerics--which included a few bishops--turned to an American visitor for his observations. Father Arthur Carl Kreinheder, the founder of American Lutheran monasticism related, "I have visited several parishes while here in Sweden and have asked the priests I have met 'whether or not failure to attend worship was a sin?' and not one of them could answer my question." "So?" a cleric queried. "Well," continued Kreinheder, "if your priests do not know the answer, what do you expect from the laity?"

Granted, the Roman doctrine that weekly attendance of the mass is necessary for salvation must be rejected. They teach that our work of getting up on Sunday morning and going to church is meritorious. This teaching is rightly discerned as the subtlety of the Devil, taking the sweet worship of God and perverting it against the apostolic and evangelical teaching of the Chief Article (AC 4). AC 28 is clear in this matter:

What then, are we to think about Sunday and about similar rites in our church? To this our teachers reply that it is lawful for bishops and pastors to make regulations so that things in the church may be done in good order, but not that by the means of these we make satisfaction for sins, not that consciences are bound so as to regard these as necessary services. [AC 28:53]

The Devil, however, does not limit himself to the medium of the papacy. He can work even through the evangelical articles of the Augsburg Confession, as I believe he has in the case of worship non-attendance. For various reasons, we Lutherans have invoked AC 4 and AC 28 to excuse

others and ourselves for neglect of worship. We have claimed the shield of evangelical liberty against the assaults of both pietist and pope, neglecting the place where we meet the source of that liberty. The apostle writes:

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day drawing near. [Heb 10:23-25]

I find it difficult to believe that Melancthon and our confessing forebears ever intended AC 4 or AC 28 to negate Hebrews 10:25. Those who condemned the abuses of their day, we now abuse by our misrepresentation of their instruction.

The apostle does not instruct us in law. The apostle instructs us in relationship. The question should never be framed "is it a sin not to go to church?" In this context, the church is a building which usually lies vacant six days a week. The question is "is it a sin to neglect the assembly which gathers in that church to worship God?" Failure to attend the assembly of believers is failure to receive the edification of the community and failure to give edification to the community. Failure to attend the assembly of believers is to claim 'I am an island!' Failure to attend the assembly of believers is both the ultimate demonstration of contempt for the community of faith and the spiritual homicide of each individual member of that community. Rejection of the assembly is rejection of the Triune God which placed us in community through the one body of the Son.

'Is it a sin not to attend worship?' Our answer must be 'Yes, it is a sin!' This sin is not a violation of papal decree, pietist

SA Presidential Epistle, cont.

platitide, or Decalogue. This sin is a violation of the covenant God made with us through the Son. This sin is our failure both to receive the grace which God desires to give us and to be the medium of the grace God desires to give others.

There is something wrong when half the campus walks toward the chapel at noon while the other half walks the opposite direction. Aesthetics can never be used as an excuse. Too many of us choose which services we go to based upon who is preaching or presiding. What could be a greater insult to the workings of the spirit? Will not the sacraments be valid despite the hands that administer them? Might not the Holy Spirit choose unlikely candidates to speak the prophetic word? Too many of us avoid alternate liturgies. Are we showing appropriate care to our brothers and sisters who are exploring new avenues of edification? Are we not closing ourselves off to the dynamism of the Holy Spirit? Too many of us walk out if the Litany begins. Does not the world need us to lift our voices in prayer?

Adiaphora is not an acceptable defense. The assembly of believers at worship is never adiaphora because the means of grace, the preached word and the sacraments, are found there (AC 6). To despise the worship of the assembly of believers is to despise the means of grace. To despise the means of grace is to despise reconciliation with God. Who among us can claim not to need this reconciliation?

Attending noon worship in the Chapel may not be necessary to salvation according to AC 4 and can never be mandated according to AC 28. Attending noon worship is necessary to community. Not that much lamented non-existent utopian community we so often discuss, but the real community which is realizable in Jesus Christ who makes us one body. If any of us neglects this assembly of believers,

it is as if a hand withered and fell off or an eye fell out of its socket. With our present practice, we are a leprous body, falling to pieces and in desperate need of healing. This healing grace, however, can only be mediated through the mutual exhortation of the members of this body. The call to worship cannot be neglected by any member, be that member seminarian, spouse, child, faculty, or staff. When we see our sister reading in the library, we must say, "Sister, come join the assembly!" When we see our brother walking south across the campus, we must say, "Brother, you're going the wrong way!" When we find ourselves engaged in some activity other than helping our neighbor's ox out of the pit, we must call it what it is--a sin!

*A Message from the
Middler President...*

To the Middler Class.

Everything seemed to begin very slowly at the seminary this past year. This includes our class. However, by the time you read this article in this issue of Table Talk, we will have had a class meeting and hopefully have ideas in place for the rest of the year. But, I do want you to know that I appreciate the leadership you have shown on this campus this year, and I am very proud of our class. I would like to say a big THANK YOU to all of you for all the work this class has done this year. I want to encourage you to keep up the good work as we begin our last semester before internship.

Your President,
Richard Hair

A BLAST FROM THE PAST

SEPTEMBER 5, 1826, WITNESSED THE INAUGURATION OF SAMUEL SIMON SCHMUCKER AS THE FIRST PROFESSOR AND PRESIDENT OF THE NEWLY ESTABLISHED LUTHERAN SEMINARY IN GETTYSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA. WHAT FOLLOWS IS THE "CHARGE" GIVEN SSS AND HIS NEW STUDENTS ON THAT OCCASION BY THE REV. D. F. SCHAEFFER. THIS CHARGE IS A BEAUTIFUL EXPOSITION OF A RICH HISTORY MEETING A NEW AND CHALLENGING FUTURE. IN A TIME WHEN THE FUTURE SHAPE OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IS IN QUESTION IN THE ELCA, SUCH A MESSAGE SEEMS TO HAVE CURRENCY.

Beloved brother, in the Lord Jesus Christ!

That the Church of Christ derives ineffable advantage from well regulated theological seminaries, is not a modern discovery. The Evangelical Lutheran church, has long since enjoyed them. The fathers of our church in the United States, 'tis well known to you, were prepared for the sacred ministry in the Seminary at Halle; and by their classical knowledge, great erudition and fervent piety, became under God, instrumental in the conversion of hundreds, who, but for the sons of Halle, would very probably have entered the eternal world, without ever having seen the sun of righteousness. Yes, it is an important fact, and one upon which I would have the opponents of theological seminaries to reflect, that religion was at the lowest ebb in many districts of this country, until the arrival of pastors, who were nursed and reared at Halle. There were indeed previously, men employed as pastors by our people, but they were generally ignorant, and in many instances, so ungodly, that laymen became in as many instances, disgusted, and gradually settled down in unbelief. The erudition, unfeigned piety, pastoral prudence and systematic knowledge of the duties incumbent upon the ambassadors of Jesus, which our fathers derived from the Lord, through a theological seminary, enabled them to discriminate, when to feed with milk, and when to nourish with strong meat.

They at once commanded the respect of all, and both English and German emigrants, in Pennsylvania and Maryland especially, were brought to the feet of the crucified Saviour, whom they had mocked and contemned.

The zeal, the celestial flame, the devotedness to the cause of Christ, which had long distinguished our church in Europe, were gradually caught, by different denominations of christians in this country, and accordingly, all their energies were brought into requisition to establish theological seminaries. The Presbyterian church was among the first, and the number of her learned and pious clergy is sufficient to establish the fact, that theological seminaries are among the most valuable institutions, which Christians can and should support.

Strange as it must appear, yet 'tis a lamentable fact, that the German churches (Lutheran and Reformed) in the United States, remained perfectly indifferent, as regards theological seminaries, until of late. Whilst others prepared young men for the ministry, and sent them forth pious, erudite and well stored with classic lore, to missionate throughout this extensive country, we could scarcely provide churches already organized, with suitable pastors. Either we were compelled to admit men into the ministry, if they were pious, though possessing no more knowledge than every lay-man out to seek for himself; or suffer our churches to remain vacant until young men could be found, whose circumstances enabled

A Blast From the Past... cont.

them to enter a college or university, and after graduating, to spend a year or two in the study of theology, under the direction of one or other of our most experienced pastors. The great disadvantages, under which the church suffered, are well known. No matter how pious and scientific our pastors, who prepared students, it must be conceded, that as every stationed pastor has a flock to feed and defend, he cannot devote sufficient time, to the instruction of students of divinity.

That grand and blessed institution of our church, the General Synod, brought into existence but a few years since, and, exposed to difficulties, ever since its birth, has nevertheless operated with such success, as not only to acquire a strength, which enables it to bid defiance to its most malign opponents, but with the blessing of God, to place our church in the United States into that state, which enabled her in Europe, to contribute so much toward the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom. Yes, I anticipate that we shall soon unite with our sister churches, in a powerful manner, to pull down the strong holds of Satan, and that our numerous members, dwelling throughout the United States, will be furnished with pastors, who shall inspire their hearers with divine fire of the love of God. The calls for such pastors are loud and numerous, and at this period, there exists an ardent desire in many, who are ignorant of the language of our fathers, to have the word of life divided among them agreeably to the views of our church. The General Synod, has therefore determined, in humble reliance upon God, to establish a theological seminary. To the important and highly responsible station of its first professor, you, my dear brother, have been elected, and it has devolved upon me, to charge you, in the most solemn manner, as in the presence of the Triune God, to be

well aware of the sacredness of the office, with which we invest you this day.

(The remaining half of Schaeffer's Charge to SSS is not presented; instead, we move directly to his "Charge" to the students of the new seminary!)

The students present now rose and were addressed as follows:

You, my young brethren, who have determined to become students of divinity in this seminary, will, I trust, be diligent in your studies, increasing in piety, and deport yourselves in general, as becometh your high vocation. It would not comport with the feelings of my brother, whom you now recognize as your professor, to speak of his acquirements in encomiastic strains, nor would it be consistent with my duty; for the General Synod of our church, has elected him to take charge of our students, who feel disposed, to prepare themselves for the ministry in this seminary. You heard the responsibility of his station, and yours is by no means unimportant. Upon you will in a great measure depend, the prosperity of our seminary. If you leave it erudite and pious, and become active, zealous, prudent and faithful ambassadors of Jesus, then will our seminary rise and flourish; but if on the contrary, you should be unmindful of your duties as students--if your hearts and hands are not improved--if piety and knowledge be wanting, then may our seminary sink--which may God avert!

Finally, may we all be faithful! May we discharge the various duties obligatory upon us, with alacrity and delight!--Then will we embrace each other, and with those whom we have been instrumental in disciplining for Jesus, join with the choristers of heaven, in singing glory unto the Lamb of God forever and ever, Amen!

Bookmarks



Hot off the Presses

Several books recently received by the library may be of interest to the seminary community. First, Scott Gustafson has just had a book published. It is entitled *Ministry With the Power of Jesus* and deals with a theology of ministry, which is a hot topic right now. Knowing Scott, you can expect an interesting, intelligent book with a few twists (cf. the dedication page). The call number is BV660 .2 G87 1991.

Final Exit by Derek Humphry (R726 H84 1991) received a great deal of media attention when it came out. The book is a how-to manual for suicide. *Final Exit* is intended for terminally ill persons, but while such "self-release" (in the book's terminology) is controversial enough, other questions have been raised as to the advisability of making such material available to the general public.

Edgar Trexler, editor of *The Lutheran*, has just published *Anatomy of a Merger*, a history of the formation of the ELCA (BX8048 .3 T74 1991). This is the first in what will probably be a deluge of such analyses.

The authors of *Habits of the Heart* have produced a new book called *The Good Society* (E169 .12 G645 1991). While *Habits* looked at our personal and cultural life, *Good Society* expands the field of

view to examine society's institutions.

Sexual Harassment

Harassment has been brought to our attention by the Clarence Thomas hearings and by discussions here on campus. *Peer Harassment*, while chiefly meant for college students, contains some valuable information. It is accompanied by a video of the same name (LC212 .862 H83 1991 +). *Academic and Workplace Sexual Harassment*, published by SUNY, is on order but has not yet been received by the library. It promises to present a more scholarly analysis of the problem.

Lent

The Lenten season will soon be upon us. For those of you leading worship this season, the library as always is a "resource of resources." On the computer, go to VIEW CATALOG -- SUBJECTS and look up "Lent." If you like to browse the shelves, BV85 is the best place to start. Some specific recommendations: *A Lent Sourcebook* (BV85 L418 1990); *Lent: A Guide to the Eucharist and Hours* by Kevin Irwin (BX2015 .784 I79 1985); *The Scandal of Lent* by Robert Kysar (BS2615 .5 K97 1982); *Parish Path Through Lent and Eastertime* (BV85 P37 1985). *Prelude to the Hallelujah* is a new book of Lenten meditations by Edna Hong, a Minnesota writer and translator (BV85 H66 1991).

Tamara Riegel

The Body Myth

About a week ago at the college, I heard Naomi Wolf speak about her book, The Beauty Myth. This book has been hailed by some as one of the most important feminist publications in recent years. Whatever the truth of this statement, the book I read and the talk I heard proved that Wolf is an intelligent, articulate young woman who is passionate about her subject, and eager to pass on some of her knowledge and enthusiasm to others.

Wolf analyzes the phenomenon in North American culture which she calls the "beauty myth." In the last 20 years the pressure on women to conform to a universal ideal of beauty have increased exponentially. Women are pressured to conform to the ideal as portrayed by anorectic teenage fashion models. Women are spending \$50 billion a year on cosmetics, diets, and plastic surgery. Women are subject to sexual harassment if they are pretty, and to summary dismissal from their jobs if they are not pretty enough. Women are starving themselves to achieve an ideal weight 23% below average. Women are submitting to the knife to literally remold their bodies to an ideal more male than female. Women do this because the media and the advertising establishment insist that they must conform in order to achieve what they desire in love or career.

Why has our culture suddenly become so interested in women's appearance? Wolf observes that the early 1970's, the crest of the second wave of feminism, brought sweeping legal, political and social changes and opened up countless new possibilities for women. Almost immediately the media began to push the necessity of youthful beauty for any successful woman (think of Jane Pauley and Deborah Norville).

Wolf argues that the force behind this powerful myth is

political and economic. When women began to be provided with equal opportunities, the status quo was threatened. A similar situation occurred after World War II. When the soldiers came home, Rosie the Riveter had to be persuaded to return home, or there would not be enough jobs for the men. The Feminine Mystique immediately appeared in American popular and scholarly literature, and millions of women were convinced that home was where they belonged. Essentially the same scenario was repeated in the 1970's. Our economic system depends on the 25-40% of the gross national product which is unpaid work by women, and upon the vast pool of women willing to work long hours for low pay. The best way to keep women out of the way and out of trouble was to (A) convince them they are not worth better jobs or higher pay, and (B) exhaust them through complicated rituals of personal grooming, fanatical exercise, and stringent fasting, so that they have no energy to speak out or stand up for their political and economic rights. The beauty myth helpfully fulfills all these requirements, and it has the convenient side effect of putting women in competition against each other, rather than making them allies of each other.

One may well ask why women go along with the myth if it is so harmful. One may also ask why businessmen wear ties. There is such a weight of cultural and social tradition behind the myth that few women are able to stand out against it. On the one hand, women are told that beauty aids are a way to pamper themselves and remain feminine in a man's world; on the other hand, women are told in a thousand subtle and unsubtle ways every day that their worth is judged overwhelmingly on appearance.

The Body Myth

cont.

Wolf is obviously a keen observer of culture, and her conclusions are original and compelling. You may read her book if you wish to explore the subject further. What I would like to explore are the theological implications of the beauty myth. If our culture values women only on the basis of their external appearance, what does this mean for Christians?

As one examines the effects of the "beauty myth", it becomes disturbingly apparent that this movement which claims to value women, and the beauty of women, so highly is in fact anti-woman. The demands made upon women, the evaluation of their looks, the criticism, praise or scorn lavished on women's bodies is not a loving or admiring attempt to encourage women to "be all that they can be." It is a personal attack upon woman's physical self. Think for a moment of the bloody scalpel, hardened silicone, carcinogenic implants of the plastic surgeon's trade (87% of whose patients are female). Think of the women raped, stabbed, beaten, burned, violated and humiliated, not just in "hard" or even "soft" pornography, but in the neighborhood theater (1 in 8 movies contains a rape scene) and on the covers of detective novels. Think of the rape and bondage fantasies in television and print advertisements. Think of the women restricting their caloric intake to that of Auschwitz inmates. This is not a celebration of women's bodies ... it is rejection.

Why this fierce denial of women's bodies? What is a woman's body, that it should be despised, and that our culture should be trying so desperately to make it disappear? Occidental civilization has a long history of associating the female with the human body, and with the world of physical reality in general. This is in contrast to the male, who is associated with the spiritual and immaterial. Women are identified

with the animal side of human nature. Science can fertilize an egg in the test tube, but so far a woman is still required to carry the fetus in her body for nine months before giving birth in an excess of blood, sweat and pain: all reminders of the embodied nature of humanity. In some ancient religions this creative ability of women is revered. In other religions it becomes a negative thing. The ancient Greeks believed male homosexual love to be the purest of loves, because it is not defiled by the all-too-physical realities of a male-female relationship. In Buddhism women are the yin, the dark side. In Christianity women are the tempters, the white sepulchers who are hopelessly entangled in the sinful body themselves and can easily drag a careless man down with them.

The female body is despised because it represents our bodiliness. But why should we be so afraid of our corporeality? The truth is that we, along with the rest of Western culture, are all Manichaeans at heart. Like Augustine, we are secretly ashamed of our carnal desires because, like Augustine, we are secretly convinced that the soul is better than the body. The body, it seems, is the source of all our sinful troubles. Intellectually we know that "flesh" in St. Paul's epistles means selfish desire, but like Luther, we think of the butcher shop when we hear the word. Paul's "thorn in the flesh" could easily have been spiritual, but we always speculate on the corporeal possibilities (a stutter perhaps, or that old bugaboo, uncontrollable sexual desire). The body must be the source of sin, for was not the eating of the apple in Eden a physical act? And we all know who first succumbed to that culinary temptation.

If the Western Christian tradition has contributed so much to the rejection of the body, is there anything in that same tradition which might justify changing to a positive

The Body Myth cont.

attitude toward, or even love of the body? Indeed there is. First, we can consciously acknowledge that the physical body is an God-given part of the definition of being human. No matter how much our Gnostic tendencies would like to think that a soul released from the body is fulfilled humanity, it is not. Augustine, for example, acknowledged that body and soul are a union, that the body is an intrinsic part of being human, and that the body serves the soul by providing it with information about physical reality.

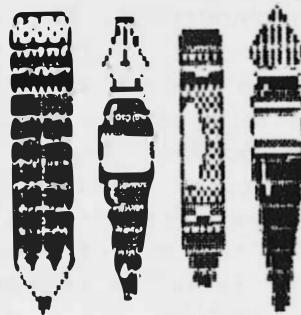
The body is also the means by which we communicate with each other and also with God. Augustine may have felt that the ultimate end of the soul was to look inward and upward, "away from this light of the eyes," to find knowledge of God, but we know that knowledge of God is not to be sought outside of physical reality (direct revelation is not ruled out completely, but it is not where God has promised to be). Luther tells us that God has chosen to reveal God's self to us as mediated in Word and Sacrament: "God gives us neither Word nor commandment which is not contained (*einfaſſe*) and presented to us in a thing which is outwardly corporeal" (W A 23, 261, 12-22).

How is it that the transcendent God has chosen lowly physical reality to communicate with us? This same God has also chosen to *himself* become one with physical reality in the person of Christ Jesus. The Incarnation lies at the very heart of Christian belief. The second person of the Trinity became a human being, soul, body and all. And we are able to say that not just the second person, but *God* is incarnate. This is so, first because Christ is God; second because the Father and the Spirit participate in the humanity of the Son, just as each person of the Trinity participates in any action which is associated with a particular person of the Trinity, as was

established by Gregory of Nyssa. God has chosen to be one with us in all the essential ways of being human, not just for 33 years in Judea, but now and forever. The body of Christ is here with us, in the Sacrament and in the community of believers. The body of Christ will be with us always, just as our individual bodies will be, as we confess in the Apostles' Creed.

Thus the body ... *our body* is not only an essential part of the definition of being human, but it has become a part of the definition of God. This despised corporeality is the very means by which God has redeemed us and called us to God's self. In gratitude for and celebration of this great gift, we should love our own and our neighbors' bodies, in which we can see the very image of our incarnate God, caring for them in all their wonderful variety of shapes and sizes and colors, and glorifying God in them.

Tamara E. Riegel



A Big
THANK You
to all who submit
articles to TABLE TALK!

and to
those
who read
it...



A Reflection on Evangelization

by Thomas Jacoby

I just received the news that a friend of mine died last night.

Chip was videotaping at the scene of a fire, when he had a sudden heart attack. The paramedics could not revive him.

Chip was not that old and I never knew he had a history of heart problems. In fact, there was an awful lot I never knew about Chip, or maybe it's more realistic to say I never bothered to learn these things about Chip. I suppose a more accurate description of our relationship would be co-workers, and as with a lot of relationships like this, ours was primarily focused on our work.

Most of the time, we would meet at the job, accomplish our tasks, talk a bit whenever the action slowed down, and say our farewells when we were through. "Nice to work with you again, Chip. See you at the next one," or something like that.

I remember telling him the last time we worked together that I was preparing to move to Gettysburg, where I was going to begin studies at the Seminary. Our goodbyes had more of a finality then. Chip actually passed out of my life at that moment.

Or was it actually me that passed out of his life? I think the latter, because Chip is having an impact on me at this very moment, and I really wonder about the impact I may have had on his life.

The phone call came when I was sitting at my table studying a text assigned for our class in the Gospels. The news was shocking, and my first instinct was to think pastorally, after all,

that's what we're here to learn. I thought about contacting Chip's wife and I asked God to be with his family and to meet their needs at this time of crisis. I made a mental note to place a prayer request on the sheet outside the business office. But more shocking than the news was the irony that here I sat attempting to learn how to proclaim the Gospel to people, while this person's life had ended without me ever so much as asking him if he was a member of the Church.

I really experienced profound sadness and some pain at that moment. Chip was a little rough around the edges and not quite as experienced as the rest of us, and I realized that I had often shied away from him because of my own uncomfortableness.

But he was created in the image of God, just like the rest of us. Didn't he deserve better than that?

There are many reasons why I never engaged in any discussions about God with Chip, but the realization that I didn't even know if he had ever been baptized burned away any excuses I might have had for not doing so.

Under the law, I am guilty of disobeying what we're told Jesus Christ cited as the second greatest commandment. I cannot escape the realization that I did not love my neighbor enough to even wonder about his relationship with Almighty God.

My next prayer was to ask God to have mercy on me and forgive me for this terrible sin of omission. The passage that we speak during the Brief Order for Confession and Forgiveness took on heightened significance at that moment: ". . .and by what we have left undone . . . we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves . . ."

But the order does not stop there, thank God. It continues with some of the most powerful words I can think of. Words that speak the message of the Gospel to us all. I recalled Mark Oldenburg speaking those words to us all just last evening.

It was a real and powerful experience of God's grace to know at that moment that we also have the forgiveness of God. Because of Jesus Christ, I can remember that this sin is washed away. And I can pray that God will enable us to avoid making similar mistakes in the future.

So I do what I so often do when things like this happen in my life. I put my thoughts into writing. Why? Do I do this to remove some of the guilt I feel over my shortcomings? Probably, to some extent. But maybe also to call to mind something that we may not think about often enough.

Our role as ministers of the Gospel does not take place only in the Church. We have the wonderful opportunity to function in this capacity on countless occasions in the world. What poor stewards we are, if we waste this treasure! How much can we benefit so many others if we learn to cheerfully and easily let the good news of Jesus Christ be part of all our interacting with others?

I feel very fortunate that I am part of a community which helps me learn how to do this. I thank God that, together, all the individuals forged into one body of Christ do reach many Chips of the world. I am grateful to be able to experience the immediate support of everyone here. I hope that this event may somehow serve to edify the community and help make real the power of the Gospel in our lives and in the lives of those neighbors with whom we interact throughout the time on earth God has given us all. Please pray for those who mourn Chip's passing.

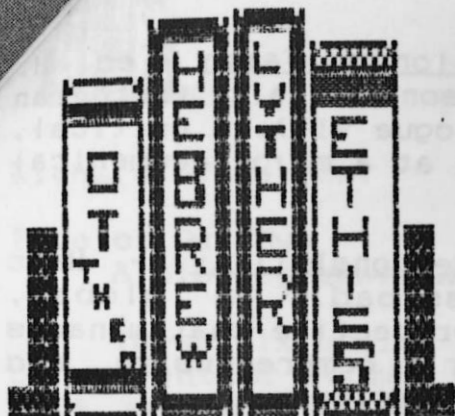
From the NOTA BENE:

Save These Dates -

February 27th (Thursday) - Music. Gettysburg! presents a rare East Coast appearance by one of the nation's finest college choirs: The Concordia College Choir in concert in our chapel beginning at 7:30 pm. Of course, there is no charge, but of course an offering will be received.

March 1st (Sunday) - Music. Gettysburg! strikes twice within a week, this time with help from the Institute for Luther Studies. At 7:30 pm a sixteenth century Eucharist will begin in our chapel: Martin Luther's Formula Missae, with service music by Luther's favorite composer, Josquin des Pres. Eric Gritsch will preach, and service music will be led by the Schola Cantorum of Gettysburg and the Boston Shawm and Sackbut Ensemble.

March 2nd (Monday) - At 7:30 pm at the Gettysburg College Chapel. Cathy Cowan will be speaking on State Policy and the Environment. Ms. Cowan, a former Adams County Commissioner, a high state official responsible for environmental policy. A lively presentation on an important topic -- sponsored by the Interfaith Center for Peace and Justice.



BUILDING YOUR LIBRARY

SUGGESTIONS FROM THE FACULTY

It is my usual routine to work between the semesters in the library at Muhlenberg College. While I do it mainly for the income, many of my friends think I go there just to sit in a building full of one of my most favorite things: books. Meanwhile at home I have also worked at surrounding myself with these paper and ink brews in my apartment. Yet it is often difficult to know which books "out there" are ones which will enrich my entire person "in here." I have plenty of books which are excellent for class, but are not exactly reflective reading materials. Similarly, some books may not be suitable for class, but would make excellent additions to our personal libraries. It is difficult to recognize these books without some recommendations.

Therefore, Table Talk is beginning a new feature which is little more than a recommended bibliography. Suggestions are welcome from anyone, although the primary contributors are faculty. Mayhaps this list will inform all of us with tight purse-strings as to which books would be most helpful or useful.

- Jan L. Elsasser



Frances Gench:

Robert McAtee Brown, Unexpected News: Reading the Bible Through Third-World Eyes

Karen Lebacqz, Sex in the Parish

Wade Clark Root and William McKinney, American Mainline Religion: Its Changing Shape and Future

Gerd Theissen, The Shadow of the Galilean

D. Jadock, The Church's Bible: Its Contemporary Authority

Taylor Branch, Parting the Waters: America in the King Years

Susan Thistlewaite and Ringe (eds.) Lift Every Voice

Journals:

"Interpretation"

"Lectionary Homiletics"



Roy J. Enquist:

Here in no particular order are bibliographical suggestions that ought to be of interest:

1. The Future of Creation - Juergen Moltmann (Fortress). Fascinating collection of essays on everything from eschatology and Trinity to ethics and justification. Highly stimulating.

2. Doing Theology/Doing Justice - Jerry Folk (Fortress). A reader-friendly overview integrating evangelical theology and ethics for the general public.

3. On the Hundredth Anniversary of Rerum Novarum - John Paul II (United States Catholic Conference). The latest papal word on economics and class since the fall of European communism.

4. Loving Nature: Ecological Integrity and Christian Responsibility - James A. Nash (Abingdon). Splendid integration of scientific data and theological vision.

5. Christian Spirituality - Wolfhart Pannenberg. Five essays outlining an informed, evangelical spirituality.

6. Creation and Law - Gustaf Wingren (Muhlenberg). A modern classic which recovers a neglected Lutheran theological tradition.

7. Theology and the Black Experience - eds. Albert Pero and Ambrose Mayo (Augsburg). Fourteen essays by African and African-American theologians on the prospects/salience of Lutheranism.

8. Justification by Faith - ed. H. George Anderson et al. (Lutheran Catholic Dialogue VII). A critical, creative look at a major ecumenical issue.

9. Global Responsibility - Hans Kueng (Crossroad). A global, interfaith perspective that manages to be clear, comprehensive and theologically serious.

10. Personality Type and Religious Leadership - Roy M. Oswald and Otto Kroeger (Alban). OK, just how are we going to figure out how to develop effective models for leadership?



Richard Carlson:

Can a book that costs about five bucks and is only 100 pages be worthwhile? Yes, when that book happens to be Jesus and the Future, by David Tiede. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). Tiede examines the New Testament understandings and sayings of the future not as a road map to Armageddon nor as "spiritual truths" not as misguided, unfulfilled sayings. Rather, he takes seriously their historical contextuality but also seeks to understand their continuing impact and challenge.



Foster R. McCurley, Ancient Myths and Biblical Faith: Scriptural Transformation, Fortress, 1983.
BS 511.2 M38.

Richard D. Nelson:

Five of Our Own
A Bibliographic Note

These six useful books are all by current or former professors at ELCA seminaries. Because they are not all in print, I have noted each book's LC number in the library.

Terence E. Frethelm, The Suffering of God: An Old Testament Perspective, Fortress, 1984.
BS 1199 S82F74.

This is theodicy done in the biblical mode. Frethelm (LNTS) does not bother with logic or rational paradox, but takes us deep into the heart of human suffering. We find God already there before us, suffering as well. God suffers because of the people and for their sake. The very antithesis of the deity of human philosophy, the God of the Bible suffers both for us and with us.

Ronald M. Hals, Grace and Faith in the Old Testament, Augsburg, 1980.
BS 1199 G68H34.

The Old Testament is a gospel book. Hals (Trinity) finds divine grace and human faith to be the structural rhythm of both testaments. "The Lord who brought the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt is the same Lord who raised Jesus from the dead."

James Limburg, The Prophets and the Powerless, John Knox, 1977.
BS 1198 L5.

Limburg (LNTS) provides a short guide to the social and political message of the prophets. This would be an excellent book to loan anyone who thinks that "religion and politics don't mix" or has been seduced by the "biblical prophecy" ideas afloat in some quarters.

McCurley (formerly LTSP) traces three mythic themes through the culture of Mesopotamia, Canaan, and Egypt -- and then into the Old and New Testaments. These themes are the divine conflict with chaos, fertility and sexuality, and sacred space and sacred mountain. This first-class study is the best introduction I know to the interplay of ancient myth and biblical theology.

Foster R. McCurley and John Reumann, Witness of the Word: A Biblical Theology of the Gospel, Fortress, 1986.
BS 543 M42.

A handy introduction and shelf reference by the folks (LTSP) who brought you "Word and Witness." This is a thematic theology of the biblical gospel, tracing the classic gospel concepts from the Hebrew Bible through Jesus and the New Testament.

J. M. Myers, Grace and Torah, Fortress, 1975.
BS 680 G7M93.

Gettysburg's renowned scholarly giant, whose death we lamented in 1991, discusses the interplay of gospel and law, grace and torah in the Old and New Testaments. This pattern (grace first, then torah) goes back to the exodus event. It is interesting to compare this little book with Hals (above). Hals was a student of von Rad and is conspicuously Lutheran in his approach. Myers puts his own distinctive spin on the discussion, one which has strong affinities to the "biblical theology movement" prevalent in the United States in the 1950's and 60's. How characteristic that Hals should conclude with a quotation from "Amazing Grace" and Myers with an excerpt from the Dead Sea Scrolls!

senior sagas

On January 17, 1992 the Sr. Class held a meeting. The meeting was used to touch base with Sr. Class committees and their work. It opened with prayer then some reminders were announced. First, April 1st is the deadline for reservation for hotels for graduation. Carolann has the list of reserved hotels if needed. Second, class rings are still available, see Carolann. Third, cap and gown measurements must be completed (hoods can be purchased at a cost of about \$60). Cap and gowns must be returned immediately following the graduation ceremony. And fourth, people were reminded that the library doors were to be dedicated in memory of Miriam's dad at 1:15 on January 23rd. Committee reports were then given. The Banquet Committee reported that the Sr. Banquet (AAL) will be held on Friday, April 10th, at the Dobbin House. Babysitting will be available. The speaker is yet to be decided. A survey will be circulated when appropriate for suggestions. The Class Gift Committee has not picked a gift yet, but suggestions include money to a student lounge fund, the purchase of some type of bicycle shelter, CD's for the library CD players, and money to the Nicholson Fund. Other suggestions can be given to Viking D. or Scott M. The visual Arts Committee is working on the composite photograph with all the lettering being finished. They requested a class theme so a logo might be developed. There was a reminder to pay Mr. Matthews for Sr. photos if it had not been done already. The Worship committee reported that Mark Oldenburg would reside at the Graduation Eucharist and Rick Carlson will preach. As it stands now, the Gospel lesson will be Jn 15:15-19, the O.T. lesson will be Jer 1:4-10, and the N.T. lesson will be Phil 4:4-9. These were the scriptures voted

from the choices at the meeting. Hymns have yet to be selected. Francis Gench will be asked to assist at the Eucharist. A pick-up choir will sing and the possibility of family members assisting has yet to be finalized. Other business discussed at the meeting included: Dr. Krodel speaking to the class about the Goethe scholarship for study in Germany; activities for the rest of the semester to include the Family Feud; the Reception/Recognition committee report that they are working on the guest-list for the Recognition banquet which will cost \$15 per person (discount for children under 12); and a motion made by Joanne Groman to use the banner made by members of the class at graduation. Mariam Nicholson seconded and the motion was carried.

Family Feud

The seminary's annual Family Feud was a great success with over fifty people attending. A big thank you goes to Carolann and Jen for all their work as production managers. Also thanks go to Joanne and Miriam for refreshments and commercial breaks. A big, big thank you goes to Dr. Carlson, who by the way was the professor most likely to be seen on Broadway according to the student survey, for being our emcee.

That same student survey showed Holy Week to be a liturgical season. But such opinions didn't confound the Gnostic family who seemed to know it all! They weeded out the Jr. Hereticks in the first round, 169 - 120, and went on to win the more upward championship round against the fearsome Addams family, 185 - 74. Answers ranged from good to Jacob and Rebekah as a most popular couple in the Bible. Some gnesio Lutherans in the corner were dismayed when no one mentioned the Reformation as a most popular Lesser Festival. All in all, good answers everyone. See you on T.V., Will!

middler musings

"The second middle term deals with multicultural concerns and is designed to broaden students' awareness of aspects of racism and poverty and of concerns of different people of color. Students may choose one particular ethnic group or one particular problem as a concentration for their study" (Catalogue 1991-92 Lutheran Theological Seminary Bulletin, p. 27.)

Written in the language of academe, this description of Middler J-term sounds -- shall we say 'a bit dry.' Rest assured, dear readers, that our actual experiences were anything but! Our individual expectations for cross-cultural were met and exceeded as we added a wide variety of adventures to our collective resumé. And even though we (as students) already had a personal 'awareness of poverty,' we were challenged (in the apt words of Leslie Beard) to "learn bunches about [our] ignorance."

Recognizing my inability adequately to describe my classmates' ventures, I will let them speak for themselves:

Rob Miller & Steve Herr: "We spent 10 eye-opening, spirit-building days on the Sea Islands of South Carolina. We participated in a service learning project from Gettysburg College with one professor and 9 college students, working with Rural Mission Inc. to provide low-income families with livable housing. The Islands are home to the Gullah, descendents of freed slaves and West Africans, who shared with us much of their unique culture and language.

"We spent the week doing house repairs, including: gutting and tearing down part of a home that was destroyed by fire, painting, rebuilding a roof, installing bathroom facilities, and 'gleening' the fields (a process of collecting the left-over harvest for the low-income families).

An excellent experience that we would recommend to anyone."

Jan Elsasser: "I went to Baltimore to work with Rev. Roger Gench. There I met with black church folk fighting for the rights of the poor, talked with Jews seeking to understand who Christians are, observed a volunteer tutorial program for disadvantaged inner-city youth, and conversed with homosexuals about their struggles in the Body of Christ which so often seeks to exclude them."

Elinor Allison & Susan Folks: "Some of us stayed on campus for the Multi-Cultural Workshop. We had a few very intense discussions around these issues and really got a feel for the challenge of inclusivity facing an ELCA that counts more and more Latinos, African Americans, and Asian Americans among its membership.

"Perhaps the most spiritually significant experience of the Workshop was the opportunity to share worship with a Latino Roman Catholic congregation in York (the service was in Spanish) and an A.M.E. church here in Gettysburg."

Leslie Beard, Matthew Diehl, Byron Miller & Dave Wright: "We chose to explore the past history and current issues of the Cherokee Nation at the Oaks (Oklahoma) Indian Mission. The Mission provides housing, care, and education for disadvantaged, abused, and neglected Native American children from the ages of 6 - 18.

"The four of us traveled through 16 states, over 3,600 miles, in 12 days, took a class in the Cherokee language, visited the Cherokee Tribal Headquarters in Tahlequah, and had lunch in the Oaks Senior Center (twice) where we enjoyed some 'Ozark Racket' on the guitar and fiddle, provided by seniors Hattie and Sam.

middler musings cont.

"The experience was invaluable (Jake Chanate at NSU described it as 'looking at the details on one bead of a strand of beads'), and the side trips to St. Louis, New Orleans, Mobile and Natchez were a welcome and long-awaited diversion from the rigors of seminary life (and world stress). We hope some juniors will visit this great site during their Middler year J-term."

Katherine Douglass: "I worked with Morgantown Health Right, a free medical clinic for the homeless and uninsured in Morgantown, WV. The clinic is working with the community hospital in Preston County, a rural county with high unemployment, to establish a new clinic site. I helped the clinic assess both the need for free medical care and the barriers to the county's residents in receiving care."

Sue Irons: "AmTrak, for a slight fee, kindly moved me through the night from Pittsburgh, PA to Gary, IN (I know ... what's the difference? I learned at least one: Gary still has operative steel mills!) where I spent the following 12 days doing whatever the Gary Lutheran Parish (4 urban congregations) was doing. That included a joint parish annual meeting, a congregational budget meeting (yippee!), working in the Parish food/clothing pantry and with WIC (who operates from one of GLP's churches), and making pastoral calls to home-bound parish members."

"In our spare time, we visited Valparaiso University twice (once to audit a session of a course entitled "Religion, Racism, and Social Change," and again for their Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday Observance - crashing its Black Student Organization's MLK Day party in the process (lots of good food, reggae, & gospel music)), attended the city's MKL Day Observance (with 4000+ other folk), and took a 3-day course on developing, financing,

building, and managing low-income housing projects."

Rich Hair: "'The Challenges of the Urban Church' is what I entitle my multi-cultural experience. I was in Baltimore, MD, at Brown Memorial Presbyterian Church. The pastor is none other than Roger Gench, husband of our beloved New Testament professor, Frances Gench."

"I did many things during this multi-perspective experience, including working with BUILD, a politically active group composed of approximately 50 churches who work with legislators to enact laws for the well-being of all people. I also worked with the Institute for Jewish-Christian studies and sat in on a number of dialogue sessions. Their purpose is to allow Jews and Christians the chance to find some common ground while exploring their differences."

"We also met with two lesbian women from the church. This was the most thought-provoking night of my life. They rearranged my mental furniture, upset the whole room, and now I'm left with the chore of clean-up. That will probably take a very long time."

"This was a great and exciting time of exploring what the church faces within an urban context. For someone who comes from a rural background, it certainly was also a challenge."

Bob Knight: "My 'J' was spent with the South Central Community Action Programs, an agency in Adams Co., based in Gettysburg. This agency serves the poor, homeless, economically disadvantaged, and needy of three counties. I worked with both their office of emergency services, giving immediate financial and food assistance, and their homeless shelter, located in the same building."

middler musings cont.

"I learned that we are all poor in many ways, so we are on common ground with those we call 'needy.' We all need the Lord! And we all need each other. He gave himself to us, we give of ourselves to each other, and receive much in return."

DR. JENSON TO SPEAK

The Reverend Doctor Robert W. Jenson. Internationally distinguished scholar and church leader. will be the 1992 Warren C. Heinly Memorial Lecturer of Grace Lutheran Church. Doctor Jenson will present two lectures:

"The Unity of the Church"
at 9:30 a.m.

"The Ecumenical Dialogs"
at 2:00 p.m.

The Office of Evening Prayer in the Saint Peter Chapel will conclude the afternoon lecture.

The lectures will focus the attention of pastors and laity upon God's gift of unity to the universal, catholic church.

In the morning lecture Doctor Jenson will discuss the nature of the church's unity, its divine mandate, the problems and hope we share for the future.

The afternoon lecture will examine the historic ecumenical dialogs between and among the various communions of the church, their accomplishments and failures, as well as the challenge of the present state of affairs.

These lectures are in anticipation of the spring publication of Doctor Jenson's major ecumenical work Time, Being, and The Church, Augsburg-Fortress Press.

Dr. Jenson will also preach at the liturgies of Grace Church that day at 8:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

Grace Lutheran Church is located at N. Queen and James Streets, Lancaster, PA.

Coffee Shop Concerns



Dateline: Tuesday (or Friday)
Coffee Shop

Menu: Goopy, Powdery Doughnuts
Chewy, Onion Bagels
Sticky, Cinnamon Buns
Interesting, Blueberry Bagels
Coffee - Regular and Decaf
A Variety of Teas

Price: 25 cents each!

Too good to be true? Yes and No. The Student Association run Coffee Shop has been providing the opportunity to meet together in the basement of Valentine Hall for a long time. Twice a week we have our choice of doughnuts or bagels (or both) to go with our hot beverages. Unfortunately - the coffee shop is losing money.

There are probably a couple of reasons for this. One is that the Student Association has to pay more than 25 cents for each bagel that it buys (not counting the cream cheese and butter). There is a study going on to see what price needs to be charged in order to come out even at the end of the semester.

The other reason for the shortage of funds, and the impetus for this article, is that not everybody pays for what they eat. Whether we have forgotten to put in our quarters, or didn't have a quarter at the moment that we needed a cup of coffee is not known. What the Student Association asks is that all of us make sure that we pay for what we use.

Thanks for your cooperation.

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junior jottings

I doubt seriously that there is anything I could say about J-Term Greek that has not already been said somewhere along the line during the last umpty-ump years the Seminary has been offering "crash" instruction in the language. Reactions of our classmates and veterans vary widely from total disgust to a "what's-the-beef(?)" attitude. Some of us appear to be permanently scarred by the experience, others feel that invigorating puff of having met the challenge straight on, and there are those of us who are downright gifted in languages or in academic endeavors in general who actually enjoyed the experience. Some of us are combinations of the above or one of the others depending on which day it was/is.

Since I have yet to truly work with what I was supposed to have learned during January, I really cannot make any informed comment concerning the effectiveness of the course for me as a prospective candidate for the ministry of Word and Sacrament. It is hard to imagine that an information-storage experience with such a steep learning "curve" will be of much long-term value. In my opinion, J-term does not provide enough time for the effective memorization essential for learning a language. However, tearing apart J-term Greek is not my purpose in writing this brief piece.



I want to thank my classmates for their care for each other, for the prayers, for the jokes, for the comradery, for the pep talks. Thank you's go to those to whom Greek came easily for sharing their knowledge with others whose gifts were definitely not in foreign languages. That gratitude goes to our Advanced Greek tutors as well as our top "scholars." Thank you, Dr. Gench, for your topnotch teaching and genuine pastoral care of our neurotic bunch. Thanks, Wayne and Patti, for helping us with those night-before-exam Greek Breaks. Finally, I extend a special thanks to one of our classmates whose faith and perseverance have left a deep impression on many of our hearts. We keep you in our prayers.



I sincerely hope that this spirit of cooperation will continue to grow among us, and that we will keep our eyes open to the gifts we can offer to one another no matter how trivial or insignificant they may appear to be at the moment. May we emanate that same spirit of care and love to next year's junior class as well.