

# *Table Talk*

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## *Table Talk*

Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg  
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Stephen Fiechter *Chair, Publication Division*  
Rose Ann Campise *Editor*  
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## *Table Talk* Talks

How grateful I am to have been asked to be the editor for *Table Talk!* It is invigorating to interact with so many of you in compiling this publication, a booklet of the words of our creative and pastoral reflections.

*Table Talk* has a long history of presenting the prose, poetry, reflections and reactions, fiction, and articles of interest of and for this seminary community. Everyone's contribution is a gift, and is respected and appreciated. The November issue received reflections on Baptism, Death, Baptism & Death, on the Diaconate, and the "Theology of the Hammer." All inspirations! All gifts! On behalf of our readers, I thank this month's contributors: Robert G. Argot, Eileen Sudbrink Felder, Nancy Gable, Dr. Susan Hedahl, Gwenn Trout (who sent her article from California!), and Dianna S. Wentz.

My contribution is to invite and encourage all members of our community to gather around the table and talk. To make it easier for you to participate, *Table Talk* will feature articles that require a brief response, such as "If I were the new bishop of the ELCA...". This "LTSG Bulletin Board" will offer you an opportunity to voice your opinion, as well as to suggest topics that you would like presented to the community for discussion. Next month's question is "What I want most in/from my first call is. . ." Just place your response in the *Table Talk* mail box!

Another kind of article, "Dear Padre" invites you to comment on Padre's theology, as well as to ask *Table Talk*'s "Dear Abbot" your own pastoral questions.

And *Table Talk* challenges you to see how well you know your seminary friends. This month *Table Talk* asks you "What did your classmates do before they came to seminary?" To find out, flip to **Wuza**. And to find out what your Student Association is doing, flip to the SA Minutes.

What an interesting year lies before us! Join in the excitement! *Table Talk* wants to hear your voice, your glorious voice! December's issue is waiting for your tales from internship, multicultural, and CPE (even from first call)--send your heroic incarnational legends of the seminarian-in-the-world, stories which

will encourage the Juniors and Middlers as they make decisions about their future sites. And tell every one how wonderful you are! A new feature, "Glad Tidings!" will give you the space to shout your good news about your achievements, awards, and brag-ables.

*Table Talk* also invites you to join the excitement of being a proofreader, typist, or journalist. For the next issue, *Table Talk* needs someone to interview Dr. Duane Larson about his forthcoming book, *Times of the Trinity*, someone to ask Dr. William Avery about Arthur L. Larson; and someone with crossword software to help Diane Bowers and myself create an Augsburg Crossword Puzzle.

This month *Table Talk* gratefully acknowledges the help from Richard Burgess, Steve Fiechter, Gretchen Gustman, David Jernigan, Louise Reynolds, Lisa Teichman, as well as Patrick Donmoyer, Travers Klawonn, and Ben Peterhaensel in the publication of this issue.

Rose Ann Campise, *Editor*

**Note to Table Talk Authors with Macs** Trying to communicate with a DOS machine is not difficult but requires some discipline we aren't used to.

*First*---you have to use a diskette that has been formatted for a PC. While Macs can read diskettes formatted for a variety of systems, we must be kind and recognize the limitations associated with other platforms. If the diskette's icon does not show a big PC in the middle of it, it is not a diskette that has been formatted for the PC.

*Second*---PCs were brought up differently so they name things differently. They abhor spaces in a file or volume name. They also have a short attention span and can only take a name that is a maximum of eight characters long followed by an optional period and a three character suffix. Thus instead of my naming a document "Dave's excellent Story" I have to rename it for the PC as "DAVESTRY.WP4" so the editor has a clue that it was saved under Word Perfect 4.0 for the PC and the file may involve someone named Dave. Forget upper and lower case with PC file names - DOS/Windows converts them to uppercase.

Remember, we can live with DOS/Windows more easily than they can us. We must remember to be nice to our less fortunate brothers and sisters.

*An Anonymous (for obvious reasons) Friend of the Editor*

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**Next month:** Articles for the next issue should be submitted to *Table Talk* by November 15; a suggestion for December's articles is **incarnational stories of the seminarian in the world**---stories of **internship, multicultural, or CPE experiences**. Readers are also encouraged to send their responses to "What I want most in/from my first call is. . .", to write to "Dear Padre", and to send in their brag-ables to "Glad Tidings!"

## **If I were the new Bishop of the ELCA I would . . .**

. . . start serious discussions about the clergy shortage and what we can do about it. A key issue for problem-solving would be funding theological education adequately, so that students would not be burdened with huge student loan debts.

*--Wendy Gordon, Senior, Southwestern Texas Synod*

. . . gather pastors together in groups of 10--15, and pray together, invoking the presence of the Holy Spirit. Then I would ask them to share with us that which is deepest in their hearts regarding Christ's Church. I would ask that they share with brothers and sisters in this safe place, their fears, their joys, their pains, and anger--then we would commit ourselves to a community of mutual support and love in Christ, for the upbuilding of the Body!

*--Louise L. Reynolds, Third Year Special Student, Delaware--Maryland Synod*

. . . always keep in mind my proper role. The ELCA structure, our system of hierarchy, is designed to *serve*--to serve the *people* who are the Church. These are the Body of Christ. The Bishop's goal is to *serve them*, not the other way around. And . . . always err on the side of love. Where law and love collide, where structure and love conflict, where the easier way will diminish love, always choose what will serve *love* best.

*--Linda Olsen, First Year, Metro Washington D.C. Synod*

. . . ignite the zeal of our members to end injustice, poverty, and racism.

And . . . seek to expand the programs available within the ELCA that support the family. Family to me means the nuclear traditional family--mother, father, 2.5 kids; it also includes single parent families, committed couple (regardless of sex) who choose to live in a committed relationship, with or without the state of matrimony. Being able to participate in the dialogues concerning the human sexuality statements allowed me to see the pain and suffering of those trying to live out a committed relationship outside of marriage. The dialog must continue!

*--David W. Jernigan, somewhere between Middler and Junior, Metro D.C. Synod*

. . . wear out the knees of my pants in prayer.

*--Daniel O. Donmoyer, Second Year, Lower Susquehanna Synod*

**Next month's question is "What I want most in/from my first call is. . ."**

*Table Talk Talks:* The following article appeared in my teaching parish (St. Marks, Hanover) newsletter. It is a news release written by Mim Woolbert, from the ELCA offices in Chicago, to introduce us to our Bishop elect, The Reverend H. George Anderson. I enjoyed reading it, I thought you might also. I appreciate Lisa Teichman's help in retyping this article for *Table Talk*. —Editor

The baby was six weeks old and jaundiced. The hospital did not want to let the adoptive parents take the child. But Frances and Reuben Anderson persisted, and 63 years later Hugh George Anderson would compare that adoption with the unconditional love of God.

He made that comparison on August 19, the day that the once-jaundiced child was elected Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. "Adoption, by those parents and adoption as a child of God has been a gift with me all my life," he said, "a feeling of being appreciated and valued by someone."

That feeling of belonging and what Anderson calls "a sense of guiding and providence in my life" sustained the clergy man through a distinguished career, as personal tragedy and a chain of events that nearly put him at the head of a Lutheran denomination in 1978.

Anderson, then president of Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in Columbia, SC, was the leading vote-getter in the balloting for the presidency of the Lutheran Church in America. In an ironic twist of fate, he would have succeeded Dr. Robert J. Marshall, the pastor who had confirmed him in Grace Lutheran in Alhambra, California, in 1945.

But he said he could not "visualize" himself as head of the Lutheran Church in America. "I interpreted that as the lack of an inner call to that task," he said, and withdrew his name. The personal tragedy was to come next, as his wife was diagnosed with cancer. "If I had been elected then, I would have been pulled away from home at a terrible time," he said. "I had precious time to be with her during those days."

The death of his wife four years later was a test of faith, he recalls. He had just become president of Luther College in Decorah, Iowa. The parents who had adopted him as a jaundiced child — "sharing with me all they had" — had recently died, his father's death coming within 10 weeks of his mother's passing. He assumed the role of single parent at the same time he took over the leadership of one of the country's most prestigious Lutheran colleges.

"I went through a period of depression," he said, "trying to function from day to day." It was worship in Decorah Lutheran Church and at the college chapel that sustained him. "I could listen to other Christians singing hymns of praise, even it was difficult for me to do so," he said, "and that became a great blessing."

The new ELCA bishop reflected on numerous moments of blessing while speaking to reporters just following his election. When Pastor Robert J. Marshall, the future president of the Lutheran Church in America, arrived at the Alhambra congregation, he quickly determined that Anderson and the other young people were not properly prepared for confirmation, and the rite was delayed "until we learned those important basics of the faith."

The call to the ordained ministry was also unexpected. Following his first year at Yale, where he found campus pastors "challenging and stimulating," Anderson had volunteered as a youth worker in a mountain parish in Western Virginia. "The pastor contracted Bell's palsy," he remembered, "and I ended up accompanying him every day as he did his pastoral work."

The experience led him to switch his interests from science to theology, and he enrolled in the Lutheran Seminary in Philadelphia in 1953.

Another unexpected opportunity set him on a distinguished career path as a historian and theologian. He was invited to accompany Kenneth Scott Latourette, a noted church historian, on a research trip to Europe. "He was a strong influence on me," Anderson said, "for he was an intellectual with a strong spiritual life."

Anderson, a Phi Beta Kappa graduate from Yale, would later earn graduate degrees from the University of Pennsylvania, and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, and become known as a translator and author of many works on Lutheran history.

Throughout his life, he said, was a sense of security and confidence, fed by his sense of adoption by human parents and my God. He later married Jutta Fischer, a woman who had been a student at the South Carolina Seminary during his presidency.

Though it is common for church leaders to be asked to reflect on their past, Anderson had words about the future for the ELCA Assembly. Those words applied the faithful confidence he had described in his personal life to the 5.2 million member denomination. "As to the future," he said, "God has promised that as long as the earth endures, the church will be here. The future is not our enemy. It belongs to God."



## Dear Padre

Dear Padre, in Dr. Gerald Christainson's class we struggled with accepting the awesome responsibility of the authority of the keys,

*Matthew 16: 19: "I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of the kingdom of the heavens and whatever you may have bound upon the earth it will be bound in the heavens, and whatever you may have abolished upon the earth it will have been abolished in the heavens." [Greek/English Interlinear, translated by Brown and Comfort]*

In light of our power to bind and abolish, what should I do as a Pastor when a husband, his wife, and her lesbian lover come to the communion rail to receive the Eucharist (an actual incident); and it is general knowledge among some circles that the women are lovers but it is questionable as to whether or not the husband knows about his wife's affair.

From, "I've got a brand new key"

Dear "New Key"

I guess you are asking whether or not you should give the Eucharist to those who came forward to receive it?

I would give them all communion without question. To deny the Eucharist to anyone because of their sins would be to deny the basic purpose of the sacrament. However, I would deny the elements to someone who was disrespectful of the sacrament; for example, if they were disruptive or drunk.

In either case, I would, of course, find an appropriate time to have a pastoral conversation with the person(s) in question.

Padre

*Table Talk* invites your comments on Padre's theology; as well as your letters to our "Dear Abbot". [Padre is just a student, like you and me.]

## Diaconal Ministry Exposed

By Dianna S. Wentz

*True or false: Students in the ordained ministry tract should fear that they may not receive a call because now congregations can offer a call for a cheaper Diaconal Minister (DM) instead. True or false: Students seeking to become an AIM should just forget it since the DM is shiney and new and the ELCA has plans to simply toss aside AIMS.*

If you answered true to either of these statements then you are one of many operating under misguided assumptions vis-a-vis diaconal ministry. Since the Gospel calls us to do more than preach the word and since LTSG is the center for Diaconal ministry, (and since I have heard many direct and through-the-grapevine negative comments about the diaconal program) I hope you all read this brief summary attempting to answer many of the doubts/fears/questions which have made their way to my ears. Obviously, in this limited forum I can not (nor will I try) address all of these questions. Later in the semester, a program will be held on campus to take an in depth look at the theological, constitutional and practical implications of the diaconal program and I hope to see you all there! For now, I will limit my expoundings to that plain blue collar directness for which I'm known, and I pray bring about a somewhat clearer lens through which you may view the diaconate.

The bottom line is the harvest truly is too plentiful for the laborers and the ELCA has voted to add another tractor to its efforts to bring in this harvest. This new piece of equipment or tool, the diaconate, will not displace, uproot or step on any of the existing forms of ministry. The DM will at times assist (as does the laity or an AIM) in the worship service, but this is not to be the focal point of many DMs. Instead, the DM will boldly go where the ordained and the AIM have previously been too weighted down to go on a full time basis. Most often, the DM will work in a setting separate from the parish. Each DM will serve God through the ELCA according to the gifts given to him or her. The DM may work in ELCA social service offices, hospitals, schools, nursing homes, urban centers, counseling centers, governmental affairs offices, her current law or accounting or dentistry firm. A DM will, on occasion, work for a congregation in a capacity OTHER than parish minister: shelter programs, outreach programs, etc. Our job as Christians is to work within God's harvest wherever it may be. Can anyone argue that in today's society a good portion of

that harvest is in a non-parish based body? As Lutherans we should be proud to join other denominational bodies in carrying out God's work by carrying it out to God's people.

What are the academic requirements for a DM? (no, we are not 'less educated' than M.Div. students.) In addition to the theological Master's degree (which could be an M.Div if one so chose), the DM will have to prove to a field experience supervisor, Master's degree level competence in his particular skill or gift area (nursing, politics, social work, etc.). In some cases, this requires the DM to earn a second Masters degree (either before the theological one or after) in her chosen discipline, as is the case with one of this summer's formation event participants. In many cases, that's 4 years of academic study AND the field experience/internship: the DM student also undertakes the search for internship site and program development on her own and submits a proposal of such to the panel here at LTSG for approval, revision, or rejection. The other field and spiritual requirements will be elaborated upon at the above mentioned forum. Finally, DM students will endure the same candidacy and approval process and upon a call will be consecrated.

It goes without saying these few paragraphs have not nearly touched the surface of the diaconate. Many questions remain -- how does the ELCA body have enough funds to sponsor another 'tractor'; how do the three 'tractors' work together without plowing up the same field, etc. -- but I hope this quiets some festering fears I've witnessed. It is my prayer that God gives us wisdom, patience, and strength to continue to grow Christ's church. The diaconal ministry is yet another step in that growth as we all work for the Kingdom to come. Amen!!

*Dianna Wentz is a second year student from the Metro-Washington D.C. Synod*

**Table Talk Talks:** (From Nancy Gable) I extend to members of the community the invitation to dialogue about my sermon on the Diaconate of October 18, 1995. I am aware of the complexity of issues, the possibility of differing opinions, and hope individuals will stop by the office and find a time to talk face to face about concerns. The content of my sermon was something I wrestled with for several days; through prayer, journal writing, study, and conversation. The decision to speak openly about the real struggles and hurts I live in ministry--in the wider church and on this campus--was not made easily. Please take the time to talk with me and not simply about me. I look forward to the opportunity.

## Wuza

Fuzzy wuzzy wuza a bear. . .

Can you figure out what your colleagues wuz before they came to LTSG?

- |                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| A. Dianna Britten      | 1. Construction Company Controller   |
| B. Rebecca Davis       | 2. Managed million dollar business   |
| C. Nate Motz           | 3. Faculty Assistant, Off Campus, Intern in ELCA Division for Church Society |
| D. Louise Reynolds     | 4. VISTA Volunteer in Utah, High School substitute teacher                   |
| E. Ursula Gassman      | 5. Research Assistant, Biomedical Ethics, Kennedy Institute of Ethics        |
| F. Gretchen Gustman    | 6. Fork lift operator for distribution warehouse                             |
| G. Richard Leseganitch | 7. Laborer in glass factory  |
| H. Lil Nicolai         | 8. Freelance interpreter and translator                                      |
| I. Jenny Hubler        | 9. Actuary, ITT  |
| J. Rob Argot           | 10. Bankruptcy Attorney (Esquire)  |
| K. Wendy Abrahamson    | 11. Drug & Alcohol Counselor, State of Maryland, Garrett County              |
| L. Lynette Nelson      | 12. Mortgage Servicer at bank  |
| M. Ron Brown           | 13. Student Pastor, 2-point parish, WV                                       |

- |                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| N. Chad Kline       | 14. Multi-billion dollar International Company Benefits Plan Administrator   |
| O. Dione Kleptka    | 15. College Religious Major, Philadelphia Seminary, Independent Study, Japan |
| P. Diane Bowers     | 16. Human Services field with people who face challenges                     |
| Q. Lovette Mott     | 17. Accountant, Pastry Chef  |
| R. Ann Eshlossnagle | 18. Assistant House, Milton Hersey School                                    |
| S. Stephen Fiechter | 19. Captain, U.S. Army Intelligence  |
| T. Dan Bringman     | 20. Technical Reference Assistant, University Computer Center                |
| U. Dick Burgess     | 21. Executive Director, non-profit agency for people with autism             |

*Table Talk* thanks Louise Reynolds for collecting the information for this article.

Next month *Table Talk* will again challenge you on your knowledge of your seminary friends to see if you know what musical instruments they play. Those wishing to be listed in this matching column contact Paul Chapman.

## Giver of Gifts

by Eileen Sudbrink Felder

In late June, I had the awesome opportunity to administer the sacrament of baptism for the first time. My pastor, on sabbatical, asked me to do so in his absence. The family approved and the Bishop sent his authorization and permission. In great anticipation, I made the preparations. The child would be received at the Saturday night alternative worship service, using a liturgy adapted from the LBW. I read and studied the liturgy. I prepared the chancel. Napkin? Check. Christ candle and baptismal candle? Check. Lukewarm (not cold) water in the font? Check. Certificates signed and sermon ready to go? Check. I was all prepared for this baptism... or so I thought.

God's frequent surprises-- promptings and calls to intriguing places and tasks-- have made it clear to me that faith is an adventure. In so many instances, in the midst of those tasks, God makes his presence known. But even with that known sense of communion, I wasn't prepared for that revelatory moment I was about to be given.

A strong sense of community was felt as the liturgy progressed and the congregation participated in a responsive reading of the flood prayer. The transformational moment had arrived. My trembling hand brought the Water/Word to her head-- "Claire Noel, I baptize you in the name of the Father..." With that, her beautiful eyes met mine. They held a startled little expression that said, "I don't know exactly what's going on here, but I trust you." I was dumbstruck. I thought I heard God laugh. A door opened and I was overwhelmed by the Spirit's presence and an incredible sense of joy. In a millisecond that seemed to last forever, I wondered if I could continue. The prevenience of it all was so clear. This vulnerable little child, through no doing of her own and with no understanding except her momentary trust of me, was generously being given gifts so bountiful that it seemed too good to be true. In that moment, I knew without a doubt that it IS true. We all reaffirmed our baptism together and I thanked God for his generosity and love. God's laughter helped me to realize how happy it must make God when we, whether we're clear about what's going on or not, look to him with such trusting eyes.

Claire Noel received her baptism in the name of the Son and the of Holy Spirit. She was sealed with the precious Spirit of God which will awaken, enliven, and

illuminate the very gift of faith he gave her that evening. What a good and gracious God we love-- who comes to us in our naivete; who gifts us with all that we'll ever need to love him and live with him in peace. It is ALL gift-- from an awesome, overwhelmingly loving and passionate God! As I kissed her in peace, Claire grasped my finger and giggled. My heart celebrated, with God and with all the host of heaven, that we have a new little sister in Christ.

We are taught that baptism is one of those liminal, doorway moments of transition and transformation where God's Spirit moves and works to bring metanoia. This, then, was a liminal moment for Claire Noel and her family. I didn't realize, however, that it was also a liminal moment for me. Was it the "rite of passage"-- my first baptism? Was it because I was an instrument for her liminal moment? I don't know. But, I have the sense that wherever that Water/Word splashes, it touches all who are witness to it. God blessed this child, her family, the congregation, and lo and behold, he blessed the "minister" too! It was a conversion experience-- about my 753rd, and Claire's first. It was humbling to participate in the mystery-- my trembling human hand bringing the Eternal Water/Word to a tiny human head. I was changed forever, once again.

God's Spirit has been working overtime to teach me trust. I'm not always a willing or able student. But now I have an example to look to. As I have struggled, countless times, to trust, to let go-- I've remembered Claire's trusting eyes and have recalled God's joyous laughter. Her eyes are helping me to turn my eyes in trust toward the God whose love has been spoken in an irrevocable Word. God has an affinity for delivering life changing messages by way of an infant. Add to the list of wonders that Claire Noel, barely across the threshold of grace, performed her first act of Christian ministry. Thanks be to a good and gracious God!

Giver of Gifts,

My hands cannot hold all the blessings  
that the rain of your Spring showers down.

And so, they grace me with their touch,  
flowing through my open hands  
bringing joy and refreshment  
to parched, barren lives.

I am drenched from head to toe  
 in the deluge of your love---  
 the innumerable gift-filled drops  
 come fast and furious—a never-ending flow.

Hear my laughter and joy as I splash and play  
 in the outpouring of your grace---  
 a caring touch, a loving friend,  
 grief shared, consolation given,  
 a Voice calling to adventures unknown,  
 strength and purpose,  
 help and guidance,  
 the ability to walk despite  
 fear and brokenness,  
 a Son, a Savior, a Friend.

Thanks be to you--Giver of Gifts,  
 You who are all goodness and grace---  
 generosity personified . . . .  
 and my hands cannot hold all the blessings  
 that the rain of your Spring showers down.

*Eileen Sudbrink Felder is a second year student from the Delaware/Maryland Synod.*



## A Pauper's Funeral

By Dr. Susan H. Hedahl

John Johnson. Somehow it seemed the Scandinavian equivalent of John Doe.

"Will you come over?" asked the funeral director. "I'd like the man to have a Christian burial."

I hung up the phone with a sigh. It had been that kind of winter: end-of-winter depression for pastor and parishioners. Short-tempered everybody. Crabby me. Endless hospital calls and still the calling never done. There had been no deaths until this month: now in sixteen days there had been four funerals and this was the fifth.

Reality had narrowed to an ending round of cake and hot dishes and the heavy smell of too many flowers confined to small places. I finally promised myself a steak dinner at Charlie's. One parishioner, with pastoral instincts of the best kind, said, "Pastor, I think you should just not bother with a different meditation for each funeral. Use the same one several times."

John Johnson. He lived across the alley in the nursing home. Alone, indescribably, incredibly, mysteriously alone. "There isn't anyone else that called," said the funeral director. "You'll be the only one there."

And so it was. The driving sleet and March wind rapidly turned the cloth-covered casket stained and gray. The two grave-diggers watched soberly at a distance. I quickly read the service before the rain totally wrinkled and distorted the pages of the hymnal. The new LBW I held seemed very old. I had used the Service for the Burial of the Dead more often than the Communion liturgy.

"And let light perpetual shine upon him/her" said the hymnal . . .

I concluded the service. Who was John Johnson? I'd never even seen his face. As I walked towards the car a line from John Crowe Ranson slipped into my thoughts, "He had been translated far beyond the daughters of men." I grappled with that translation as I heard the scrape and slide of ropes on wood while the casket was lowered into the ground.

That evening, at a clan-gathering to celebrate the birthday of the twins, our gathering grew hilarious with lasagna and merry children and wine and conversation. The puzzle of John Johnson played a silent counterpoint against the drift of the party.

My mother sought me out during a quiet moment after the meal. "Diane told me about the funeral today of the old man named John Johnson." She stopped as her eyes filled with tears. "Sue, if you would have called me, I would have come to his funeral."

Again the line from the LBW seared through me: "and light perpetual shine upon him/her." This time the words did not whisper but echoed lambently, forever.

*Dr. Susan Hedahl is an Associate Professor of Homiletics at LITG.*

*Table Talk* Talks: I spotted an advertisement in *Partners*, September/October 1995 on page 25; Dr. Hedahl has written the Epiphany volume for the *Proclamation 6, Series A*, commentary. --Editor

## Keith's Arrival

By Robert G. Argot

June 16, 1995

Dear Keith,

It has now been nearly two weeks since you came into my life. There was so much excitement when you arrived, that I cannot remember my exact feelings at that moment. I do know that they were very intense, but as society sometimes dictates, a man cannot show his emotions. I do know that I was doing a lot of walking at the hospital, waiting to see you, even though I knew you would be unable to say anything to me. I must admit, when I first did see you, you didn't look that great. Of course, you look a lot better now, since the nurses have washed you.

I remember how tense your mother was about the whole event. She is doing much better now, but I don't know if the reality of the situation has hit her yet. You are her baby (now don't blush at that), and she loves you very much, but this is something she has never experienced before, so be patient with her.

I suppose you may instinctively know, that when you arrived, it was uncertain whether or not you would live. Because of that, I baptized you a couple days after you arrived. You are the first whom I have baptized, and although I am honored to have baptized you, I wish it could have been at a better time. I would liked it to have been at church, with all of your family present, rather than at the hospital, with only a few close family members there. But life brings about strange situations, and so you have been baptized in a time of uncertainty, rather than celebration.

Since I am the one who baptized you, I feel even closer to you now than when you first arrived. I guess it could be said that we are now brothers, although I admit that really sounds strange. It is the truth though; your baptism brings you into the family of God, and so we are brothers in Christ. It is mainly due to this spiritual relationship, that I promise to assist you in your faith journey. I hope to help you mature in your faith, and to be available when you have questions and doubts.

But then again, I have my own questions and doubts. I think that most of them always existed inside of myself, but your arrival has brought them out into the open. Perhaps the biggest question is, "WHY?"

Why did you have to be in a car accident?

Why weren't you wearing a seat belt?

Why was I the one to be the on-call chaplain who talked with your parents and other relatives?

Why do you have to be there, lying unconscious, unable to speak, and at the age of 23 have such an uncertain future?

Why does your family have to experience such pain in their lives?

Why are you the one hooked up to all the monitors, and yet I am the one who feels so helpless?

Keith, I wish I could have met you under different circumstances. I wish you would wake up, and be healed, and be my friend. We are now brothers in Christ, and I will always treat you as such. I pray for you, hold your hand, and talk to you. I want you to be able to talk back, and to tell me about yourself. I want to learn about my new brother from my new brother. You are my brother, and I pray that I can be yours too.

Happy Birthday Keith.

With love, your brother, Rob.

*Robert G. Argot, Jr. is a second year student from the Lower Susquehanna Synod.*

## A Mexican Experience

By Gwenn Trout

Four days after beginning my internship at Gloria Dei Lutheran in Sacramento, CA, I found myself among the caravan of 7 adults and 14 youth aged 15--22 for a mission trip to Tijuana, Mexico. We would spend the week building houses for Habitat for Humanity.

After two day's travel, we arrived in Southern California. Our contact person met us in San Diego to help us purchase our required Mexican car insurance and help us across the border. After playing with the children at a Mexican orphanage and visiting the home of an elderly Mexican woman who tutors children who cannot make it to school, we arrived at the Habitat compound outside Tijuana in time for dinner.

Our accommodations were primitive at best---outhouses, plank bunks three-high, and solar showers (we learned you can take a shower with 2-1/2 gallons of water!). We ate at picnic tables on the porch (cereal for breakfast, sandwiches at noontime, dinner by Mexican families), and we could drink bottled water--even to brush our teeth!

We arose each morning at 6:30, dressed and did our chores, left for the worksite at 8:30. We worked from 9:00 to 12:00, broke for siesta, and returned back to work from 2:00 to 4:00. We came home, took warm showers, and relaxed before dinner. After dinner we had bible study and campfire, and lights out by 10:30. It was 85-90 degrees each day, without a trace of clouds (it only rains in Mexico in January) but with a cool ocean breeze at times.

During our week, Habitat had three house projects and one community project going on, each in varying stages of completeness. I helped build (roof) tresses the first two days, then helped put tar paper, chicken wire, and stucco on the outside walls of a house. At another site, our group dug the foundation and later laid the concrete for a new home. Neither home was larger than a two-car garage.

Our maestro (master teacher) was Don Nacho, assisted by his son Nacho. Don Nacho is 72 years old, but worked harder than any of us! We had no interpreter, and Don Nacho speaks no English. Several of us put our high school Spanish to use, and somehow we figured out what he wanted us to do. He even had a *sense* of humor! The woman whose house we were building, Giselle, worked along with us until she broke her ankle.(The home owners are required to put 750 hours of sweat labor into building their homes.)

For lunch on Wednesday we went to a street market, had tacos and other local fare, and bought a few trinkets. Wednesday evening we went to El Centro--the downtown tourist center of Tijuana. Our group bought Mexican blankets, silver jewelry, chess souvenirs. The shop keepers love to haggle prices, and it was fun to see who got the best deals!

As we cleaned up, packed and headed north on Friday afternoon, we felt a mix of emotions. We had worked so hard, yet realized we had made such a small dent, even in those houses we had helped build. There is so much more that needs to be done.

As we drove into California we were struck by the sharp contrast from what we had witnessed in Mexico. In only 25 miles the terrain changed from brown and dusty to green and lush. Houses were no longer shacks but mansions with swimming pools and two-car garages. Roads were paved (very few are in Tijuana). Every house had running water. Streets were well marked. Not so in T.J.

What was most remarkable was the friendliness of the people. Even though they are struggling to eke out a meager existence in this dusty, dirty, poor, government-corrupted country, they were warm and friendly to us "gringos". We worked side by side, and they were grateful that we were willing to leave our plush lives to help make theirs a little easier.

It was my choice to go on this trip, but I know I will be forever changed by this experience. We came home with cuts and bruises, dirt under our fingernails, cement in our pores, dust on our sneakers, and sunburned, too. But we also came home with a new understanding and appreciation for the riches God has given us. For the first time in my life, I truly felt a sense of servanthood, and it forced me to reexamine my need/desire for "things".

I urge you to get involved in Habitat for Humanity projects or similar adventures in Gettysburg and elsewhere. Habitat is not a Christian organization, but certainly operates with Christian attitudes. The work is hard, but oh, so worthwhile! I'm sure you won't regret it!

*Gwenn Trout is on internship and is from the Lower Susquehanna Synod.*

**Table Talk Talks:** (From Stephen Fiechter) "Building houses for God's people in need," Habitat for Humanity is an interfaith Christian-based organization out of Americus, Georgia. The seminary community is a covenant partner with Adam's County Habitat for Humanity, which is currently building a triplex home on Fairfield Road. We have been asked to provide workers on Sat. 12/9/95 (8 AM to noon). Lend a hand if you can!

Lutheran Theological Seminary Gettysburg  
Minutes of Student Association

I. The meeting of the Student Association Council was called to order at 1:04 pm on 18 October 1995 by the SA president, John Brock.

John Bromhal opened us in prayer.

Members present: John Brock, Elsa Clark, Karen Erskine, Jason Sigmon, Nate Motz, Lynette Nelson, Wendy Abrahamson, Doug DeStephano, John Bromhal, Mary Peterhaensel, Rob Argot, Christina Abrahamson, Rebecca Davis, Marjorie Mustafa, Sharon Vak, Wendi Gordon, Rose Ann Campise, Dianna Wentz, T. Hall

II. Minutes of the last meeting approved as read.  
(DeStephano/Bromhal)

III. Treasurer's Report: The treasurer's report was distributed among council members. The report was approved as read. (See attached report) (Davis/C. Abrahamson)

IV. Diaconal report from Dianna Wentz- Dianna spoke on behalf of the seminary requesting SA sponsorship for a diaconal event on Tuesday, December 5. The sponsorship includes promoting and supporting the December 5 informational meeting that informs the community about what diaconal ministry is. Motion made and carried. (Clark/Motz)

V. Old Business:

A. Pet Committee: Elsa Clark was nominated by Doug DeStephano for Pet Committee chairperson. Elsa declined the nomination. Marsha Adams was nominated for Pet Committee contingent upon her acceptance. (Motz/Argot) (Note: Marsha declined the nomination but agreed to serve on the committee.)

VI. Reports

A. Social Action Division: (Chairperson Christina Abrahamson) The Division is looking for committee members to serve and asks that SA members encourage people to sign up. The Division also requests that events having to do with Social Action be brought to the chairperson. There will also be a Social Action bulletin board posted at a later date.

B. Fellowship Division: (Chairperson Doug DeStephano) There is a Halloween Party planned for October 27 on the 4th floor of Valentine set to start at 9:00 pm. The Division is still looking for someone to organize the party for the children.

C. Athletic Division: (Chairperson Rob Argot)  
There are three football games planned: November 4 (H) Trinity, Southern; November 11 (H) Philadelphia (?); and November 18 (A) V.T.S.

There is a volleyball game planned for Tuesday, November 7 from 7:00-10:00 pm.

There is a Frisbie Golf event scheduled for Saturday, May 4 in the early afternoon. There may be a community event with food following the game.

D. Junior Class: (President Nate Motz) Friday Night Fellowship is planned for adults each Friday night. There will be dancing, games, and fellowship.

E. Budget: (Treasurer Sharon Vak) The budget was distributed and there was a brief discussion. The budget was approved. (Gordon/W. Abrahamson)

F. The Junior Class submitted a written report. (see attached report)

#### VII. New Business

A. Change machine: (SA President John Brock) There is a proposal to purchase a change machine with SA paying half the cost (\$550.00) and the seminary paying the other half. SA would also be responsible for some maintenance costs as they arise. There was discussion about the benefits and drawbacks of the proposal. A task force committee (DeStephano and W. Abrahamson) was set up to get more details and to report back to SA at the next meeting.

B. Student Health Insurance Representative: (Tiffany Hall) The representative requested that the SA council pay for airfare to the December 8th Health Insurance meeting. The seminary will cover additional expenses for this meeting. (C. Abrahamson/Argot) The council approved the request.

Future SA council meeting dates: November 15, December 6, January 17, February 21, March 20, April 17, and May 8.

VIII. The meeting was adjourned at 1:56 pm. (W. Abrahamson/Motz)

Respectfully submitted,



Tiffany A. Hall  
SA Recording Secretary

This report is unofficial and awaiting approval.



## STUDENT ASSOCIATION

President John Brock  
Recording Secretary Tiffany Hall  
Corresponding Secretary Ann Dentry  
Treasurer Sharon Vak

## STUDENT ASSOCIATION COUNCIL

	JUNIORS	MIDDLERS	SENIORS
Pres	Nate Motz	Jill Wszelaki	John Bromhal
Sec/Treas	Lynette Nelson	Tom Teichmann	Doug DeStephano
Trustees	Christina Abrahamson	Rob Argot	Elsa Clark
	Marsha Adams	Ruth Rinker	Donald March
	Wendy Abrahamson	Rebecca Davis	Wendi Gordon
	Jason Sigman	Karen Erskine	Stephen Fiechter
	Bill Hughes	Marjorie Mustafa	Mary Peterhansel

## STUDENT-FACULTY RELATIONS COMMITTEE

SA President	John Brock	
JR President	Nate Motz	Chad Huebner
MD President	Jillian Wszelaki	Richard Burgess
SR President	John Bromhal	

## WORSHIP COMMITTEE (2 students/class elected by the class)

JR Kristie Hackbart and Diana Britton  
MD Gretchen Gustman and Stacey Sayko  
SR Stephen Fiechter and Dennis Smith

## STUDENT HOUSING COMMITTEE

### PET POLICY COMMITTEE

(Chairperson appointed at 1st SFRC meeting)  
JR Marsha Adams  
MD  
SR Dennis Smith and Elsa Clark  
Pet Coordinator: Geoffrey Hall

### HONOR BOARD (plus 3-one from each class)

John Brock, Chair  
JR Gail Wolling  
MD John Woods  
SR Scott Olson

### STUDENT CONDUCT BOARD (3-one from each class)

SA President	John Brock, chairperson	
JR President	Nate Motz	JR Jonathan Deibler
MD President	Jillian Wszelaki	MD Tammy Bernd Steinhart
SR President	John Bromhal	SR Mary Peterhaensel

### BY-LAWS (five voting members appointed by SA council)

Doug DeStephano, chair

STUDENT COORDINATORS

Supply Preaching      Tiffany Hall  
Course Evaluations    Beacky Davis  
Coffee Shop Manager   Doug DeStephano

FACULTY COMMITTEE

Academic Policy    Becky Davis and Wendy Abrahamson  
Admission/Scholarship    Christina Abrahamson and Ann Dentry  
Field Education    Lynette Nelson, Angela Ryan  
Library    Lynette Nelson

DIVISION CHAIRS

Athletic    Rob Argot  
Lectures    Jillian Wszelaki and Ruth Rinker  
Publications    Stephen Fiechter  
Fellowship    Doug DeStephano  
Social Action    Christina Abrahamson

FOOD SERVICE COMMITTEE

Chairperson,  
JR Dione Klepetka  
MD  
SR Stephen Fiechter

## Instructions for Submitting Articles to *Table Talk*

*Table Talk* is published September, October, November, December, and February, March, April, May.

Articles should be submitted by the 15th of the prior month.

### **DISKS:**

Please submit a hard copy with your disks. Label your disk with the name of the software program, file name, and hardware (IBM or MAC).

- 1.) Preferred: Any IBM-compatible 3 1/2 or 5 1/2 disk, in WordPerfect.
- 2.) Acceptable: IBM-compatible disk in Microsoft Works, Wordstar, MS DOS.
- 3.) Questionable: Other wordprocessing programs.

### **USING THE STUDENT COMPUTER CENTER:** Library, 2nd floor

1.) Either use the computer closest to the window in the student computer center or copy your file onto that computer. [Computer is IBM-compatible with floppy and hard disk drives.]

2.) Use Microsoft Works 3.0 or DOS WordPerfect 5.1

3.) Save your file as: `c:\table\filename.dec`

*Note: Your file name is limited to 8 characters, do not use spaces, slashes, or periods. The three characters that follow the decimal indicate the month of the Table Talk issue (.dec, .jan, feb, etc.).*

4.) List your file on the *Table Talk* log.

### **HARDCOPY:**

Submit early so it can be typed and proofread.

Questions: Contact Rose Ann Campise 338-9681

## **Augury**

**Nov. 4** Luther Bowl II vs. Trinity & Southern Seminaries  
Home: First Game at 9:00 AM

**Nov. 5** Music Gettysburg! The Baroque Bunch. 7:30 Chapel

**Nov. 6 to 10** Mary Leonard will be with LTSG as Member in Residence.

**Nov. 10** Music Gettysburg! The Cornerstone Chorale & Brass. 7:30 Chapel

**Nov. 15** SA Meeting 1:00 in Valentine 302

**Nov. 18** Luther Bowl II vs. Virginia Theological Seminary  
Away: Virginia

**Nov. 18** Pancake Breakfast (\$4.00) Presbyterian Church 7:00 to 10:00 AM  
Proceeds go to Habitat for Humanity.

**Nov. 18** H. George Anderson will be installed as bishop of the ELCA.  
Michael Creighton will be consecrated as bishop of the  
Central Pennsylvania Diocese of the Episcopal Church.

**Nov. 26** Music Gettysburg! Organ duets w/harpicord & strings. 7:30 Chapel

**Dec. 5** Discussion on Diaconate. Details to follow.

**Dec. 7** Community Blood Drive. Details to follow.

**Dec. 9** Habitat for Humanity 8:00 to noon Fairfield Road

**Dec. 10** Music Gettysburg! Choral Vespers for Advent 7:30 Chapel

**Dec. 17** Music Gettysburg! A Christmas Offering. 7:30 Chapel

**And don't forget Friday Night Fellowships!**

*Submit notices for community events by the 15th of the prior month.*