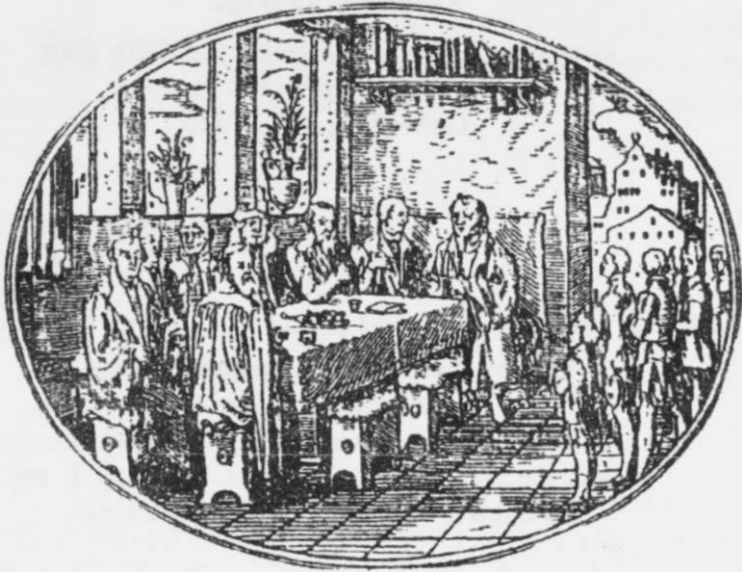


# *Table Talk*

*Volume 33, Number 4*  
*May 1998*



*A Publication of the Student Body*  
*at the Lutheran Theological Seminary*  
*at Gettysburg*

## *Table Talk*

Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg  
61 N. West Confederate Avenue  
Gettysburg, PA 17325

*Table Talk* is published periodically during the academic year by the Student Association of 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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*Contributors: The Students, Staff, and Faculty of*  
*the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg*

And ‘you are off!’ More than likely you are rushing off campus to begin Internship or CPE or to your first Call and are leaving behind the community where you were nourished and where you cared for other seminarians and teachers, where you were challenged and where you encouraged your brothers and sisters in Christ. Well, here is something to take with you, as you “Go out to Serve the Lord,” a little bit of *‘Table Talk;’* thoughts, reflections, poems, from those who had the time and talent to share these with you —

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As you go, keep in mind that our community is not just the seminary community on the ‘glorious hill’ but the community of saints, so we are united with one another whenever we gather around the Lord’s *Table* and *Talk* about the wonderful things that God has done.

“The Peace of the Lord Be with You!”

On behalf of the *Table Talk* Staff  
 Rose Ann Vita, *Associate Editor*

## **Be At Peace**

Be at Peace.

Do not look forward in fear to the changes of life.  
Rather, look to them with full hope that, as they arise,  
God, whose very own you are, will lead you safely through all  
things...

Do not fear what may happen tomorrow.  
The same, everlasting God who cares for you today,  
Will care for you then and every day.  
God will either shield you from suffering,  
Or give you unfailing strength to bear suffering.  
So be at peace and put aside all anxious thoughts and imaginings.

-St. Francis de Sales

## **A Blessing Prayer**

May the Son of God,  
who is already formed in you,  
grow in you so that for you  
He will become immeasurable,  
and that in you He will become  
laughter,  
exultation,  
the fullness of joy,  
which no one will take from you.

Isaac of Stella, 1169

## Peace, Shalom, Salaam

At a Global Mission Event this semester the often violent and devastating impact on countries that results from international arms sales, especially those conducted by the U.S., were detailed and discussed. Following the event, the Student Association (SA) at one of its meetings discussed and debated what, if any, our student body's position should be on such peace issues as limiting international arms sales, banning the production and use of land mines, and global disarmament. The SA further discussed what voice this student body should use in expressing those positions, if they can be agreed to. Unfortunately, the SA was unable to come to any final opinion on the matter before the meeting ended. It will be up to next year's SA to decide whether or not it wants to take up such peace related issues again. The SA will have to decide if it wants to make engaging this seminary community on these issues a priority for the Social Action and Lectures Divisions next year. I earnestly hope and pray that they do.

In the meantime, we still live in a world where peace can be as elusive as our dreams are upon our waking. In January, I was one of over 20 members of this seminary community that traveled to Israel and the Occupied Territories of the West Bank as part of a J-term course. One can not go to such a place, a place where armed Israeli soldiers and Palestinian National Police walk the streets and patrol border checkpoints, without pondering the devastating impacts that the lack of peace has brought to that corner of the world and all its people. At the end of one long day during which our bus traveled over many kilometers of poorly paved roads through shattered West Bank villages, I made the following entry in my journal:

*As we were driving down a road in the West Bank I saw a dilapidated shack, I wouldn't even call it a house, by the roadside. The land around it was unkempt and the trees all looked dead. It typified for me the plight of the West Bank. As we passed I saw a girl of about 4 or 5 swinging on a swing in one of the trees behind the "house". She was smiling and having fun like any little girl on a swing - even like my 5 year old daughter back home. The scene brought tears to my eyes even as it does now writing about it. Here was an innocent child of God, having fun amidst the desolation of a home, a neighborhood, and a land that offers little hope for her future. This child who could have been of any race, any nation, any religion. If we could all for just one moment behold such a child, we, all of us, Jew, Christian, Muslim, would treat each other with the kind of love and respect that would make this creation almost as peaceful and harmonious as our One God intended it to be. Even if it was for just one moment. Shalom.*

May the Shalom and Salaam of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

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*Mark Olsen is a first year student from the Metropolitan DC Synod*

## The Challenge

I'm never who I really think,  
Sometimes I curse, sometimes I drink.  
I am not proud to say these things  
but as I write — my soul, it sings.  
It's words, do echo in my head.  
They challenge me and make me dread;  
the person that I really am  
is not whom others see.

I'm seldom who I want to be;  
I often fail at charity.  
I miss the chance to do some good  
the way I think, I know — I should.  
I walk away from where I'm lead.  
One of many, I turn my head.  
The person that I really am  
may BE whom others see.

I'll change the way I live my life.  
I tell myself — amid this strife.  
It's difficult to pass this test  
Deny myself and help the rest.  
I know that I can be the one  
who with the help of God's own Son,  
I'll change to who I really am  
a child of God, that's me!

---

*Robert Way is a first year student from the Allegheny Synod.*

**What a holy and blessed year it has been,** here in this place, here at this seminary! It was with great fear and trepidation that I left my home and family in RI on August 14th. Intro to Greek loomed large and overwhelming. I was riddled with concerns for how my family would ever "survive without me". I saw myself as the "glue that held them all together." How would they ever be taken care of without me?! Was it "right" for me as wife and mother to leave them to complete the requirement of this Lutheran year? It all seemed so ludicrous, so impossible. Yet, at the same time, step by step, one door after another opened and the way was paved for me to live and study in Gettysburg, PA at LTSG for nine months. An what a nine months it has been! Immersion in the "Lutheran ethos" has truly been a grace filled experience! And an experience of coming face to face with my personal sinfulness and the demons that live within me. Through it all, God has sent amazing people to care, help, support and guide. Professors have provided sound theological education and have always been willing to lend an ear. The business office and the admissions office have answered every single one of the four thousand questions that I had. And I have lived, and learned, laughed and cried, and loved with many cherished friends whom I know I will stay in touch with throughout my ministry. Prior to coming to this seminary God *graced* me with the gift of a verse from Romans: "*And we know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.*" (Romans 8:28.) This verse has sustained me as I labored to make the break from my home and family back in August. And now, at this time in May, I am filled to overflowing with a deep sense of God's abiding care and presence. All has indeed worked together for good in my Lutheran year experience. My family has thrived and become more independent in my absence. My relationship with my husband has deepened. My theological education has been rounded out to include classes that will help me to serve the people and the ELCA well. And the most amazing thing is that all of this has come from an experience that was very challenging and often very difficult. I suppose I need not be surprised. After all - it is the Easter season - the time of new life and abundant blessings and joy that comes through the grace of the risen Jesus. Many sincere thanks to all of you here - faculty, administration and students for your love and support this year. You will all always hold a very special place in my heart and you are all in my prayers as you continue your journey with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

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*Elaine Morin is an STM student from the New England Synod*



## Life is change

Life is change,  
It is not stagnant.  
So like opposite poles  
    of a magnet,  
Let's come together,  
Become one,  
Finding our strength  
    thru the Cross of the Son.  
And like similar poles,  
Let's push out,  
Sharing the Good News  
    of what Christ is all about.  
Life you see —  
    is juxtaposed.  
Christ not only died for us,  
But He also rose!  
We're drawn together  
    to be one,  
Yet each sent forth  
    to proclaim the Son.  
Yes, life is change,  
It is not stagnant,  
And we as Christians  
Are like a magnet.

5/05/98

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*Don Costlow is a second year student from the Allegheny Synod*

## Whom Shall I Send?

A sermon on the Sixth Chapter of Isaiah delivered at St. James, Brogue, February 8, 1998.  
Revised for the Seminary Community at Gettysburg for publication in *Table Talk*.

*"In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the LORD sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory." The door posts on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke. And Isaiah said: "Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my own eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!" Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. The seraph touched my mouth with it and said: "Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out." Then I heard the voice of the LORD saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And Isaiah said, "Here am I; send me!"*

*"Here am I! Send me!"* What was Isaiah thinking?

**[Earth-to-Isaiah, come-in-Isaiah!]** In this world, you just don't volunteer!!! *"Here am I, send me!"* "Send me! . . . send me where!" Isaiah acted as if he had been in a bar drinking too much and lingering too long into the ungodly hours of the night. Isaiah acted like someone who proposes marriage the same night that he meets "the little angel of his dreams"—the wonder sent from God who touches his lips with heat and makes him feel good, real good . . . no longer guilty, no longer lost. Suddenly Isaiah becomes a new man, a man whose shortcomings are overlooked, a man with loose lips blurring out: "Here am I!" "Send me! Send me! Send me!"

**[Earth-to-Isaiah, come-in-Isaiah!]** But it was too late, Isaiah had imbibed a little too much spirit, inhaled a little too much holy smoke, heard a few too many hosannah choruses. Now Isaiah was seeing UFO's and hearing voices. What Isaiah heard the LORD utter was utter non-sense!

*"Go and say to this people: 'Keep listening, but do not comprehend; keep looking, but do not understand.' Make the mind of this people dull, and stop their ears, and shut their eyes, so that they may not look with their eyes, and listen with their ears, and comprehend with their minds, and turn and be healed."*

What was the LORD saying! Speak and speak until *this* people become so numb, they no longer listen? Nag and nag and nag until they turn a deaf ear? Show them again and again and again until they shut their eyes tight, and in a tantrum turn away. Pester them until they shout back, "W-c-c-a-n't h-e-a-r y-o-u!" The utter non-sense of it snapped Isaiah back to his senses. He cried out:

**[Earth-to-God]** "How long, O LORD?" How long? I'll tell you how long, says the LORD: "Until cities lie waste without inhabitant, and houses without people, and the land is utterly desolate; until the LORD sends everyone far away, and vast is the emptiness in the midst of the land. Even if a tenth part remain in it, it will be burned again, like a terebinth or an oak whose stump remains standing when it is felled." *The holy seed is its stump.*

Utter non-sense! Did you hear what the LORD told Isaiah? Keep speaking to dull minds, to plug ears, to shut eyes. The halitosis that the LORD commissioned Isaiah was so severe that when Isaiah spoke people turned away and could no longer turn back. And the LORD responded that the prophet's bad breath would continue until all hope for communication would vanish, and life would become unbearably barren and desolate, and nothing would remain but a vast void of deafening silence. *This* people would become senseless—deaf, dumb, and blind.

Hold on! It gets worse! Loosed-lipped Isaiah had not only volunteered to launch a halitosis attack but also an arteriosclerosis attack! Literally, Isaiah volunteered to "to make their hearts fat"—to harden their arteries. The LORD said, "Whom shall I send to harden their hearts?" — and loosed-lipped Isaiah says, "*Here am I! Send me!*"

The truth of the matter is that *this* people did not need God to send Isaiah to saturate their arteries with grease; they were doing a pretty good job of it themselves, gorging on a high cholesterol diet. They were living high-on-the-hog — so to speak. The people living in Israel in the year that King Uzziah died were PIGS! — wallowing in their self-centered, self-righteous, self-indulgent selves. They did not need God!

Why, it is written in the fifth chapter of Isaiah, that he rails against *this* people's ingratitude, injustice, and indulgence. Why, *this* people lived in a land where the LORD planted good vines and expected in return a harvestful of sweet fruit, and they handed back to the LORD a mere handful of sour grapes. Why, *this* people lived in a land where survival was dependent on farming, yet *this* people mercilessly confiscated farmland from the poor farmers who could not repay their land loans — like gluttons, *this* people engulfed their next-door-neighbors' means of survival.

And *this* people drank far too much! They rose early in the morning to drink, and drank until they were drunk. Swaying in their drunken stupor, *this* people covered their weakness with pride and obnoxiously asserted that they had no problem with drinking. They had everything under control; they were masters of their own destiny delighting in the achievements of their own hands, placing their trust in their city erections, showing off their power and prosperity. *This* people did not need Isaiah to harden their hearts — by their own greed and gluttony they had larded their own innards and fattened their own hearts. These self-centered, swine-hearts had no need of God. It was to these pig-headed people, that loosed-lipped Isaiah volunteered to go. Send me to the hard-hearted, to the hard-headed, to the hogs! Send me to the stubborn, to the proud and arrogant!

And to Isaiah the LORD said, Go! . . . talk and talk; and talk and talk to these thick-heads. Go ahead! But the more you talk, the less they will listen. Go! Your going will cause them to turn even more to their own way, until they are destroyed. Like a self-possessed herd, they will rush toward the edge of the cliff and jump. Their porcine pride will propel them to hit bottom and *their* world will be shattered!

What kind of God is this? A God who sends someone to shatter *their* world? Yes! A God who sends someone to shatter *their* world of self-centered pride, self-righteous, self-indulgence — a God who sends someone to shatter *this* people's world. What! The LORD sends Isaiah to harden their hearts so they will hit bottom and all the unholy hollow places of *their* lives will be broken! Yes! "*Their cities will lie waste without habitation, their land will be utterly desolate.*" God sends someone so *their* shallow world will bottom out; . . . so they will hit bottom!

"Hitting bottom" is an Alcoholics Anonymous term. Most alcoholics have constructed *their* own world and in the center of *their* world, they lie in a drunken stupor, 'speaking with unclean lips, living among people of unclean lips' — 'their minds dull.' In their drunken stupor they see and listen but they do not comprehend the vast emptiness of their high — for they have stopped their ears and shut their eyes and have become deaf, dumb, and blind to their dependence on alcohol to fill their emptiness. It is only when they hit bottom and "*vast emptiness [is] in the midst of the land*" that they see they are addicted to alcohol. Sometimes it takes hitting bottom to open one's eyes!

As one speaker at an AA meeting said: "I really didn't believe I was an alcoholic. Some of my friends and my spouse said they were worried about my drinking, and they thought I had a problem; but I didn't believe it.

I was doing well at work. I didn't drink in the morning. Sure I drank a lot, but I wasn't an alcoholic. I liked to drink, and I thought that drinking helped me relax and unwind; there was always pressure in my job."

By God's grace, when an alcoholic hits bottom, they find AA. The loss of *their* world restores their sight: they see they are an alcoholic. The vast emptiness opens their ears: they hear their own cries for help. Like a live coal from the altar, 'tough love' loosens their lips and they cry out:

*"Woe is me! I am lost, for I am of unclean lips,  
and I live among people of unclean lips;  
— yet my own eyes have seen the LORD of hosts!"*

*♪ Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me;  
I once was lost, but now am found, was blind but now I see. ♪♪*

By God's grace, their sight is restored, their ears opened, their tongues are set free to confess their powerlessness over alcohol and their belief in a Power greater than themselves — the One we call "Holy, Holy, Holy!" — who will restore them to sanity.

Well, are we any different? Maybe our addiction isn't alcohol (maybe it is) but we, like they, swagger through life with our eyes bloodshot, half-shut; we imbibe in pride; we drink to excess and drive through life intoxicated with self-importance. And we hard-heartedly deny it! "We are fine, just fine." "We don't have a problem. . . . we are doing all right on our own — thank you!"

Just like our ancestors we give God sour grapes, live off the misfortune of the poorer countries, and rise early in the morning to dull our minds with consumerism. And just like our ancestors, God sends us prophets and professors, seraphs and seminarians, foul-breathe friends and family — but we-know-it-all refuse to listen. In a tantrum, we turn away, with our eyes and ears shut, and grunt "Go away!". . . "w-e c-a-n't h-e-a-r y-o-u!" Pompous as pigs knee-deep in mud, we snort: "We are infallible, incorrigible, indispensable! We are indestructible!"

Just like an alcoholic, *our* porcine pride keeps us in utter senseless denial, until the one day when *our* "cities lie waste without inhabitant, and houses [are] without people, and the land is utterly desolate" — the one day when "the LORD sends everyone away, and vast emptiness is in the midst of the land" — until the one day when we hit bottom! We may need to hit rock bottom and lie flat on our fat back, pork belly-up, to be able to see that *our* porcine priorities are upside down and need to be turned around. The day *our* world becomes empty is the day we see the world is filled with God's glory — not *ours*.

Thank God, God sends someone to proclaim a radical 'bottoms up!'

**Hold on! It gets better!** Isaiah heard God saying, "*Whom shall I send?*" --to bring good news to the oppressed? --to bind up the broken hearted? --to proclaim liberty to the captives? --and release to the prisoners? Who will be the emissary to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor — the year of the radical bottoms up! (Isaiah 61) *Whom shall I send? . . .*

We see God's emission in the seventh chapter of Isaiah:  
*"Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son,  
and shall name him Immanuel."*

**[God-to-earth. God-to-earth-come-in!]** Mission Immanuel: God comes to earth! God comes into *our* world! Why! Ultimately it is God who blurts out: "*Here am I! Send me!*" It is God who comes to restore us to our senses — to restore our sight, enable us to hear, free us to speak. Godself comes into our lives to declare a radical bottoms up!

*"Here am I!"* God lays waste cities-without-inhabitants, lays waste houses-without-people, lays waste land-with-out-life. God fills the vast emptiness with God's glory — God's presence! "*Here am I!*"

*"When Jesus came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll to the place where it was written: 'The Spirit of the LORD is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor.' And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them. 'Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.' "* (Luke 4:16-21)

*"Whom shall I send?"* I shall send myself, says the LORD, our God.

*Holy! Holy! Holy! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.*

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*Rose Ann Vita is a senior assigned to the Metro New York Synod*

## You Can't But God Can!

Throughout my seminary experience I have enjoyed reading the articles and insights provided in *Table Talk*, our campus literary forum. The insights which I have gleaned have proven helpful many times in my ministry and the reflections have been very helpful. I have, however, been reluctant to provide an article up to now thinking, who am I to write, and who would care what I have to say? I apologize for my silence.

I was recently to share a bit about the ministry which my wife and I started some three years ago, "Shepherd's Staff Pastoral Services". Given the nature of my shyness I have wrestled with the idea of writing for fear of "tooting my own horn." In prayer about this issue, I have decided that it isn't completely my own horn to toot as this is God's work, God's ministry, and God's provision, simply using me along the way.

Let me begin by saying that the typical 4-year seminary experience is the norm here at Gettysburg but sometimes it works differently. In my case, however, it was more like a 10-year experience. Regardless, it has been a journey of sorts, from day one.

At first, it appeared that I was going to be one of the "4-years and gone" crowd. I spent my first two years on campus, then went on internship, where things "started to unravel" as I failed. I'll spare you the details but let me just say, some of the reasons were my fault, some was the supervisor's and some was the internship committees fault. I went on leave to try to sort it all out and also to grieve the loss of a family member. For four years, I did a number of things: managed a men's clothing store, held a supervisor position in markets for Sam's Club.

As I healed, I attended a local Lutheran church where I began to become more active. I still felt "Called" to ministry and sensing this call, through my congregation I contacted the area nursing home ( a non-profit) who warmly welcomed the my interest and my congregation's desire to minister in some way to the residents. Through my congregation and the support of my pastor, I led worship service at the facility on an occasional basis and over time, it became more frequent. Area congregations had ministered to this facility but over time their support dropped and there was very little consistency in pastoral care or worship services.

The board of directors became aware of our ministry to the residents and asked me if I might be able to render more worship opportunities and pastoral care to their facility. I gladly obliged. This again pleased the board

and with time I was asked if I might consider researching ministry to Older People and people and their families who live with Alzheimer's Disease. Their interest was the feasibility of providing full-time pastoral care to the resident's of the facility. The board also desired that during this time I should receive \$50 dollars a week as I performed this work. At this point, I happened to be unemployed so I had plenty of time to investigate the board's request.

Through this time, I continued to minister through my home congregation and my pastor. As I researched this field and performed a "hands on" ministry, I became aware of many aging related issues. I also discovered that the residents were only receiving Holy Communion twice a year- with the exception of private communion with their pastor. My pastor gladly consecrated Holy Communion and I distributed the sacrament at one of the Sunday worship services. This was such a moving and powerful experience! One man- a retired pastor with Alzheimer's received Holy Communion by intinction and suddenly had a moment of clarity where he said, "Amen!" and then slumped back into his mysterious world! There were times when I knew that I was standing on holy ground, in God's presence with his people.

When I had completed my research, I presented my report to the board of directors. The next day I returned to Western Pennsylvania where I met with my endorsement committee for re-endorsement. Sadly, my committee did not sense that I had a Call for ministry and stated very clearly that the doors were closed for me to ever serve in the ELCA. Was I mad? No way! I felt more baffled than anything but I kept praying, "God, if you haven't called me to ordained ministry in the Church, either leave me alone or stop providing opportunities where I minister!" Since this particular door was closed, I figured that God would lead me into some other direction.

When I returned from Western Pa., there was a message from the president of the Board. He had called a special meeting based upon my report and the Board, including the residents and staff, wanted me to serve full-time as their Chaplain. Of course, when I returned his call, I listed numerous reasons why I could not: I'm not ordained, I'm not even a seminarian, I haven't had more than 1 unit of CPE, etc.. "Just minister to us, and everything will fall in line." I conceded and my salary jumped from \$50. a week to \$25K per year with benefits! With in a month, I had applied for candidacy with the American Association of Lutheran Churches and I was soon granted licensure as a licensed lay pastor, and had even been accepted back into seminary. Shortly thereafter, Dr. Avery was able to set up an



internship with Rev. Paul Derrickson at Hershey Hospital for a two-year internship. In this arrangement, he agreed to oversee my ministry at the very facility that had called me. Also, this arrangement allowed me to take classes at the seminary.

The chaplaincy ministry steadily progressed as did the Board of Directors desire to acquire more facilities. They were involved with a total of six different facilities in three states and based upon the success of the pastoral care program at my facility, they invited me to assist them in the hiring and training process of chaplains for their other facilities. Yet once again I responded, "Who am I? I'm not even ordained! I don't have years of experience in this field much less experience in overseeing other ministers!" But once again, they assured me, "Don't worry, we have confidence in this program... it'll work!" And it did.

After working with this Board for a total of four years, I was recommended to a new non-profit in Texas who desired to break into the nursing home industry. My wife, Arden and I were able to "sell" them on the idea of chaplaincy in their facilities and on the value of the Shepherd's Staff program. Two years prior, we had formed this non-profit but aside from occasional consulting, it was just an idea. If we landed the contract with the Board, it meant that Shepherd's Staff might take wings. At the board meeting, the board not only wanted our chaplaincy program, they wanted a five-year contract for their current facilities and all of their subsequent purchases. Amazing!

In addition to the work I've done in Pa., NJ, and Md., we now have eight chaplains located in facilities in Texas. At our first training in San Antonio, we were even blessed to have my favorite Christian author, Max Lucado participate! As Shepherd's Staff continues to grow, I am preparing for our next training this June in San Antonio. This time we will train 24 chaplains for full-time ministry in nursing homes, retirement communities, and Alzheimer's units. Our ministry is quadrupling in size!

Like quick facts? Check this out: Each facility has approximately 100 residents, 100 staff, at least 100 family members- I consider this a congregation of 300!

Currently our chaplains are providing ministry in Texas alone to 2400 people, 7-days a week with 24-hour a day availability. After our next training, we will be providing pastoral care to some 9600 people in 7 states.

Each of these segments of people have very special needs and our chaplains specialize in this form of ministry to their needs. Our residents are receiving Holy Communion at least twice/month plus special days. They

have opportunities for at least 30 religious activities each month. Their families have unlimited access to pastoral support plus support groups. Also, the chaplain ministers to the staff on a daily basis.

Also, the chaplain actively works with area pastors and congregations and fosters further understanding on aging issues and God's presence among the aged.

Shepherd's Staff Pastoral Services recruits, trains, places, and oversees pastoral services in nursing homes, retirement communities, and Alzheimer's units. We are gender, age, race, and denominationally inclusive and our diversity is one of our greatest strengths. Our chaplain's starting package is between \$35-42K.

As I look at our growth, I am consciously aware of God's leading and his provision of great people who have influenced this ministry- Gettysburg students and professors. For example- Dr. Oldenburg's lectures on worship, Dr. Waldkoenig on understanding your people, Dr. Avery for my internship experience, Dr. Balas- pastoral care, Dr. Gustafson-theology of ministry, Dr. Larson on the Holy Spirit, Dr. Enquist on ethics, Dr. Hendrix- helping me to understand the background of denominations. The list goes on and on. My chaplains, staff, residents, and their families thank you as well.

Thank you, one and all for welcoming back a Prodigal, but now it's time for graduation and ordination. I guess the saying has proven true, "Where God closes a door, he opens a window!"

Enjoy the breeze.

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*David Peterson is a fourth year student from the AALC and will be ordained a pastor on June 17, 1998.*

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*(Continued from page 17) Joshua Way, son of Robert and Pamela Way, won local and regional competitions in the Youth Essay Award Competition sponsored by the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars. The essay has been entered at the state level and Josh is anxiously awaiting the decision of the judges later in May. Robert Way is a first year student from the Allegheny Synod.*

**On a stuffy summer day in Philadelphia**, a group of men gathered to change the course of history. A young man named Thomas Jefferson had written a declaration. These men, members of the Continental Congress of 1776, had gathered in Independence Hall to sign this declaration. It pointed out problems of British rule and declared this fledgling nation's independence. This was the beginning of American patriotism.

Legendary acts of patriotism are sprinkled throughout American history. Any American can name some: the Boston Tea Party, Patrick Henry's liberty speech, the Civil War. Songs, poems, stories or movies carry at least a respect for patriotism. What is patriotism and do Americans still have it?

Patriotism is defined as love, loyalty and support for one's country. I would like to think of it as respect for everyone and everything that has kept this country going strong for 200 years. Patriotism is also instilling that respect into every American.

By standing for the national anthem and the Pledge of Allegiance we show patriotism. We also show patriotism by respecting our country's heritage and our ancestors who helped form this country. Above all we show patriotism by being proud that we are Americans. It seems like very few kids today want to stand up and say the Pledge of Allegiance. Is that a lack of patriotism? The flag, the "Star Spangled Banner", the Statue of Liberty, and numerous other things are only symbols of patriotism. Real patriotism is held in the heart and mind. Patriotism is our thoughts about our country. Everyone simply has different thoughts. So while kids may not respect the symbols, that doesn't mean that they aren't patriotic.

Sometimes those thoughts of patriotism are fueled by anger. Often those thoughts become actions, and we get to witness true acts of patriotism. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech, the struggling soldiers at Iwo Jima, and the Continental Army's winter stay at Valley Forge are true acts of patriotism. Even though they happened many years ago, these acts still serve a purpose. By reflecting on these events, we feel proud to be an American.

This country was formed by a group of patriots, political activists, more than 200 years ago. As long as the men, women and children in this country respect America and its principles, patriotism will live in the hearts of Americans forever.

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*Joshua Way — See page 16 for biographical information.*

## The Way of the Servant

A Lenten compline meditation on Luke 13:10-17

**To Set the Captives Free!**

She was crippled by a spirit, bent over, unable to stand up straight. And those who saw her in the synagogue said, "It ought to be that way." This is not the way creation was intended. The God of Righteousness did not make imperfect, deformed persons. Who knew, they said, what kind of spirit held her in bondage, bent over for 18 years. The God of Righteousness was a God of perfection and wholeness, and therefore this imperfect, broken, bent over woman was an affront to their God, certainly not welcome within the synagogue on this a day of Sabbath.

It ought not to be that way . . . This woman should not have crossed the threshold of the synagogue with the God-fearing worshipers on the Sabbath day. Bent over, crippled, unable to stand straight, she should have kept herself separate, away from all the faithful. It was shameful for her to be there in their midst. It was an affront to the idea of Sabbath itself, a day set aside for all of Israel to rest from their labor and acknowledge with their worship the God of creation. This was the day when the perfection and wholeness that was God's work was acknowledged.

Bent over, crippled, unable to stand straight, she ought not to be in their midst, such a concrete example of the bondage of the human; a graphic example of creation gone wrong. This daughter of Abraham was not within the circle of the righteous, she was not within the circle of the honored. You could tell by just looking at her, bent over, crippled and unable to stand up straight.

And Jesus ought not to have healed her. That, too, was outrageous. There are six days in a week to cure others, they said, six days when work ought to be done. THIS was the Sabbath! This healing ought not to be done on this day. She would still be bent over, unable to stand straight tomorrow. Come back tomorrow, they would tell her. Your bondage can last another day. THIS is the Sabbath. That was the rule. No cures on the Sabbath.

To the leader of this synagogue, to this religious, observant one, Jesus responded, You are right. It ought not be this way. Every child of Abraham should be free to stand up straight and praise God on this day of all others, on the day of the Sabbath. All of the forgotten, separated ones of society ought to be liberated and praise the God of all creation on this day of the Sabbath. Every child of creation ought to be restored to wholeness, every daughter ought to be allowed to be at rest on this day of the Sabbath. That is how it ought to be . . . This woman whom the Creator loves, ought to be set free . . . for life.

That is the Redeemer's work. To make whole the creation that is bent over, crippled and unable to stand straight. To set free those who are held in bondage by shame. To release those held captive by the rules so they might praise the Ruler of all the Universe.

But who are the crippled ones? Who are the ones bent over, unable to stand up straight? Who are the ones held in bondage, in need of liberation? Who is it that presumes to tell the Ruler of the Universe what ought to be done? Who is it that stands in the synagogue and excludes another child of God? Who is it that presumes to tell the bent over, crippled one that tomorrow is soon enough for her liberation? Who is it that ought to be ashamed in this story?

Christ came that we might be set free, that we might have life and have it abundantly. We are bent over, crippled and unable to stand straight. We have confused the rules with God's saving work of life. Jesus, the Christ came to us because it ought not to be that way. By his touch, we are liberated from our bondage so that standing straight, praising God, we can liberate others with that same healing touch.

To liberate others for life is the way of the servant, both then and now.

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*Gail Wolling is a third year student intern from the Upstate New York Synod*

## The Easter Challenge

Who was I that I could hinder God?

(Acts 11:11-18, verse 17)

Easter is a wonderful celebration of life and the promise of eternal life. But Easter is not only about the death of Jesus the crucified and his resurrection, it is also about our deaths and the promise of new life for us, in spite of the fact that we might find ourselves quite comfortable with life the way it is. Easter challenges our rigid ordering of our world and the distinctions we cling to that separate us from one another. There is loss promised in Easter as well as great gain.

Easter promises that the distinctions we create between insider and outsider, us and them, allies and enemies, will be overturned. God is determined to embrace the whole creation. Easter means death to our old ways.

Easter is dangerous to boundaries of human prejudice and separateness, of economic and social distinction. And Easter is dangerous to death. Though we may not always welcome the new life that defeats death, our death and the death of all others. We are rescued from our sins so that we might live. We can give thanks and join in the celebration, for we cannot hinder God.

**Disturb our lives, O God, with your power to make new. Amen**

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From: *Christ in Our Home: Light of Today* (Augsburg Fortress, 1998)

*Calendar of Events*  
*Summertime 1998*

- May 15*                    *3:00 Graduation*  
                              *7:00 Eucharist*
- May 19-20*                *Internship Teambuilding Workshop*
- May 29*                    *Music Gettysburg!*  
                              *8:00 Morgan State University Choir*
- May 29-30*                *Preaching and Church Music*
- May 31*                    *Gettysburg Chamber Orchestra*
- June 15-26*                *Continuing Education Courses*
- July 6-10*                 *Diaconal Summer Courses*
- Aug. 21-Sept. 4*        *Greek Session*
- Sept. 8-10*                *First Year Pre-Session*
- Sept. 8 -9*                *Second Year Pre-Session*
- Sept. 8-10*                *Senior Pre-Session*
- Sept. 11*                    *First Class Sessions*