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# The Seminarian

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Festival of the Ascension

1952

THE LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY AT PHILADELPHIA

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## IN THIS ISSUE . . . .

Dedication .....	3
Editorially Speaking .....	4
Insularity, Inc. — Franklin D. Fry .....	5
The State As a Means to Community—Carl Berkobin .....	7
Concerning the Word — Paul E. Hoffman .....	9
Acknowledgments .....	12

*Dedicated*

to the

CLASS OF 1952

of

The Lutheran Theological Seminary

at

Philadelphia



*Class of 1952*

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# Editorially Speaking

## HAIL AND FAREWELL

Once again, now, part of the Student Body will begin packing, not in preparation for spending the summer vacation at home, but in getting ready to move to their various fields of labor as ministers of the Gospel. To you who graduate this year, we extend our heartiest congratulations, and wish you God's richest blessings, as you begin your work whether in the parish ministry, education, foreign missions, or wherever your call may take you.

## THE SEMINARIAN

This brings to a close another year for our student publication. We have tried to maintain its editorial principle: A journal of stu-

dent expression. But our work could not have been as perfect as the complete lack of criticism might indicate. If you are pleased with **THE SEMINARIAN**, then we are happy, but we urge you to be free with any comments or suggestions for improvement.

## OPERATION REDECORATION

Extensive renovations in the north wing of the Krauth Memorial Library have given it a real new look. It is no longer one huge room, but the first floor has become the new periodical and reference room; also on this floor is a new office for the librarian. The second floor contains two large seminar rooms, and four carrels for private study. Things are really brightening up.

## Insularity, Inc.

Not long ago I slipped into the serious error of describing the ministry as the 'highest' calling. Fear not; there were men present who promptly rebuked my careless tongue with Lutheran theology! Seemingly, the incident was past, but, instead, my mind has turned to another dimension. Now I state the careful conviction that the ministry is most certainly the 'broadest' calling.

Wait. Let me assure you that the breadth of which I write is not the already belabored one. Yes, I know that the competent minister has to be many things to measure up to his job . . . teacher, scholar, counselor, financier, writer, speaker, liturgist, etc., etc. This aspect of the ministry is one of its greatest attractions for me, and always has been.

The breadth this article would discuss is of a different type. The competent minister must be aware of many things, must be familiar with many situations. The pastor, as no other man, must be equipped to deal with the deepest and most unique needs of 'all sorts and conditions of men.' The range of his experience must be wide and deep if his preaching and counseling is to be intelligent. Otherwise, how can he serve each of his people in the way which will be singularly effective?

Don't get me wrong! The Gospel is the same for all men. This basic fact must be assumed, no matter what else is said. I do believe, though, that a man's situation

in life must be known and appreciated by the pastor before he can give the Gospel its most effective application to that man's life. The man in the pew must be confronted by his God not off in left-field someplace, but right where his battle with life is being waged. Harvest festivals are not apt to be either challenging or relevant in the slum areas of a big city!

This chameleon-like character of the pastor is especially essential in the area of counseling. We have been urged to seek 'empathy' with the counselee. We must, so to speak, climb under his skin and stand in his boots. How is this possible unless we have previously made a real attempt to absorb his picture and pattern of life? Only the foolish, the unknowing, or the desperate will heed the counsel of a man who speaks without authority.

One of the most sincerely Christian laymen I have ever known recently sold his business because he couldn't make it pay on a Christian basis. It was a difficult decision, since the business had been a family one for a good many years. Was it a right decision to desert the field to the godless? What help should he be able to expect from his pastor in this vital moment? The staggering question is: 'As his pastor, would I have possessed adequate understanding of his predicament to be in a position to give him intelligent help?'

Any pastor or seminarian who

saw the recent plays 'Detective Story' and 'Death of a Salesman' should have been shaken by them. Variations of these soul struggles are present in every congregation. Will you be ready to meet them? How can you be, as an uninformed outsider?

Entirely different worlds confront a youth who enters a teacher's college or a school of medicine. It would be wise for the pastor to prepare them for the jolts their Christian faith will receive in these fields. Are you one of those pastors (or will you be) who is not even aware of the uniquely challenging atmospheres which lie ahead in these professions?

Here is a pastor whose appreciation of industrial life and unions is largely limited to the comments of his banker-father and the attitudes of a conservative Eastern college. How effective will his ministry be if his pastorate is in down-town Pittsburgh? Are you he?

The crux of the matter is this: If we truly believe that every man has a calling, then we must be prepared to tell him how he can best serve in his calling. How can we, unless we ourselves first have some familiarity with it?

And yet this is precisely the point at which many of us are dull-witted members of Insularity, Inc. Most of what we know is the direct result of the channel which leads us from a church home, through a church college (where we were sheltered and pampered as 'pre-sems') and a church seminary, into a snug little church and parsonage. Even the little safaris we may have taken into the Great Unknown have been colored by the pre-judgments and/or selective blindness of the

man who has long been headed for the ministry. Our knowledge of God's other callings is largely academic.

This narrowness of experience and perspective may be sufficient for the demands of many lives; it is ruinous when matched against the demands of the pastorate! Our task involves all of the 'highways and byways' of life.

As a side note—I am convinced that much of the superior scorn which men harbor when they view the ministry is caused by our insularity. All too often we really don't know what their lives are all about. And yet, in truth, the able pastor has a wider grasp than any of them.

In considering this situation I have developed a further conviction. The only way to be ready for the constant challenges from the different callings is to have some experience within them. This fact would present an impossible task of preparation were it not for several considerations. 1) Many jobs are similar in the factors which are important for the pastor. Much manual labor can be seen as a single calling for our purposes. 2) We have gained sufficient acquaintance with several fields through the natural courses of our lives. 3) Some occupations can be ruled out by logical guess of our future. 4) We largely waste the many opportunities in our pre-ordination lives for a wide sampling of the ways men earn their bread.

It should be the last consideration which holds the most promise for the man who awakes to this personal need. The sooner he awakes, and the more he accomplishes, in like manner, the fewer will be his fears and failings as a

Continued on page 11

# The State as a Means to Community

What do we mean by the word community?

"A community is an association of individuals and families that, out of inclination, habit, custom and mutual interest, act in concert as a unit in meeting their common needs. Always some action is reserved for individual or family initiative and generally a part of life is formally and impersonally organized by legislation or other formal agreement."<sup>\*</sup>

The state itself is a community to the extent in which it expresses mutual interest and meets mutual needs. The special job of the state is in the area of regulation of functions performed by either individuals or groups so that the needs of all are met most effectively.

Within the state there are a multitude of small groups each with a special occupation to do, or axe to grind. These groups vary as to size with the smallest of families at one extreme, and the largest of associations at the other. But they are still part of the one community, the state, and the state must acknowledge their existence, and control their efforts so that they pull with and not against each other. The success of the state as a community depends up-

on its success in keeping this harmony between the discordant elements which exist side by side.

By the nature of its distinctive position among all the groups within it, the state becomes the supreme power over its territory. In the final analysis it makes the decisions which are to be followed, and from which no appeal to a higher authority (except in cases where the appeal is to God when the state is not fulfilling its appointed task) can be made. The other forms of community must abide by its plans.

The basic unit of community is without any doubt the family. Economically, socially, spiritually, morally, whatever way you look at it, the family always comes first in your thinking. But the family, while basic, must still, in some respect, bow to the state as supreme.

We may speak of man expressing himself through the unit of community. The unit of the family, and, almost immediately, the unit of the town into which the family tries to merge with other families both provide means for this expression. Now the state sometimes inadvertently steps in to hinder this later merger, and so prevent full expression. The history of the opening of the western sections of this country is a case in point. In order to get the land settled and productive as soon as

<sup>\*</sup> Morgan, *The Small Community*, p. 20.

possible, the national state offered to sell it in large chunks. While they succeeded in luring farmers to the area, they forgot the need those same people would have for community life. Each family was given a tract of land half a mile square, which meant that the nearest neighbor was a good hike away. It is no wonder that as time passed, the more prosperous farmers rented out their farms and moved into the rapidly growing towns so that they could partake of community life. In the Amish and Mennonite territory of Pennsylvania, the exact opposite trend is true. There, the farmers hold on to their land largely because they are, and they know they are, part of a town community.

But while the state must be careful to provide every means for the self-expression of the family, it must, at the same time, do everything in its power to protect that family. This protection is of both a physical and moral kind. Equipment for fighting fires, police forces, etc., all must be made available in case of need. And the laws of the land must be made tight enough and enforced strictly enough to ensure the maximum possibilities for the continued unity of the family unit.

All around the country new towns are springing up, towns which are real communities, and to which the state must have a purpose. I think it can be said right off, that to the new towns as well as to the old established ones the state provides information. From the central government they can gain specialized information to be used in running the local political set-up, and also information which will be of help to the citizens of the town in their everyday lives. From the state

they get methods of communication, both by mail and by roads with other communities; and from the government they get protection.

This is not all a one way relation. The small community forms the backbone of the political set-up of the state. It gathers and distributes information, it raises money, and within its framework it trains future leaders for the state. The town is at the same time subservient to the state, and in a full sense, part of it.

To make a useful citizen, there is a certain amount of education which a man must have. One way of providing this education is for the local village, or perhaps even the state (i.e., Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, etc.) to direct it. Then each man would come out with a different set of values, and thus destroy the unity of the larger community which is the state. The other method is for the state to direct the educational procedure, and thus provide a uniform basis for everyone's education. By this latter method, the training of teachers and accumulation of knowledge becomes much easier.

It must be remembered, however, that a great danger lies within this scheme. By training the minds of the young, the state can gain such acceptance that the people can no longer change it if it needs changing, because they will not see the need. The practical situation of unscrupulous leaders must be considered. Such a consideration leads to the conclusion that education must not be completely controlled by the state. It must have some private controls. All the state can do is to require a certain amount of schooling for

Continued on page 11



## Concerning the Word

The Word of God is the primary factor in Christian experience. God Himself has confronted us in His Word, and if we believe, it is because He has overpowered us, and made of us His own, against our natural willfulness and reason. This Word is something alive and active. It is not in any sense a revelation of mere data or information supplemental to our ordinary knowledge, some sort of "divine information." It is not concerned primarily with facts, either historical or otherwise. Rather, through His Word God demands of us absolute love and allegiance, and absolute love for our neighbor, and, in the light of human rebellion against this demand, offers unconditional forgiveness for the sake of Christ, Who as God Incarnate bore the sins of the world upon the Cross. As Luther pointed out so well, the Word is a two-edged sword—commands and promises, Law and Gospel, the proclamation of Wrath and of Love, judgment and grace. Not that God is schizoid, but that such a two-sided proclamation is just what our human situation demands.

This Word of God speaks to us in our ethical dilemmas, and through grace gives us freedom. In order to be truly loving to our neighbor we may have to lie, or rebel against authority. If there were no forgiveness with God such situations would be intolerable. Slavishness to the Law might then very well lead to tragedy.

But in a life situation that demands action, we can trust in God's mercy to forgive, and therefore can do the loving thing and "sin bravely."

Something similar is demanded in the intellectual realm. Here too we are saved by grace. Because certain areas of human activity are naturalistic or idealistic, or materialistic, Christians, for love's sake, cannot refuse to soil their hands in participation. Christian love demands, and God's grace makes possible, a Christian participation in psychology, psychiatry, bio-chemistry, or nuclear physics, and demands and makes possible a tentative approval of the idea of natural causation, for instance, or the psycho-sexual and psycho-social explanations given for human activity. We, as Christians, must be bothered continually by, but accept as realistic, the apparent plurality of our world, at least the pluralism apparently forced upon us by our finite modern minds. The attempt to synthesize all thought, or create a unifying philosophy ("Christian" or otherwise), besides being both illusory and reactionary, is basically idolatrous, and by grace we are set free from the attempt.

The Christian responsibility to be constructive in this world makes it imperative that we enter into this situation immediately. This means the proclamation of the freedom of investigation and explanation from the Church as well as from the world. For there

are no restrictions or limitations which we as Christians either have to, or are able to set to the areas or phenomena to be investigated, or the means by which that is done. We cannot reject modern psychiatry, no matter what the grounds, without thereby rejecting an area of Christian service! The psychoanalyst helps people attain health. It is therefore a legitimate area of Christian activity. Here, for love's sake, we must be pragmatic—tentatively. Grace allows it; love demands it.

The Bible is often called the Word of God. When this is done, we must realize that it is called so only in a derivative sense. Christ Himself is the Word Incarnate. He is Lord. He is Lord even of Scripture. But because the Bible cradles Christ, it too can be called the Word of God. Yet they cannot simply be identified. The Word is both more universal and less static than Scripture. But if they are not thus identified, if the Bible is not in a peculiar sense the inspired Word of God, how then can it be authoritative for faith and doctrine as we profess?

Here we have to see that the doctrine of the authority of Scripture must be separated from the doctrine of inspiration. The Bible contains the classical expression of Christianity, of the Word. As such it contains Law and Gospel as it was first proclaimed among Christians. The priority of Scripture is thus historically established. And because it has this priority, it judges tradition and prac-

tice in the Church. It is authoritative. And it is inspired. The Holy Spirit works through the Word to the salvation of souls. It is He Who convicts us of sin and makes us believe the promise of the Gospel. He speaks through the Bible, calling, gathering, enlightening, and sanctifying the whole Church of God, through Law and Gospel. The Bible is inspired. But it is not authoritative because that is so. But it both is inspired, and it is authoritative.

The most amazing thing about Christians is their audacity. One aspect of this is their confidence that the Holy Spirit speaks through them when they proclaim the Word. They, like Scripture, are inspired! Here there is no gradation among Christians. St. Paul, Martin Luther, the local pastor, and the witnessing layman, are equals. Each has had the same "religious experience." Each has been apprehended by God Himself in His Word, and has become a witness.

This Word of God is thus a vital, dynamic, active phenomenon. We are absolutely dependent upon it. In the Word we are seized by God, and commissioned and sent into a world both morally sinful and intellectually confused, and above all, in rebellion against God. We are to serve God and man in this environment, sustained only by that Word. It is a lamp unto our feet, and a light upon our path. Yet we cannot actually "see." We can only believe it, trust in it.

—Paul E. Hoffman

Continued from page 6  
senior two months from commencement.

No one can assay what this problem involves for the seminarian, except in a general way. Each man must make his own appraisal of his preparedness, and then move to fill the gaps. This he can do during summer vacations and in the part-time work most of us have carried during the school years. Is there any law which says a man must be a camp counselor eight summers in a row? Or file cards at the publication house, or customers at the Academy three winters in a row?

In attacking his problem, I would suggest three general principles to follow:

1) Work to know the fields with which you will probably be most intimate. Most men do not follow a rural parish with an industrial one.

2) Sample first those fields with which every pastor will have deal-

ings. I found a summer tour as a bank teller most valuable. Also work as an operating-room orderly. A friend of mine has never regretted the view of life he got as a clerk in a pawn-shop. What's wrong with a summer in a steel plant? Certainly not the pay!

3) Remember how quickly people change when they are with a pastor or even a man they know to be headed in that direction. Never go as a man who is expressly doing this 'just for the experience' and 'to see how the other half lives.' Such an attitude will militate against your purposes. If your aim is to absorb ways of life, enter into them as fully as a Christian can.

This article is, in a sense, a warning from one who wishes he had two more years to swim about in the various streams of life that swirl around the pastorate. Climb down off that island, man, while you still can!

—Franklin D. Fry

Continued from page 8  
each of its youth, and to set the daily hours to be allotted for the educational procedure, such hours not to prohibit the students from other necessary activities.

The last of the community relationships about which we shall speak is that of the state to the Church. It is generally recognized that the duty of the state lies in the direction of political control, while the duty of the Church lies in the direction of spiritual guidance. But it is easier to separate the two fields of influence on paper than it is in practice. When the state passes a law, that law affects the Church; and the

Church, by its presence, affects the state.

Primarily, both communities are similar and dissimilar. They are similar in that both are of God. But there the similarity stops.

"The State may perhaps be described as an 'ordinance of Creation,' since its existence depends on the inherent necessities of human nature; whereas the Church is the agent of God's forgiving and recreating grace."<sup>\*</sup>

It is the idea of agent which puts the Church beyond the state. While the state deals out justice,

<sup>\*</sup> Watson, *The State As a Servant of God*, p. 59.

Continued on page 12

the Church fosters love. The state is concerned primarily with ruling man because he has fallen, while the Church tries to get him to go back to his Creator and to the realization that there is no life outside of Him. When these two purposes are set side by side, they show only a small area in which they consciously overlap. And it is just that area, the area of the public activity of men, where each must remember its prime purpose.

"As servants of God, both Church and State are responsible to God, and not to each other, for the fulfillment of their tasks; and either has a

right to resist the other, if it trespasses outside the proper sphere of its services."\*\*

The relationship between the community of the state and the community of the Church must be one of cooperation without control if the Will of God for man is to be fostered. Neither can work without the other, for the Church needs the order provided by the state, and the state needs to work toward the abolition of imposed order which comes only through love, and that is what the Church teaches.

—Carl Berkobin

\*\* *Ibid.*, p. 59.

## Contributors to this Issue

Franklin D. Fry, of New Rochelle, New York, is a graduate of Hamilton College, and a member of the Senior Class. Carl Berkobin, also a Senior, is from Nutley, New Jersey, and a graduate of

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