



the SEMINARIAN

VOL. XXIV

February 27, 1963

No. 21

TO THE EDITOR:

Dear Sir,

I write to inquire through the columns of the Seminarian what contacts locally any of its readers, student or faculty, may have had with "speaking in tongues." Ordinarily, of course, glossolalia is a term that might crop up in a New Testament introduction quiz or might be of interest to observers of storefront sect churches. Some of us may vaguely recall reading in Time and other news media about an Episcopal clergyman on the West Coast who had encouraged the practice of "tongues" in his congregation, but it has come to my attention recently, through questions and discussion at a retreat for pastors of the Eastern Pennsylvania Synod, that this practice may be closer to home than most of us had realized.

Dr. Warren Quanbeck, of Luther Seminary, has noted (at the same retreat) that there are now perhaps a dozen students at that school who "speak in tongues" (glossolalia, not Greek, Hebrew, or Norwegian, that is), in most cases students from the West where the "churchly revival" of this practice seems to have started. The practice is also said to exist among theological students at Yale and Princeton.

One pastor of a Lutheran church in the Philadelphia area showed me a four-page mimeographed set of guide-lines for the practice of "speaking in tongues" in a Lutheran congregation in California. The gist of this paper is that "tongues" are not forbidden by the Lutheran Confessions, they are mentioned in the New Testament, and therefore the practice is to be expected in congregations today; steps should be taken to keep the practice within the church (usually at midweek services, certainly not helter-skelter in members' homes), though the question of whether "tongues" should become a part of the church school program is for the present left open. This same local pastor described to me how several of the best members of his congregation (loyal leaders, of solid Lutheran background, who have had no contact with Pentecostal movements) engage in the practice. All this I report factually, with the recognition that pastors in such cases have a very practical problem and concern as well as a theological interest.

I leave to students of church life today, of sects, and of psychology certain problems of the current practice; surely it should have firsthand observation prior to detailed comment. But what concerns me is the argument used to justify this practice and the use of the New Testament involved.

This claim, that "the Confessions do not forbid it and Scripture refers to it" betrays a legalistic concept of the Confessions ("canon law") and a fundamentalistic view toward Scripture. It proceeds from this view rather than from an understanding of what the Gospel and the Word of God are. As I should oppose certain other practices which have been promoted in the church, e.g., in the area of worship on this basis ("the confessions don't forbid it, the 'early church' did it", though here the concept of what the early church did or did not do is sometimes vague), so I raise question about this revival of "tongues" on such a basis.

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"TONGUES" (cont'd)

Ultimately what concerns me, as a student of the New Testament, is the use of Scripture involved. The notion that "what was then, should be now" is hardly a valid approach (e.g., footwashing). Mark 16:17 in the "added ending" should scarcely be cited as Scripture, unless proponents are ready to encourage snake-handling as well (proof-text: 16:18). Luke's references in Acts deserve study as part of Lucan theology, but he does seem to interpret whatever happened at Pentecost not as glossolalia but as ability to speak or at least be understood in foreign languages. That leaves the Corinthians passages, and practices at the church in Corinth remind one of religion in California or Florida today; the unusual flourished! It was in Corinth that "baptism for the dead" also was practiced. One suspects that Paul had a local problem here; he wisely did not "blast" the glossolalia-ites but he certainly rates "tongues" at the bottom of his list (I Cor. 12:27ff.), not among the usual "fruits of the Spirit" (Gal. 5:22f.). But perhaps some correspondents have had more first-hand contact. I should welcome information, through letters to the Seminarian or in personal conversation.

John Reumann

CORNELL-MT. AIRY SEMINAR

The time draws near - a week from this Friday. You won't want to miss this day of challenging and provocative discussion. Here are some of the details:

Friday morning session. Starting time will be given in next weeks issue. Chairman: Lee Miller, President of the Student Body.

Four papers will be presented by members of the Cornell U. faculty:

1. Current Theories of the Universe

Mr. John Irwin

2. The Responsibility of the Scientist to Society.

Dr. Raffensberger

3. The Implications of the Biological Sciences for Christian Theology.

Dr. William Keeton

HEYER COMMISSION DRIVE

The annual Heyer Commission appeal for funds to aid work in the foreign mission field will get under way tomorrow, and continue through March 28. Sometime tomorrow, a container will be placed in the hands of each student for him to use in the course of the month for his contributions.

The goal of the drive this year is to raise \$500 to aid student work in the mission field of Tanganyika. It is therefore most appropriate that Mr. Matthew Mamuya, a native of Tanganyika who has recently joined us here at Mt. Airy, will give a presentation entitled "Christ in Tanganyika Today." The time is 7:30 P.M. tomorrow evening, February 28, the place Room 1 of Hagan Hall. Refreshments will be served following the program.

It is hoped that our hearts will be opened to the importance of the proclamation of the Gospel in distant lands.

The SEMINARIAN is published weekly during the academic year by the Student Body of the Lutheran Theological Seminary, 7301 Germantown Ave., Philadelphia 19, Pa.

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4. A Scientist views the Church

Dr. Clifford Berg

Matins will be at 10:00 a.m.

In the afternoon there will be two sessions of group discussions. Each session will be divided into groups centered around one of the visiting scientists. One session will begin the afternoon to be followed by a coffee break. In the second session following the participants will change to another discussion group.

The evening forum will probably begin at 8:00 p.m. It should be the highlight of the Seminar. Two men from Cornell, Drs. Keeton and Berg, and two from Mt. Airy, Drs. Heinecken and Lazareth, will endeavor to deal with any problems remaining after the labors of the discussion groups and to summarize the results. Dr. Bagger will moderate.

FOOTNOTES

With Lent here you will be hearing sermons aplenty on "Rend your hearts and not your garments." This is a wonderful text for this season; it underlines the inner phenomenon without which Easter means cheap grace and easy victory. Lent is the time to realize, i.e. to make real personally the gravity of sin and an heartfelt repentance.

But if these sermons then start to dissuade you from any external observance of the season, watch out! Will you be yielding to the softness of our life, its lack of respect for discipline in any form, by avoiding the rent garment? Think deeply on this before you relegate your practice of Christianity to the never-never world of pious thoughts and imagination - does your neglect of outward observance indicate faith in God or laziness and presumption?!

I challenge each of you as I challenge myself to a renewed diligence during these next months. There is a threefold path:

1) Take on some extra form of devotion. Perhaps this can be a determination to attend chapel regularly, to see whether the Spirit might "feel like it" even when we do not. Or set aside time each day for private meditation on scripture or with a devotional guide. (A Lenten devotion for use at night is available from me). Or you might adopt a pattern of intercessory pray for friends, and enemies.

2) Practice a bit of self-denial. Of course there is no inevitable benefit to be gained. In fact, if you are successful you might become slightly proud of it; but if not, you might thereby come to learn just how terribly weak the human will can be. Just see if your desire to run the race and to preach the gospel to all nations can bring you to tighten your belt or do without tobacco - just see whether your devotion is strong enough to produce a discipline from within. There is a lesson to be learned also in our very attachment to these little things.

3) Dedicate yourself to the performance of a specific good work. Maybe it will mean regularly helping your roommate with his Greek (help teaching him, not doing it for him - that's too easy). Perhaps it will mean a little extra parish visiting at your assignment. Or how about saving those dimes that usually go for brew and the movies to give to the Heyer Commission drive. Remember you are not giving anybody a cup of cold water when you are your own beat charity case.

Why not give it a chance; try some of these old-fashioned customs and you may well find blessing in them.

G.M.

FASTNACHT - A SUCCESS!

Last night's Fastnacht was certainly a success. The audience, which was overflowing, was kept in stitches for most of the evening. The Penna. Dutchmen Tom Reinsel and Mike Levengood, served as masters of ceremony. Before, during, and after the acts, their dialogue was delightful and timely,

The Junior's provided two skits. Their first was a faculty panel interviewing prospective students. The students in this case were a few of the present faculty members. Then Junior William Bock and two assistants had a wonderful skit dealing with Grandma Hatchet, and artist. Highlighting this were actual sketches done by Bill. One of them was presented to Professor Bornemann.

Next came the Wives Club with a skit on the Vatican Council. The Pope and a few of his cohorts were presented in an imaginary setting on the eve of union with the Protestant world.

A faculty review of three candidates for seminary president was done by the Middler Class. Three men interviewed were a leader from Cuba, a Gettysburg intellectual, and a man named Kennedy (a la Jules Auger).

A delightful surprise was the appearance of the "Fireside Four," a barber-shop quartet. Senior Dick Hadfield is a member of this group. They sang a medley of songs.

Last on the program were the Seniors who performed a skit on marriage counseling entitled "The Merchant of Venice." Roland Perez was featured as Pastor Merryweather,

Coffee and rolls and fellowship rounded out the evening of fun and levity. All in all it was a most enjoyable evening for all who attended. Our thanks to all those who planned and participated in the program.

