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# SEMINARIAN

Vol. XXV

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FROM A SEMINARIAN'S NOTEBOOK

ANNOUNCEMENTS

**POLITICS.** The negative reaction of the nation to Rockefeller's divorce and remarriage is absurd. It's as ridiculous as the votes for John Kennedy in the last election because of his looks. Once the Rockefeller baby is born, and everyone sees how cute it is and how happy (pun!) a father the governor is, people will again have a sentimental excuse for supporting him.

The governor's martial affairs are certainly nothing unusual for America. Perhaps people don't like to see this side of their nature reflected in their representatives. Here is an opportunity to condemn in public what is condoned in private.

**CHURCH.** With the number of women writing articles for The Lutheran, you'd think the women of our church had two magazines going.

I for one am glad for Honest to God. Some are ready to call the author a heretic. Perhaps anyone trying to be honest to God is automatically a heretic. At any rate, if Bishop Robinson is right, then we could now have a new breed of "atheistic Christians" - those who accept Christ but reject a theistic system of theological expression. Now isn't that a beautiful synthesis of the formerly opposite categories of "atheist and "Christian"? Now surely everyone will come running to the church.

The last thing I'd ever want to be is a seminary professor. For he is a man who can do no right. Students complain if he gives them work (oh, those deadlines) or if he makes no assignments (he's disorganized); if his lectures are precise and comprehensive (too much detail) or more general (he's too lazy to prepare); if he gives a test (I hate tests) or if he assigns a paper (I hate papers).

## SYMPOSIUM NEXT WEDNESDAY

A Symposium, the second of the year, the subject of Birth Control, will take place next Wednesday evening at 8 o'clock in Hagan Hall. Featured will be Dr. Lawrence Ryan, a Gynecologist and Obstetrician at Lanckenay Hospital, and Professor Martin J. Heinecken.

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## PLAY TRY-OUTS TONIGHT

Anyone desiring a part in the second production of the Mount Airy Players, Christ in the Concrete City, is asked to report to the Upper Sunday School Room tonight at 7:30.

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## CHAPEL PROGRAM

Next weeks regular chapel service will not be so "regular." A pantomime has been planned by Messrs. R. Grove and C. Weiser. It promises to be an unusual and interesting event in the life of our seminary.

## WELCOME BACK MESSRS. HEINBACH AND RODRIGUEZ

We are indeed glad to see Mr. Rodriguez back in our midst after his speedy recovery at the Chestnut Hill Hospital. Mr. Rodriguez thanks all those students who visited him while he was in the hospital. Also we, belatedly, welcome back Mr. Heinbach. He has been able to assume his full duties in the Refectory.

## "THAT THEY ALL BE ONE"

Our thoughts this week (January 18-25) are directed toward Christian Unity. Several discussions on this always popular subject have cropped up in several corners of our community this week. Many opinions and "solutions" have been offered. What follows are some of my own thoughts which I should like to add to the pile which already exists...

Jesus, in John 17:20-21 prays: "I do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word, that they ~~may~~ all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou has sent me."

One might ask on the basis of our Lord's petition whether the Church of Jesus Christ is one, is to be one, or if the divisions among the churches are violating this petition...

The crucial question concerning Christ's prayer for unity is what does he mean? The Augsburg Confession (Article VII) reads in part: "For it is sufficient for the true unity of the Christian church that the Gospel be preached in conformity with a pure understanding of it and that the sacraments be administered in accordance with the divine Word." Within Protestantism, this statement by the Reformers could be received by all. But when one discusses "pure understanding," the difficulty begins. And indeed, it seems to me, this is where the ecumenical movement has bogged down. It is on this situation that the world as the ban of faith fixes his attention. We must admit that this is a sore spot among us, and that it is unfortunate for us that during the past 450 years we have so stressed our differences that the unity we possess has been neglected. (This is not to say that differences are to be overlooked).

Gustaf Aulen in The Faith of the Christian Church, (pp. 302-303, second English edition), states that the unity of the Christian church does not consist in organizational uniformity, doctrinal uniformity, or uniformity of life. But these are the areas in which all too often we seek to find our unity! We would like to have an uniform organization to which we might grasp for possible security--false though it might be. The dangers of the other two approaches are also obvious. Doctrinal uniformity would tend to "intellectualize" the Christian faith and could lead to acceptance of some quite heretical notions. It would also gloss over the "Who" of faith--"Jesus Christ, whom the Father has sent."

Well, if the unity of the Christian church is not to be found in organization, doctrine, or life, where is this unity to be found? John 17 gives us a clue. Jesus prays, "that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they ~~also~~ may be one in us." Jesus' prayer points toward the unity which exists between the Father and the Son, and is bound up in the relationship between the Father and the Son. This is a unity--unity which can only be seen through the eyes of faith. The direction of unity must flow from God downward to the church. In a report, the Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches states: "Unity is not primarily a task to be accomplished, not a unity to be fabricated where there was none before. We have to start with the unity already given in the church." Later, in the same paragraph we read: "The more we concentrate on Christ, the Lord of the church, the more will church unity increase; for only in Christ can the church find its unity."

This seems to be the direction indicated in John. For we must always start with the act of God...and not our understanding of the act. Unity does exist. Maybe it has been to the churches disadvantage that over the past centuries its emphasis on its points of disunity has far outweighed its known and real unity. As a corrective to this, the ecumenical movement maybe fulfilling a necessary task...But, let us remember what constitutes the church and where unity really lies.

## COMMENTARY ON CIVIL RIGHTS

### The Theology of the Segregationist

"Segregation is a system of belief that would protect its defectors from all that looms on their horizon as 'the powers of death and destruction.' It is a way of handling the menace to salvation of one's own impulses and the perils of the world as well. It therefore becomes a holy path, complete with commandments, priests, theologians and a plan of salvation. That is why professional segregationists, despite their insistence that 'segregation is not a religious issue' seen very willing to quote Bible verses at you, mostly from the Old Testament. These are thrown up, invariably, as shields, as outer defenses designed to discourage penetration to the realm of theological discussion. The Bible-quoting segregationist... hopes his verses will convince you that segregation isn't a religious issue. Then you will descend with him away from the holy of holies and argue with him on his own chosen safer ground, of sex, or of popular anthropology, or of Negro criminology.

With this thought in mind, James Sellers, THE SOUTH AND CHRISTIAN ETHICS, goes on to spell out the theology of the segregationist with regards to God, Christ, and man. First, their theology: "The God of the segregationist is largely a God pieced together out of the Old Testament, although that is hardly fair to the Jews." Second, Christology. (The segregationist) "He has a dogma, as we have seen 'God is the author of segregation'. But he does not go on to say, typically, 'Jesus Christ is the co-author of segregation'.... The truth is, the segregationist has formed his notion of God almost entirely without reference to the revelation of God brought in Christ. When he talks about Christ, then, it is about a Christ who has something to say on every subject but segregation."

Third, anthropology. "The doctrine of the superior white man is really their starting point, and their doctrine of God is nothing more than a God carved out of odds and ends in the Old Testament to fit a preconceived idea of man." It is boldly obvious at this point that classical theology begins

with the Doctrine of God, and in this doctrine finds the doctrine of man implied. The result is, indeed, different.

In one word Sellers says the theological meaning of the attitude of the segregationist is PRIDE. Or again, "Segregation today is in the same shape that hillbilly music is: it has already lost most of its authentic folk quality, and its modern expressions are the uninspired work of professionals."

R. Grove

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### LETTER to the STUDENT BODY and FACULTY

Dear Students and Faculty:

I would like to thank the Student Body and Faculty for their generosity and many kind words of sympathy and encouragement that I have received since the death of my wife on December 21, 1963.

Your words and your actions have meant so very much to me and it has been a great comfort to know that there are people like you who stand by ready to help in time of need.

These past few weeks have not been easy but you have all helped me to bear them. God has given me strength to go on each day and for that I am so very thankful.

Sincerely yours,

Russell C. Gronest



## ON PSEUDO-RELIGIOUS CONCERNS

BY Robert A. Cornelius

"In this humanistic age we suppose man is the initiator and God is the responder." (Thomas Kelly: A Testament of Devotion) The "Honest to God Controversy" is the result of a soil and atmosphere fertile for such an occurrence. The day is nigh when everyman whose conscience prickles when he confronts the church, must, finally, respond to the Divine Will, and bring down the house of cards that parades through history under the guise of religiosity.

One need not look far among secular or religious authors to find indictments that charge that both church and individuals have wandered into a maze of pseudo-religious concerns that have clouded the real thrust of the Gospel and of God. Self concern has replaced assent and commitment to God. God remains, as he will. Only assent to this inevitability has disappeared.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer concedes, "Innumerable times a whole Christian community has broken down because it had sprung from a wish dream." Arthur Vidich and Joseph Berman, sociologists, in a study, SMALL TOWN IN MASS SOCIETY, state, "The religious halo for these people is one that surrounds activities which in intrinsic qualities are not religious, i.e., not peculiar. Church life, then, is an added layer of social activity..." David Riesman's analysis in THE LONELY CROWD is somewhat more poignant: "When puritanism, as Max Weber put it, turned the world into a monastery...the puritan inner-directed man was made to feel as if he had constantly to hold on to himself...it is as if his character, despite its seeming stability, did not feel stable and, indeed, the puritan in a theological projection of his inner feeling, had constantly to fight against doubts concerning his state of grace or election."

In the face of such criticism and growing awareness the house of cards can not stand forever; revolution is called for, demanded. And, the Lutheran, really aware of the nature of faith, ought to be at the head of the revolution. Who should know better than a Lutheran that a Christian community is not built on a wish dream, that church life is not an

added layer of social activity, that least of all a man should be concerned with his state of grace. The Lutheran knowledgeable in his faith is aware that all he can do before God is assent and respond; and, subservience of self to God, and response to him, is not short of revolution in 1964. God is dead only insofar as unqualified assent and response to him is the exception to the normal. He lives but we die in our mis-carried frenzy of self fulfillment and concern for the advancement of humanity which so often supplants acknowledgment of God's Kingship. The trap of all theology, even HONEST TO GOD, is that it can obscure, so easily, that which it pursues. One need not explain God, or even understand God, to assent to him. God lives to us in relationship, not in understanding. For that relationship to come alive a man must admit that it exists. Henceforth, he finds both that he is propelled out of the endless circularity of self fulfillment, and that he must respond more fully to the needs of fellow men. He is both elevated above the world and thrust more deeply into it. He both rejoices and anguishes. And, in our earthly dimension, God lives in that rejoicing and anguish.

The revolution is happening, and many are discovering that we Lutherans have had as our heritage of faith. Will we be moved by our faith, proclaim it to our neighbors, live it before (of) our neighbors, and to them?

Gabriel Vahanian, writing in DIALOG points a finger directly at Lutherans when he says: "...the Christian era has bequeathed us the 'death of God', but not without teaching us a lesson. God is not necessary. That is to say, he cannot be taken for granted. He cannot be used merely as hypothesis, whether epistemological, scientific, or existential, unless we should draw the degrading conclusion that 'God is reasons'. But if we cannot any longer assume that God is, we may realize that he must be. God is not necessary, but he is inevitable. He is wholly other and wholly present. Faith in him, the conversion of our human reality culturally and existentially, is the demand he still makes upon us, the choice he confronts us with. But when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

## SPEAKING ABOUT GOD

A plea of John Robinson in his book Honest to God is to speak of God (as Paul Tillich would have it) as the "ground of being, a God in the depths. Such a speaking about God does indeed have its advantages. C.S. Lewis comments, "The image of the Earth\*Mother gets in something which that of the Sky\*Father leaves out." The symbol 'ground' helps us to pictorially view God as sustainer and upholder of the universe in whom all existence, even our very own, is rooted.

Yet, the imagery of depth also admits elements which, unless balanced by other symbols, limit and possibly distort the Christian faith. The Bible itself and even its individual writers employ varying and diverse images to express each particular concern (for example, the meaning of the crucifixion). The employment of any one particular figure to the exclusion of another is a loss in our proclamation. It is only through a multiplicity of symbols that we can begin to say something about God. Yet, it must be realized that in such speaking all our language must fail. We, to be sure, may speak of his work in the world--his rule and power, his love and direction. But to speak of these is not to speak of God in himself. It is only to speak of the deus absconditus whose will manifests itself in the creation.

The use of the 'in depth' imagery, like all other symbol, has its failure. Its most obvious one is that it tends to identify God with this world. Some of the responses to Robinson's book have shown this to be true, for some have written to express their thanks that they no longer have to believe in a personal God or a God of miracles, who raises men from the dead.

It seems that what we properly need is a balance of imagery and symbol, even if they be contradictory, that God may not be reduced to a single conception in our mind. To speak of God 'in the depth' moreover does not say anything about him. Just to say 'God loves and accepts you' is an idle phrase. Such a God is always hidden. We can only truly speak of God when we speak of Jesus Christ, his passion, death, and resurrection. 'Apart

from Christ, there is no God.' It is the message that Christ died for us, not plain talk about God accepting us, that reveals God. The message about Christ, moreover, is not found by looking into the depths of our existence. It comes from without. It is sent to us. That is why we cannot allow that only 'in depth' imagery be used. For this imagery only attempts to describe the unknown God. We may use it not so much to say something, but rather, in order not to say nothing. But in our proclamation, we can only properly speak of the Christ who came not from the depths of our existence, but from without, from without time and space, about which all human tongues must be silent.

Jin Bresnahan

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## BIBLIOGRAPHIC MUSINGS

In case you have forgotten, or haven't looked lately: NEW BOOKS IN THE LIBRARY ARE NOW ON DISPLAY in the cases in the rotunda. As you enter the room, you will see the books facing you. The volumes are grouped in four major fields, to facilitate your browsing: Exegetical, Historical, Doctrinal, Practical. Have a look.

The books you no longer need, or can encourage others to give, can be missionaries. From gifts to us we have sent these gifts to others since last week: Pacific Lutheran Seminary (1 book), Eastern Pennsylvania State Correctional Institution (163 books), Piney Woods School (34 books), United States Book Exchange (10 books).

The librarian's office door is always open. Drop in any time for help with your book and reference problems.

Henry Scherer,  
Librarian

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WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

HEYER COMMISSION

The week of January 18-25 has been designated a Week of Prayer for Christian Unity by the World Council of Churches. It is being observed by the Seminary community with prayers for unity and appropriate Lessons in the context of our regular chapel services. This morning a special service, prepared by Dr. Seltzer especially for our observance of the week, was used.

Beginning in 1940, The Faith and Order movement fixed its week of prayer for unity to coincide with the Roman Catholic Chair of Unity Octave. This latter observance was begun in 1908 by the Rev. Paul James Francis, superior of the Graymoor Monastery of the Society of the Atonement, in Garrison, N.Y. The octave, which coincides with the eight days concluding with the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, was approved by Pope Pius X in 1909.

This year, for the first time, Roman Catholics, Protestants, and Eastern Orthodox are using the same material, as well as a common theme for the observance. The material is a pamphlet prepared by the Association Unite Chretienne, of Lyons, France, more than 200,000 copies of which have been distributed in the U. S. by the National Council of Churches. This year's theme is "The Great Shepherd of the Sheep."

While we emphasize the cause of Christian unity in our corporate worship this week, it is hopefully a constant concern in our prayers both public and private, and a motivating force in our actions. We ought also to look forward to making this a concern in the prayer life of the people whom we will soon be serving as pastors. The unity for which we pray is indeed—

"The unity for which Christ asked God, unity in truth and love, unity for witness and service"

—Henry Ireland—

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TELEPHONE BID REJECTED. SEE BULLETIN BOARD FOR FULL DETAILS.

The Student Body decided, at its last meeting, that the cause of this year's Heyer Commission Drive shall be the seminary of the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church, in Tokyo. A goal of \$500 was also approved by the Student Body.

In view of this, the Executive Committee of the Heyer Commission is pleased to announce the appointment of Greg Shannon as Chairman of the drive. The drive will be conducted during the period April 6 through May 1. In the past it has been the practice to have the drive coincide with Lent. It is felt, however, because of the demands upon us during the Lenten season, it might be well to appropriate the month following Easter for the drive. More information on the Seminary in Tokyo will be forthcoming.

MATTHEW AND JOHN IN PARALLEL

As another week passes-by, we see a different situation in the Evangelical bowling league standings. If what they say is the 'Gospel truth' - "the last shall be first and the first, last", then we are in for a surprising, as well as a farciful, nerve-breaking season. Luke, who like 'stickers in a dog's tail' refuses to be left behind, is showing it by their determined bowling. As it stands anything can happen and it usually does. Opposite Luke is Mark who regained a first place, bowling a 3 game average of 770. This stands as the highest average in a night so far. Matthew was Mark's victim and inspite Matthew's defeat, it can not go without saying that Schlotter, top bowler for the night, rolled a 192. Matthew's team average was 711. In second place we find both Matthew and John. What happened to Matthew didn't happen to John resulting in an ascension of John. John bounced into action with a mystical 752 for the night and Luke trailed by a half a length with 739.

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Next week we will publish a report.