

THE SEMINARIAN

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A LETTER FROM MRS. TAPPERT

Open Letter to the Seminarians, Faculty and
Members of the Board of Directors.

October 8, 1976

Shock and consternation struck mind and body upon reading the October 6 issue of The Seminarian. Again I am obliged to express my thoughts and feelings via the editors of this paper. If one could hit Theodore Tappert's spirit below the belt, that has now been done. Ted seldom revealed to me internal seminary affairs, yet his death came a day after admitting to himself and to me that physically he would be unable to teach the final semester before retirement. His frustration also was evident when he stated that the one man who in his opinion was qualified to replace him in Reformation Church History and the Lutheran Confessions was somewhere in Europe. This carefully selected person was Oliver Olson. Ted's grief and pessimism over the welfare of the seminary was disturbing. The outcome was disastrous. It was impossible to console him. Yet nobody realized that the next day (Christmas) he would be gone from our midst.

Over the forty-three years of his teaching, Ted Tappert helped to maintain the excellent standards of the LTSP by supporting the choice of renowned faculty such as Hoh, Heinecken, Doberstein, Steimle and Bornemann. Clarence Lee was recruited after several years' search for a qualified scholar to share the work in the Church History Dept. My husband also advocated strongly the addition of the giant minds of Reumann, Lazareth, Krodel and McCurley.

Now the seminary appears to be floundering. Is it possible that personal feelings have interfered with objective evaluations and considerations? The difficulty today in securing top-notch theologians in any seminary ought to be recognized. Few clergymen in the ruling generation are knowledgeable about the history, doctrinal position and prestige of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, as well as sufficiently competent to teach our upcoming ministers of the Gospel.

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EDITORIAL

I must admit, this dialectic of law and gospel is becoming more agonizing as it takes on flesh. The resignation of Richard Olson and the non-vote effecting noncontinuence of Oliver Olson's contract reveals an unusual motif producing community suffering and lament in the decision-making process. It certainly is a matter of frustration for these two individuals. What individual is not only capable but proficient in teaching Educational Ministry at 8 a.m. on a Monday morning to a first year class which is rarely cognizant of "experiential" until ten months later in Clinical Pastoral Education? What individual bears sufficient strength to maintain a dialectic upon 35-50 persons; much less a dialectic of which one-half threatens and accuses our very pride?

Where does the civil use of law and the theological use of law begin? Suppose the nature of vote is commitment; the voices of "yea" and "nay" the voices of commitment to relationship. Is abstention a commitment to relationship? At the very least, abstention is the cry again of frustration. The position of the faculty evaluation committee is not an enviable one. At what point does law maintain community harmony and order? At what point does it accuse us all?

Can we (students) condemn the non-action of the faculty evaluation? "J' accuse" is not limited. Through our own dupery of professorial characteristics and opinion, we may have implied "the highest form of flattery" in that imitation. But our nuance was known only to ourselves; explicitly, we failed. Instead, all that was heard were the warbled notes (certainly not the Word) of criticism and abuse in our inter-personal relationships. If we complained of a professorial emphasis on the accusation of law, we condemned ourselves by our own accusatory remarks and descriptions which boxed and condemned individuals, like some adolescent's otter-trap. We demanded grace and exuded only law.

Now we remember grace. Will a last divisive petition absolve us? Have we grown in our fear of loss?

(continued on last page)

THE SEMINARIAN STAFF

Editors: Bill Damrow and Ray Miller

Typists: Mark Livermore
Woody Woodroffe

Ruth Keener

Crank: Tom Irwin, Jr.

"Good Buddy": John Zoppi

NOTE: John Roberts column "Confessions of the Masked Househusband" will appear in the next issue of The Seminarian. Meanwhile, he asks you to look for a red-spiral pocket notebook which is lost somewhere between Hagan Center and Jacobs Apts.

(continued, "A LETTER FROM MRS, TAPPERT)

Because Ted believed his home and family to be part of himself, his devotion to his profession, to our seminary and to the church always took priority. He was well-acquainted with Oliver Olson's academic background, his mastery of the German and Scandinavian languages and his theological scholarship. One needs only to digest Dr. Olson's lecture to the seminary community soon after his arrival in the winter of '74, or to read his section in the recent literary production of The Left Hand of God, to realize that he is well qualified for the position. Does not such a man deserve immediate re-consideration? The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia will suffer untold loss if Oliver Olson is rejected at this crucial moment when its character and reputation seem to be at stake.

Yours with sincere concern,

Helen Tappert (Mrs. Theodore)

copies to Pres. Bost and to the Deans, Reumann and Krodel

(Editor's note: For those who are unacquainted with the work of Dr. Tappert, those being mostly Juniors, the following is a partial outline of Dr. Tappert's relationship to this seminary:

Theodore G. Tappert served as instructor in this seminary from 1931 to 1936. He was made assistant professor and, on the death of Charles M. Jacobs in 1938, professor of Church History. For twelve years he was a member of the board of publication and for six years a member of the committee on church papers of the United Lutheran Church, and he was a participant in interdenominational as well as denominational study commissions. For six years he was a member of the executive board of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania, in 1952 a member of the board of Luther-Gesellschaft, in 1957 a member of the board of directors of the Foundation for Reformation Research, and president of the American Society for Reformation Research. Besides editing "The Lutheran Quarterly", he was editor of The Lutheran World Review and department editor of the New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge. He contributed articles to a half-dozen other encyclopedias, about 60 articles to theological journals, and chapters to a dozen symposia. He translated H. Sasse's Here We Stand (1938), and with J.W. Doberstein he edited and translated The Journals of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg. He was the author of The Church Through the Ages (1941), Our Neighbors' Churches (1954), Luther's Spiritual Counsel (1955), and The Lord's Supper (1961). In addition, he collaborated on a new edition of The Book of Concord (1959).)

UNIFORMITY AT WHAT COST?

A clergyman friend of mine once remarked that there are two basic kinds of people in the world, the "both-and's" and the "either-or's." The "both-and's" are the ones who seek for a common ground--the compromisers, the healers, the peacemakers. On the other hand the "either-or" people are those who tend to take a strong stand for or against the issues--the prophets, the activists, the martyrs.

It would seem that within our Church, indeed within our own Seminary, there should be room for both types of people. To be sure my friend's distinction is a simplistic one. Throughout a lifetime individuals are, at different times, compromisers and prophets, healers and activists. However, the person who dares to be different, who dares to "rock the boat" with controversial stances; he it is who, like the prophets of old, has a better chance of being stoned at the gate.

I firmly believe that the greater part of the Student Body at Mt. Airy Seminary is secure enough in its own sense of personal worth and Christian commitment to withstand, nay even to require and thrive upon, strong and well-thought-out statements of our Biblical, theological, and confessional heritage as Lutherans. To deny them that "prophetic voice" for the sake of a superficial uniformity is not only a personal tragedy in the short run but also a deeply serious pedagogical mistake in the long run.

Carl W. Filer

MEMORANDUM TO THE EDITORS OF THE SEMINARIAN From President Bost

Since the editorial in your October 6th issue reflected such a sensitive and appropriate concern, and since it was generous in its evaluation of my part in the Student Body meeting held earlier that day, I dispatch this communication with reluctance. However, at the risk of appearing ungrateful and picayune, I would call attention to several errors in fact which appear in the report on the Student Body meeting.

The article on page one states that "Mr. Robert Hughes has been promoted to Associate Professor" and that this action was "unprecedented" since Professor Hughes has not yet completed his doctoral program. Changes in rank can only be authorized by the Board of Directors of the Seminary and that body has not authorized a promotion for Professor Hughes. What has happened is that the academic area in which Professor Hughes serves has recommended that he be promoted, and the Executive Faculty has endorsed that recommendation and forwarded it to the Board Committee on Faculty which will prepare its own recommendation to the Board of Directors concerning Professor Hughes's status. While I did intend to make it clear that, since the earned doctorate is often considered a pre-requisite for promotion beyond the rank of Assistant Professor, the recommendation of the Executive Faculty with regard to Professor Hughes is a strong tribute to the quality of his work among us. I did not mean to imply that such a recommendation was "unprecedented in this seminary."

The article in question also states that "The faculty recommended to the Board of Trustees that Dr. Oliver Olson's services not be continued here at this seminary after his contract expires in June." In reviewing the several options open to the Executive Faculty with regard to Dr. Oliver Olson, I did note that such a recommendation was one of the possible actions which might have been taken. However, I believe I indicated that the Executive Faculty made no recommendation to the Board concerning Dr. Olson's continuation. Thus, his services would simply be concluded when his present contract expires. In my judgement, at least a formal recommendation to discontinue someone's services carries a far greater weight of negativism than the mere failure to renew a contract, even though from the institution's perspective, the end result may be the same.

"THE NEW INTERNS"

St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church
200 Longwood Drive, S.E. Huntsville, Alabama
35801

Greetings from the "Heart of Dixie" you all. It was good to get my first copy of The Seminarian and get a feel of what is happening this year. I am thankful that the paper is mailed out as a common means of communication for all of Mt. Airy's family.

In reading this first issue I am already looking forward to the football poll (my old domain) and renewed reports of Mt. Airy's success on the football field. Don't forget we go to Gettysburg this season.

Thus far I am having a good year at St. Mark's here in Huntsville. We have a cross-section of people from varied parts of the country, living here because of the space program. In addition we have a sizeable segment of Germans who came over after World War II, and helped in developing our space program. They are Americanized in many respects but still hold to many of their own traditions as well.

There is much to see and do here and it is a real learning time. I would like to welcome back the seniors and middlers and wish them well this year. And to the juniors I say welcome and I look forward to meeting you in 1977-78.

I encourage the editors and staff of The Seminarian as you begin another year of publication, I as one intern appreciate your work.

I would also like to add my thanks to the faculty and staff whose work in the precious two years has added to and supplied me with much of my abilities and feelings of confidence in many areas of ministry.

Peace to all who labor in His name,

Newell Embley

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Junior Class has arranged for Dr. Bost, Dr. Reumann, and Dr. Krodel to answer questions from students concerning recent campus events during convocation hour (9:40 A. M.) Wednesday. Place to be announced.

EDITOR'S NOTE

The Weekly Football Poll run by Chuck Koup has already been organized. It will begin to appear regularly in THE SEMINARIAN next week.

(Editorial, continued)

If we had not been trained by the best, we might say that "law and gospel" had contradicted itself. This common suffering in accusation and loss is its own personal earthquake: the twin lips of a fault crumbling and quaking as they wear upon one another, growing less and less, further separated. If we had not been trained by the best, we might say that the distinction between law and gospel was falling towards pure separation.---But we have been taught by the best. We have been taught alternatives. We know law and gospel to be distinguished yet not separated. The law has accused long enough....

Have we ever thanked you for teaching us to teach, to see alternatives, Rich Olson? Have we ever thanked you for teaching us to see God's law, His gospel, and from precisely what we are delivered, Oliver Olson?

This dialectic would become anguish as it takes on flesh.

Bill Damrow
Editor

THOMAS, ACQUAINT US

In an effort to acquaint all of you with what's going on, I have become a little more acquainted myself!

A good way to find out what is happening around the seminary is to look at the calendar posted on the bulletin board in the mail room. This is published each month to inform us about "official" functions here at LTSP. It is particularly important that you check that calendar before planning anything involving the seminary community activities so don't get "double scheduled."

I also have learned who to see for room scheduling and dates: if it's academic, see Dr. Krodel; if it's library related, see Dr. Lehmann; and if it's doesn't fall into one of the above categories, see Mr. Adams.

But most important if you want anybody to know about your activity, happening, meeting, or whatever--send all the pertinent info to "Thomas, Acquaint Us," Box 319, LTSP.

Have a good week,
Thomas

THIS WEEK October 14-20, Thurs-Wed

FRI to SAT Faculty retreat at "Sugarloaf" Retreat Center.

TUE LTSP Board Meeting

8:00 PM Inauguration Ceremony for Dr. Bost at the Chapel

WED 4:15 PM Sherry Hour--Library Rotunda

6:00 Deadline for THE SEMINARIAN

6:30-8:30 THE SEMINARIAN goes to press. Help always needed! 3rd Fl, Ref

8:00 "The Caribbean Synod in Puerto Rico and Beyond"

Presented by Representatives of the Caribbean Synod

REMINDER: Drivers for Nancy Wilbur--Please continue to sign up in Mrs. Maiden's office,
Thank you!

COMING SOON! A Weekly Bible Study session!