

the Seminarian

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WHEN WILL THE KILLING END--ANOTHER POINT OF VIEW

I am very strongly moved by both the senseless killing of John Lennon and more recently the attempted assassination of the President, with the serious injury resulting to him and his staff. We must strive to do as much as possible to curb violent crime throughout the world. The point at which I differ from the original article is on the path toward accomplishing this same goal, that of a peaceful world in which to live.

Let me begin by stating that America is not the only place such horrible acts occur. Northern Ireland has a much graver problem than we do, India has been witness to attempts against Indira Gandhi and her family, Nigeria has had two Presidents assassinated within recent years, and Latin America seems to be the source of continuing unrest. If we follow the rationale of the first article, strict laws should prevent such acts, however the facts do not bear this out. The laws of Northern Ireland (England) do not allow ownership of handguns or private ownership of rifles; shotguns and air rifles may be owned, but only after strict and often arbitrary screening of applicants, and still the problem exists. The assassinations in Nigeria were committed with handguns, yet national law prohibits private ownership of handguns. In India private ownership of any firearm is prohibited, but still violent crime continues. We too have the laws to prevent such acts. The alleged in both acts of violence should have been behind bars for violation of several federal laws prior to the acts, but we are not enforcing the laws we have. A law is only as powerful as the means of its implementation.

I feel that I must also question the insinuation that handguns do not have any legitimate use. To me, they have served as both a needed source of relaxation and as a tool for my survival. I hold advanced certification in two classes of pistol competition, and I occasionally hunt with handguns. As a tool, a small handgun, which many would consider a Saturday night special, has been a comfort to me on many trips into the woods while fighting forest fires and while searching for lost hikers along the Appalachian trail after sundown. It seems that there are few things other than a handgun which are so easy to carry, yet can be heard at considerable distances, even over the noise of a fire. Why not carry a flare gun? Two reasons are immediately evident: 1. they are of greater bulk and weight than a handgun, 2. when fire season occurs, a flare falling from the sky at a point the firer has no control over, is like building a bonfire to signal for help. I consider the above two uses of handguns as legitimate. I leave it to the readers to decide for themselves.

The statistics of deaths which are firearms related are appalling, but so are the deaths which are caused by alcohol related traffic accidents, which are equal to the number of deaths related to firearms. Yet the same people pushing for a firearms ban are not pushing for either the ban of the automobile or alcoholic beverages. One may say, sure, but its illegal to drive intoxicated, but it is also illegal to threaten a person with a deadly weapon. In certain ethnic groups

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KILLING... Cont

within our society, homicide and injury committed with knives are higher than the number committed with handguns, a gun ban would have little effect on the crimes of passion in that sector. The first article seems to hint at accidental deaths, but yet ties them in with the paragraph on homicide. Yes, I do realize a death is a death, however, the problem of accidental death is one that can be addressed by different means which if instituted, could be fairly effective. The main problem is one of ignorance, and that can be remedied by proper instruction, not teaching everyone to shoot, but teaching as many as possible how to check to see if a weapon is loaded and how to properly handle and store a weapon.

The proposition that availability increases utilization may end up being true, however, the increases in violent crime in this country has not been directly related to either the number of handguns or firearms sold within a given decade but seem to more closely follow the state of the economy. The number of people in the country also influences the number of incidents of violent crimes, but I feel we should be looking at percentage figures for a proper perspective. If we do, we see one of the most violent eras in America being the prohibition years - an era of economic depression and when law abiding citizens were, by an act of Congress, turned into outlaws, something I foresee occurring again if handguns are ever banned.

I feel by taking a stand on defending the right to own firearms and particularly handguns, is probably more alienating in today's society than an anti-gun stand. Ownership or even defense of ownership of weapons is viewed as not legitimate by most of the society within the power structure. One is often accused of being power mad or in need to prove one's manliness, I don't know how one explains that many national class shooters are women, but this is what is often cast up to the shooting sector of the society.

Another point I feel compelled to raise concerning gun control is the effect it may have concerning other rights put forth in the Bill of Rights. Although my knowledge of law is fairly limited, I believe the following point is correct, if not, I'm open to correction. The point is that as long as the Bill of Rights stands as one solid block of law, the chances of any of them being changed is rather slim, however, once one of the Articles is changed or discarded, a legal precedence is set that threatens all of them with the same fate. I'm not ready to take this chance with any of the Rights these Articles guarantee, especially the rights of freedom of speech and worship. I feel one must consider this before proposing to change any of our constitutional rights.

The problem of violent crime must be dealt with, and I wish the solution was as simple as banning handguns, however I feel it is not. The problems are much more deeply seated, which manifest themselves in greed, pride, jealousy, injustice and a lack of respect for life, both plant and animal. These problems are much more difficult to solve, but like cheap grace and atonement, anything less than the solution of the basic problems will not lead to our ultimate goal-- a peaceful world.

I feel I've risked much in presenting my point of view, it's not very popular in the religious community, i.e. the NCC stand on gun control, however I feel we must face the underlying problems and not simply fool ourselves by dealing with their outlets, for unfortunately they will surface in another form which may be even more destructive such as indiscriminate bombings. I feel I may be risking a friendship, though I hope I'm not, but I felt I had to present another point of view. If I was one of the people for which you withheld your article, Mark, I am sorry you thought that was necessary, for you have the right

FOR THE SEMINARIAN

I was interested (though not enthusiastic) about Mark Schlächter's article (issue 17 of the Seminarian) on gun control. I could argue that people kill and murder more people with automobiles than all "weapons" put together but I won't. I could also say even if there were no guns people would murder each other with something—even the jawbone of an ass if they lacked this they would steal their neighbor's ass to get a jawbone! In other words the sickness is with people and you can't legislate it out of existence—but I won't use this tired argument. Nor will I propound on not treating the symptom with band-aids and Christ being the cure for the disease because I know some people think we should take all kinds of things away from society for the sake of Christ. Also, so I am not accused of criticizing without offering an alternative, I would suggest arming every person in this country over 21 years of age (except conscientious objectors of course) with a good handgun and making it mandatory that it should be carried on our persons except while sleeping. That should deter a lot of the more brazen crimes and convicted criminals of course would be prevented by law from carrying a weapon—like they are now???

This legalistic approach won't work either, of course, so back to theory. Why I disagree with you the most Mark is both theoretical and I think, substantial. Your article says "I do not feel the general public should be entitled to unrestricted purchase and possession of small and easily concealed firearms, i.e. handguns". In other words, the general public is not to be trusted. This is generally known claim of the oppressors in this world who also say the general public (or society) cannot be trusted to govern itself. The oppressors very quickly move then to disarm the oppressed lest the oppressors be compelled to live in fear of the power of the oppressed to free themselves.

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FOR THE SEMINARIAN Cont.

Love is the answer of course and love is "never selfish, not quick to take offense. Love keeps no score of wrongs;.... There is nothing love cannot face..." (I Cor. 13)

In other words love doesn't oppress so love doesn't need weapons, nor fear them in the hands of someone who loves. The problem (issue) so many people are steamed up about really has very little to do with weapons—know what I mean? Think Liberation.

Neal Brown

KILLING ... (Cont from p. 2)

to express your beliefs at this campus and I hope I'm correct in saying that it will not result in anyone being ostracized from the community.

I too ask, when will the killing stop? I believe it will not occur until the human race gains a new respect for life, one which the world has never adopted before but has been privileged to witness in but a few very special examples for Christians that example is Jesus of Nazareth.

Bruce E. Dalious

POSITION AVAILABLE

The editor of the Seminarian is responsible for the accumulation of articles and their subsequent printing in this publication. I admit it is not one of the most glamorous jobs here at the seminary, and the rewards are entirely internal. I have heard from one person who has expressed an interest in learning the ropes for next year. I would encourage at least one other, and possibly two other person(s) to see me about sharing the duties for next year. Had it not been for Mike Vaughan and his help this year, I would have abandoned this position long ago. It is not a one person job, please, participate.

Don Mason

SISYPHUS THE CHRIST (PART 2)

For Sisyphus, the decision to exert himself in the face of the apparent fruitlessness of his appointed task is one that does not rise from the illusion of hope, nor from the delusions of boredom. Hopelessness and tedium are the damnable, but essential, qualities which make the absurdity of Sisyphus' existence so profound and exquisite. The rock is not rolled because there is hope that it will eventually come to rest atop the slope. To look at that particular event as the "goal" of the toil is to spark the inferno of frustration. It cannot be accomplished, the gods have forbidden it. It must be dismissed from consciousness, to the extent to which that is possible. Boredom cannot saddle the blame for the ascent. Even in the conditions of Sisyphus' condemnation, there are alternatives to such a brutal and exhausting occupation. The imagination is the limit in devising possible options for the consumption of time and energy, even in the confines of his unique person.

To what then do we attribute the tireless commitment of Sisyphus? To this point, I have briefly surfaced two of the most common explanations for his activities and have found them to be of little satisfaction. It occurs to me that Sisyphus' motivation is rooted in the knowledge that the boulder before him is the only object in his environment which he can alter. Everything else in his infernal plight is "given" and he is powerless to alter those particularities. He commands only the rock, and only he can alter its position, that is until he defies the gods and pushes it to the hill's apex. But he is in command of its destiny, he can push it, and its movement is the one thing he can accomplish. In a sense, he is the rock's master, and the task of manipulating and moving the rock is the focus of his existence. He commands it and by his hands it moves. His satisfaction is in the communion of sweat and stone and not in the achievement of the pinnacle. The fulfillment of his existence is participation in the task, not in the completion of it. Indeed, if the task were to be completed, his existence would lose its motivation. One considers, if Sisyphus could station the rock permanently at the pinnacle, would he himself push it off after a time. The task is his reality, rather than some hopeless goal. He knows his limits and he revels in the relationship of self-expense with that over which he has power. He fulfills his potential!

Let us now consider the Christian. What drives the Christian to toil beneath the rock of agape at the foot of the mountain of rampant indifference and intense apathy? Until very recently, I would have answered that question by enthusiastically stating that we are driven by the "hope of success". I would have argued that it is well within our limits to haul the stone to the pinnacle and position it there for all time, consummating what has traditionally been called the Kingdom of God. Such was my enthusiasm, trust and optimism for our species. I must confess, however, that I am now convinced that it is not within our abilities to accomplish or "complete" this task and that we are not capable of constructing that for which we hope. It is arrogance, bordering on stupidity, to think that we can eliminate injustice and indifference by our own means, especially when we consider the rather grotesque and graphic mural of human endeavor to date. It is hardly an encouraging testimony. Indeed, it is hopeless.

Ron Parks

STUDENTS VOTE TO KEEP CONSTITUTION

Twenty-eight (28) LTS Students voted against suspending the SCC constitution, while nineteen (19) votes were cast in favor of suspending the constitution. There were five(5) students who voted to abstain.

The results were counted in the recessed April 8, 1981 meeting at which ten students were present. Thus, the SCC will operate according to its Constitution.

Some of the voters wrote comments on their ballots which expressed their concern for lack of clarity and information about what was being voted on.

After the count was concluded, the SCC set April 22, 1981 at 11:30 am as a meeting date to place nominations for SCC offices before the students. At that time, there will also be opportunity for nominations to be offered from the floor.

April 28, 1981 at 11:10 am will be a regular SCC meeting in which elected SCC officers will be installed for the 1981-82 year. Between April 22 and April 27, 1981, students will cast their ballots to vote for student officers.

Important dates to remember!
 April 22, 1981 - Report of SCC nomination committee to students
 April 22 - 27, 1981 Elections
 April 28, 1981 - Installation of 1981-82 officers

Support the SCC - be part of the solution.

Allen Tyndall
 Stephany Sechrist

THE ED VICE COLUMN

After reading Dean Hartley's study on clergy morale and conversing with fellow students, I realize the necessity here at LTS for a person to whom Seminarians can turn to for advice, guidance, and comfort. Seminarians need pastoral care and counseling too. I take to the pen now in an attempt to provide such pastoral care and counseling. I can help you and you can help me (I can practice my pastoral counseling on you). From here on, address any problems to "Dear Ed" and drop it by the Seminarian office. I will answer them in the next issue of the paper. Many of your problems as Seminarians are shared, so don't be shy, let's help one another.

Word gets around fast. Here's a letter already:

Dear Ed,

I am male, and a youth minister working primarily with senior highs. One of my girls asked me to attend her senior prom. I was very flattered and since I love to dance and never attended my own senior prom, I immediately accepted. My problem is this, what color tux would be appropriate for a youth minister?

Color-Dumb

Dear Color-Dumb,

According to Ministry (A magazine for clergy) red is never appropriate for a pastor, so that is one color eliminated. Kelly Green is a calm, acceptable color and very youthful (you'd fit in better with the high-school crowd). If your cate wears pink, perfect!! Pink and green together are the latest in the preppie style. Then again, if you're a red head, green looks obnoxious on you. Try your basic black tux--black is always appropriate. You can even save tux rental by using your funeral suit. Have fun and don't forget her flowers!!!

ED

P.S. Make sure your cleric matches your tux!!!