

THE SEMINARIAN

The Student Paper of the Lancaster Theological Seminary

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Issue 1

EDITORIAL

A NEW BEGINNING ON CAMPUS

In keeping with the spirit of new beginnings that is the theme of next week's convocation service, we would like to endorse and encourage participation in a special project being organized by the SCC's Seminary Life Committee. The committee is attempting to give new life and beauty to the seminary surroundings. On Wednesday, October 6, from 12:00 noon until 5:00 p.m., volunteers are asked to do their part in giving the maintenance staff some help in cleaning up and beautifying the campus. Planters, painters, scrubbers and sowers are needed for a few hours or the whole afternoon. This is a great opportunity for physical improvements, exercise, and a chance to get together.

We have often heard complaints from seminary neighbors and visitors about the unkempt appearance of the LTS grounds. As students, there is a lot that we can do to present a good impression. Already this summer several students and families showed their interest by planting flowers in the quad area. The Parish Resource Center staff did a wonderful job decorating the walkway beside the Lark Building. These efforts are greatly appreciated. But there is still plenty to be done.

We would like to continue that spirit which has begun. Let us take pride in the appearance of LTS and do our part to help out. Further details of the event are forthcoming. We hope to see you there.

-Mike Gingerich and Bonnie Ernisse

PLEASE REGISTER AND VOTE

by Michael Gingerich

It is not necessary to tell anyone here about the importance of voting in elections. We all know that our individual voices do count when joined together in an organized fashion.

This year in Pennsylvania we elect a U.S. Senator, a Governor, 23 U.S. Representatives, 23 State Senators, and 203 State Representatives. Here, as across the nation, these elections will be — in most part — a referendum on the New Federalism and the Reagan administration. A positive or negative assesment of the current government will affect the course of U.S. defense, social, and economic policy for decades to come — perhaps for the rest of many of our lives — much the way New Deal legislation did for 40 years.

So, if you are registered to vote please do on November 2. If you are not registered, or are not registered in Lancaster (it is easier to change your registration to here than to go the absentee ballot route), you have until October 3 to do so. Registration forms, which can also be used for address changes, will be available in by the mailboxes in the Academic Building.

Speak your conscience with your vote. The nation can really use the help.

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The Seminarian would like to welcome all new and returning members of the LTS community. We look forward to the gifts that each of us can bring to make this an exciting and rewarding year.

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The deadline for submission to the next issue of The Seminarian is Monday, October 4, at noon. Please place letters and/or articles in the Seminarian mailbox (alphabetically placed among students' boxes).

ANNOUNCEMENT

To all LTS indentification card holders: Effective immediately a special price at the United Artists movies, Delco Plaza Mall in York (Carlisle Road Exit off of Route 30 West). Your price \$2.50 per movie anytime — except Tuesday, when our prices are \$1.00, and Saturday shows before 6:00 are \$2.00. We offer 5 different movies daily. Showtimes are listed in Lancaster's Sunday newspapers.

Rod Mundy, Assistant
Manager UA Movies and
Junior at LTS

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The next staff meeting for The Seminarian will be Tuesday, September 28 at noon in the refectory. We welcome any new members.

Bonnie and Mike

THE SEMINARIAN
Lancaster, Pennsylvania

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CONGRATULATIONS to Doug and Sandy Essinger-Hiltman for the birth of their son, Thomas Martin, on Tuesday, September 21. Our prayers and good wishes are with them.

AN OUTLOOK ON LEBANON
by L.N. Bakalian

It is September, and Maria and I are still in Lancaster, not in Beirut as we though last Spring. The stage has been set and reset, torn down and rearranged many times since then, and as Lebanon has fared, so have our hopes. We spent the entire summer watching and waiting, and still we are waiting to know what our decision will be. It might be helpful for me to relate to you the situation there as I see it — not as a Middle East expert, which I am not, but as an interested observer, as one who has a stake in what is happening there.

The Lebanese themselves show a fair amount of foolishness on one hand, and powerlessness on the other. They have fancied themselves as a tolerant and peace loving nations for years, as evidenced in their governmental set-up. The president is to be a Maronite Christian, the Prime-Minister a Sunni Moslem, and so forth, representing the different religious groups. This was based on the majorities in the country at one time, but it is now held to by the Christians rather tenaciously, because they are no longer in the majority. The last census, taken in 1934, does not show the Moslem population as it really is. So the social fabric has been strained for years, and the interrecine strife there existed before the Lebanese decided to grandly take in the Palestinians, who were kicked out of Jordan in the early 1970's. With such disunity, they were an easy pushover for the Palestinians who knew what they wanted: to be in a good position to get at Israel. So as discontent grew against the Palestinians, who overran the land and made Lebanon their own little battleground, armies of Lebanese began to surface and unite against common enemies: foreign armies.

The Syrians have been in Lebanon since the 1975-76 civil wars, at the "request" of the Lebanese government. Actually, the Arab nations decided it would be a good idea for Syria to be there, and she jumped at the chance to take over Lebanon, which Syria considered part of herself anyway. Remember that since Lebanon's independence

in the 40's, Syria has never opened diplomatic relations with Lebanon, a further indication of her disbelief in Lebanon's sovereignty. Syria is much like the Palestinians: they act like they own the place. They have their checkpoint and their curfews and their taxes. If you want to build somewhere and you get a permit from the Lebanese government, depending on where you are, the Syrians or Palestinians would tell you that you could not build, unless you also got a permit from them. The Lebanese just got angrier and angrier, while feeling less and less able to do anything about it.

The armies which have arisen since the occupation of Lebanon by these foreign troops are numerous. The major ones are Saad Haddad's in the south and the late Bashir Gemayel's in central Lebanon. There are other "Christian" armies besides these, as well as Moslem armies at different points on the political spectrum. Some hate the Syrians, but support the Palestinians. Some the other way around. Some hate both. Some hate the Christians more. Some hate the Christians less, and are willing to collaborate against common enemies, the permutations go on and on. But one thing should be made clear: these are not "religious armies," fighting "for the faith." Those are labels tacked on by people in the West who can think of things in no other terms except black and white. The other night I heard a TV preacher spouting some of the most inane ignorance I have ever heard about how terrible that "Christians" are being killed in Lebanon, as if the Christians themselves did no killing.

Israel is presently seen as the bad guy, especially now that the Israelis have reasserted themselves in Beirut, at no one's request, following the assassination of President-elect Bashir Gemayel. The people of the Middle East have never particularly trusted the Israelis, though the West is just beginning to understand why. Not the least of those who mistrust Israel is Lebanon. Their welcoming the Israelis in to get rid of the Palestinians and others was not out of the affection for Israel, but because they knew Israel

(continued on next page)

AN OUTLOOK ON LEBANON (cont.)

could do the job. Israel was to them like a paid assassin. Get in, do your work, and get out. Your payment is more secure borders (though Israel has and will undoubtedly take more). The world stood aside and let Israel go to the work, though an occasional bleat of protest was heard. The world knew that something had to be done with the Palestinians, and they thought that maybe this was it. Lebanon was at the point of desperation, but until the Israelis got involved, nobody really cared. The Israelis have got blood on their hands, it's true, but they are not the only ones. The many sides involved all share blame.

Lest we get too comfortable, the U.S. also carries its share of responsibility. Until we were implicated as accessories to certain crimes, we didn't much care what was happening. But now that the U.S.'s pristine sanctity has been called into question, we say "No, no Israel. You mustn't do that with our guns." We fuel the controversies in the Middle East, as do many other nations, then get upset when the arms are actually used. Added to this naivete are the impotent cries from different leaders, including church heads, saying, "Stop the war!" as if they were God. Who needs God when we've got Menachem Begin? The only sense that has come out are actions: the recruitment of doctors and nurses to go to Beirut (through Church World Service), the money for food and shelter which is being distributed, the commitment of our military troops there. Words have lost their meaning. Action has the only currency. I hope that the U.S. will take the lead in not worrying about its own blemishes, but act on the needs that are apparent there, putting its treasure where it says its heart is.

RENDERINGS FROM REBECCA

by Rebecca J. Seldomridge

This article is dedicated to all incoming community and everyone who celebrates their "firsts" with them.

Do you know that the first...

- football game to be televised was on September 30, 1939?
- toothbrush was invented in China in 1498?
- calendar dates back to 34,000 B.C.E.
- successful 5 and 10¢ store opened in Lancaster in 1879?
- woman to be ordained in the E and R was Beatrice Weaver in 1948? She is now The Rev. Beatrice Weaver McConnell serving a parish in Columbia, the wife of our seminary organist Frank McConnell.
- time that President Interim Fauth will be presented to us is September 30th at the evening convocation?
- recorded dream (Jungians take note) was one of Abimelech's? He was told to return Sarah to Abraham (Gen. 20:3-8).
- person to fall asleep during a sermon was Eutychus? He fell out of a window after he dozed off during Paul's preaching. Fortunately, Paul revived him (Acts 20:9).
- commandment in the Bible is to "Be faithful and Multiply" (Gen. 1:27)? Some commandments can be down right fun to keep.
- war mentioned in the Bible is The War of the Kings of the North (Gen. 14:1-24) and the archaeological evidence dates it to the 20th century B.C.E.?
- time an atomic bomb was used in warfare was over Hiroshima on August 6, 1945?
- battle of WWII took place on....??

As we celebrate our firsts let us be attentive of the rest of the world, that we may see that some "firsts" never become a reality.

This summer was an eventful one for 20 year old Enter Eller of Harrisonburg, Virginia. On August 17, he became the first young man to be found guilty on federal felony charges of failing to register for the draft. His reason for not registering was direct: "I do not have hatred for authority. I have not registered simply because the U.S. Government has asked me to do something God would not have me do." For following his religious convictions he faces up to five years in federal prison.

This summer was an eventful one for Bob Jones University. A tuition tax credit bill was finally introduced in Congress which would greatly aid the privately supported institution. But amendments were attached that would require the IRS to deny recognition to institutions whose racial policies were contrary to the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Once again, Bob Jones stands to lose for standing by its conviction that interracial marriage — and hence interracial dating — is unbiblical and sinful.

What do these two cases have in common? They both show the consequences of holding an unpopular religious belief. And they both show the fences thrown around the religious freedom of the First Amendment: "Congress shall make no law reespecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

The American constitutional tradition has been and continues to be one of limiting religious liberty to those things which are "churchy," overtly pious, and otherworldly. But when religion comes out of the cathedral and enters daily life, particularly as a guide for conscience and morality, and becomes a central factor of one's attitudes and actions, it no longer enjoys Constitutional protection. One's public actions are considered to be subject to public policy, regardless of whether their motivations be religious.

Hence, "the free exercise thereof" is viewed extremely narrowly. It does not apply to practices — such as Bob Jones's ban on interracial dating — that

are somehow out of step with society's standards. Nor can it be raised as a defense for disobeying a law — such as Enten Eller's refusal to register — that is out of step with one's religious belief.

Regardless of our opinions and emotions regarding the morality or acceptability of Enten Eller's or Bob Jones' actions, we should be supportive of both as they attempt to assert that faith is relevant to all of life, and that the government has no right to judge the legality of one's religious practices. Religion — true religion, as defined by the Hebrew prophets — cannot be isolated only into worship, but must be carried out in daily life. This is a point which time and again the American government refuses to recognize, despite the explicit working of the constitution. The Bible and the Federal Government are on a collision course. Government cannot be allowed to regulate religious practices — no matter how bigoted, prejudiced, unlawful. For where will regulation end? Bob Jones has been punished for believing interracial dating is wrong. Shall Catholic Bishops be tried for treason for preaching against American Foreign and military policy in Latin America? Enten Eller has been prosecuted for breaking the law requiring draft registration. Shall liturgical churches be prosecuted for administering communion wine to underage believers? Just how far can government go in punishing practice or dictating doctrine?

A answer might be had from history. During the Council of Nicea, it is believed that the Roman Emperor Constantine resolved the Christological debate by urging the pope to choose homousia — "of one being with the Father" as the creedal formulation of the Divinity of Christ. What happened then might happen today. Who will be the modern day emperor to impose creed, faith, or morals, upon the Church? Let us keep Government out of the worship place.

A DISCLAIMER: While I admire and ardently support Bob Jones' efforts to be free of IRS harassment, I am equally adamant in my opposition to the distorted doctrine the institution holds that caused this conflict. Yet right or wrong, no religious principle or practice should be subject to government persecution.