

the Gala Christmas Edition
P Seminarian X
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A SEMINARIAN CHRISTMAS SPECIAL OR
HOW THE GRINCH STOLE THE CHRIST

The village of Hollowville sits nestled among the rolling hills of Anystate USA. The people there are much like you or me, they have the same problems, the same challenges, the same celebrations, and the same threats. Life is simple there, the residents go through the regular motions of daily routine, working daily through the week and sometimes on Saturdays, with Sundays reserved as God's day, and most of the people belong to one of the three churches in town. This year, they drew towards Christmas with their usual preparations, ordering their decorations from Grinch City, thirty miles east. Roger Wilko, owner of Herb's Grocerette, ordered gala shopping bags with a holiday motif. The town council ordered a huge banner for the town square to welcome the season. Hope, Peace, and Love churches each ordered new accouterments for their respective crèche scenes. B.B. Biggs of Biggs Department Store and Pharmacy replenished her stock of cards and gifts in preparation for the spending season. And they all waited eagerly for Grinch City to fill the orders.

Roger's bags came first. "Merry Yuletide" they proclaimed in bright red script, brandishing a grinning Santa atop an ornate sleigh. Why those are downright cheery, thought Roger, as he stored his non-holiday bags in his stockroom. Proudly, Roger filled bags with hams, and cranberries, and potatoes, and so on, as the people of Hollowville got their food for the holidays, wishing all a Merry Yuletide as he worked.

The banner came, and it was beautiful, gold and silver flecked letters of red and green, trees and Santas frolicking gaily around the border, one big portrait of Saint Nicholas splitting the message "Season's Greetings". Oh, but the town parents were proud of this banner, a real beauty. They hung it in the square three weeks before the holiday with great pomp and ceremony, the climax of the Jack Frost parade.

B.B. Biggs was panicked. She thought she would never get her gifts and cards in time for the season. People kept asking when the shipment would arrive, and finally with only three and a half weeks left, they arrived, Season's Greetings, Happy Holidays, Welcome Santa, Cheers, Yuletide Wishes, her card assortment was sold out in a week. The gift buying bonanza had also hit, and she had very little time to do more than sell, sell, sell.

Hope, Peace, and Love churches consolidated resources to construct a makeshift crèche, as their orders could not be filled. They could not decide on a location. They could not decide which pieces were in better shape. They could not decide who was in charge. So they scrapped the crèche, just this once. And on the eve of the holiday, a two thousand year old man wept. And no one in Hollowville noticed.

Don Mason

A REFLECTION ON "FEEDBACK"

I feel an urgent need to respond to Mike Weiser's Feedback that appeared in the 12-3-80 issue of the Seminarian. Knowing full well my own sense of values, beliefs, impressions, and personal biases, I am submitting my response in two separate articles. The first one is as SCC President. The second one will be my personal feelings and explorations as a single, concerned member of the LTS community.

Mike initially seems to be raising several questions in his article:

- (1) "What is the purpose of the Seminarian?";
- (2) "Should editorial guidelines or policies be formulated and adhered to regarding materials, articles, poetry, language, etc.?";
- (3) "For which audience is the Seminarian intended?"

Initially I would like to direct our attention to Article V, Section A (1) of the SCC Constitution regarding the Seminarian. "The Seminarian is the official title of the newspaper of the Seminarian Community Council. Members of this committee are responsible for the publication of this paper, as well as any other publications deemed necessary by the Seminarian Community Council. It will also be the duty of this committee to handle, in cooperation with the other committee all public relations concerning the Seminarian community."

Keeping this focused uppermost in our minds, hopefully, it is clearly understood that no one should become apprehensive about submitting articles, poetry, or commentaries which present "personal opinions" or be unduly questioned as to whether or not such was done "under the guise of community concerns". This is particularly important, because if we truly consider ourselves to be a community, then whatever concerns any individual will necessarily be of concern to the wider community. This does not discount the fact that there may be a wide variance in support as to the validity of that concern.

(cont.)

(cont.) But a caring, hearing, loving community is accepting of both those individuals and factions with whom we agree or disagree. Therefore, the opportunity and the invitation should and must remain existent for anyone and everyone to present his/her own "soap box sermon(S) on various causes", if the majority of the concerned community believes in and supports the intent of the Seminarian. This right, this gift, this hope is there, accessible, and free for any and all members of the LTS community---be they seminarians, faculty, administration, spouses, or family members. It exists for all of us---Gail Tillotson, Mike Weiser, Steve Andrews, Barry Lace, Beth Nordbeck "and friends", and those not identified.

As SCC President, I have been made very much more aware of the divisiveness which has surfaced among us over the issue of inclusive/exclusive language. It is not my intent at this time to discuss the relative merits of each. Suffice to say, if Mike is correct in his assessment that the issue of language is "chasing out as many people from the Christian community as they expect to add" then indeed, we all must re-think as to who is/are the "oppressed". At any rate, further evaluation is needed before any definitive judgment can be rendered as to whether or not the paucity of chapel attendance can be attributed to the issue itself, or rather that there is an inverse relationship between attendance in chapel and length of time invested as a seminary student. Which one needs the greater attention since both of these factors are apparently operational at this point in time.

Without suggesting editorial censorship, I hope that each person who contributes to the Seminarian will be mindful of the language and tone selected, so that there is a lessened possibility of inflammatory rhetoric and/or a

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REFLECTION (cont.)

seeming disrespect for others and the positions and beliefs held by them. Let us be reminded that a Christian is above all else loving.

It is unfortunate that Mike perceives the racism-sexism seminar in such negative terms. Let it neither be overlooked nor forgotten that the racism-sexism seminar is based upon printed material published by the national office of the United Church of Christ located in New York. It is intended purpose is to merely seek parallels between the origins and perpetuation of both racism and sexism in American society and, in a very real way, the church. Thus, it would appear to be unfair to label "Beth Nordbeck and friends" (of whom at least 4 participants are male, including myself), "as evidence of destructive forces at work in the church today."

Mike, I applaud you for your courage in speaking out and encourage you to continue to feel free in doing so. You understood the risks involved and were not deterred by them. I celebrate with you in that personal triumph. I too, stand ready and willing to discuss the issues and concerns addressed in our respective articles.

Stephen B. Andrews
SCC President

ROUND ABOUT TOWN

My hope for the New Year is to write this column every week. This space will be used to share various aspects of Lancaster, and to lift up people and events here at LTS.

Today I wish to set forth my Christmas wish for us here at LTS. It is my hope that we can set aside our differences. If we can join together as Christians and love each other as Christians, maybe we can lift ourselves above our oppression and the oppression we put on others. We are first called to follow Christ and love others. Let us share that love this Christmas.

Jeffrey S. Dick

TRANSFORMATION (Rom. 12: 1-2)

Prepare your cocoon
then
little silkworm
for God has brought the season
which calls for
your self
to be given up.
Spin it gently
carefully
lovingly
for the gift which you give
is precious.
Let go
of your old life
as a worm
Let
your old self
die.
For as you move through
the dark sacrificial chamber
of your cocoon
You will find
the new life
and
light
of a butterfly
And every flutter
of your wings
will show the rhythm
of
the breath of God.

Patti Carque

JANUARY TERM

During the second week of January session, the Senior collegium is sponsoring an open forum fueled by input from personal experience. The topic is the student and her/his problems encountered in parish work as a student.

Registration for this group is preferred, so see Andrea McCaw for further details. Some of the areas of consideration will be the authority system, the 'typical' and the atypical student situation and more. We hope that this kind of discussion will enable all participants to learn a little bit more about our own experience as it is enlightened by the experiences of others.

Don Mason

THE CALL TO MINISTRY

The call to ministry is both private and public. There is no one who can question that private call. However, one's public response to such a private call is another matter. It is one for which we all should prepare our selves to answer and defend if asked. While the following work is lacking in its literary references to the female, it is my hope that the message it seeks to impart is not lost due to its omission.

This world
Is where we were born.
This world
Is where we shall die.
This world is where, between
birth and death,
We work and play.

Between birth and death
Some men live for self.
Some men live for others.
Some men live with no purpose.
Most men live with mixed motives.

Most Christians are like most men.
They live with mixed motives.
They are neither wholly good
nor wholly bad.
They are both good and bad.
They say, "this is God's world.
We are his sons, and brothers each
to each".
And they try to act
as though this were true.
But they fail. Again and again.

They see the man Jesus,
Who said that God still loves them,
That he continues to work
in his world--
Sometimes in hidden ways,
sometimes openly--
To bring nearer to each other
and to himself.
In Jesus Christians see God
at work in this world.

In Jesus God works
To free the guilty from despair,
To heal the hurt of bigotry,
To make whole the fragmented,
To offer his presence to the lonely.
(cont.)

CALL (cont.)

Through his Spirit and
his people God
Sets before men and nations
the ways of peace and justice,
Makes clear his will
for their lives together, and
Binds up the wounds of humanity.

"who will tell this story?"
God asks.
"Whom shall I entrust
with this work?"

Those who say,
"Here I am. Can I help?"
Are those whom we call
his ministers.
Isaiah was one of these.
So was Amos, and John the Baptist.
Peter, Andrew and Paul.
Augustine, Aquinas and Calvin
Albert Schweitzer, Höhn XXIII,
Martin Luther King.

If you are one who
somewhere and somehow
Hears this call
To live for men
in the service of God,
Then you too may be
one of his ministers.

This title was originated by S. Andrews for verses found in a Lancaster Theological Seminary publication circa 1965. I found it when browsing through the archives here in the LTS Library. There was no indication as to its author.

Stephen B. Andrews

THANK YOU

Thanks to all who came to visit,
called and prayed for me while I
was in the hospital. I was
touched at so much concern for me.
It made my stay so much nicer.
Thanks once again in the Spirit
of Christ, and happy Holiday
Season.

Sincerely,
Marie Grayson