



Volume 28

Number 13

SPRING CLEANING TIME

March 16, 1977

WHO ARE WE?

I am greatly troubled by three articles appearing in the recent *Seminarian*. The articles on the *Seminarian* itself, on the SCC, and on the need for practical training all appear to be attempts to bandage symptoms of a gnawing disease--our real failure at knowing who we are and where we are going. We, the Seminary, do not know who we are! We do not know what our aim and goal is as a body. The articles point toward an understanding of our aim and purpose, but I am wondering if what they are saying is really pointing far enough toward our true goal and aim. The articles on the *Seminarian* and the SCC are based on the assumption that our goal is to be a community. But the word "community" does not really convey much emotion, feeling, or faith, at least for me. And if you think about it, everything is a community in some sense. What makes communities unique are their aims and goals, what are ours? The article on practical training assumes our aim is: "to be preparing ministers for the parish ministry." But this also strikes me as being incomplete for two reasons. First, many people connected to Seminary are not preparing for a "parish" or even preparing to become ordained. Secondly, it suggests that what we are doing here, is not valuable in and of itself. What I find in these two attempts to define our aim is a desperate endeavor to proclaim what I think our real aim is and should be--to be a "church." For me the word "church" more clearly expresses our aim. But yet we seldom, if ever, really ask ourselves if we truly are a church. In fact, I sense we act and think as if we are not! We continually try to label ourselves in some other way rather than facing our calling to be a church.

The epitome of this is the PTP program. What minister on Sunday morning says to his congregation: "If you want to really worship, go to the church down the block?" (Perhaps a honest minister who recognizes his own unfaithfulness to his calling, would do so). Are we denying Christ's call to be his body? The church is not out there, it is right here. Protestants enjoy thinking of the community of ministers and are fond of saying every member is a minister. If we truly believe that, then Seminary more than anywhere else should be a church since a majority of everyone here is a minister or is trying to be a minister.

If then we are a church, we must ask: What is our model, our image of "church"? We must continually ask such a question since the model we experience here is a model we will carry with us through our lives. We need to seriously, honestly, and openly ask ourselves if the model of the church we are living here at Seminary is true to God's call to be his body. The fact that we as a body are experiencing some symptoms of dis-ease should suggest we need some evaluating of who we are by a Physician. We must stop our dis-ease by finding out what is the real direction in which we ought to be going, what our true aim is.

I hope my sharing of this concern does not receive the typical sermon responses. If it does, perhaps we are too much like a church!

JEFF DILLER

 FROM THE COLLEGE POETRY PRESS: Any student is eligible to submit his verse. There is no limitation as to form or theme. Shorter works are preferred. Each poem must be Typed or Printed on a separate sheet and must bear the name and home address and college address. The closing date for submission of manuscripts by students is APRIL 1. They should be sent to the OFFICE OF THE PRESS, NATIONAL POETRY PRESS, BOX 218, AGOURA, CALIFORNIA 91301

The following articles concern replies to last week's edition.

Dear Allen and Jim,

You need an immediate response to your pertinent questions in OUR SEMINARIAN. I will also like to know:

Why we are so sticky and lacking the response to our own need-- even if we don't have solutions?

Why we do not share responsibilities of our joys, frustrations and sorrows even our enrichments?

What other ideas have we shared from outside our community?

What do we bring in and leave behind in the Seminary while commuting?

How do we care for people who think and act differently? IS THERE ANYTHING WRONG WITH US?

Apart from your noted lack of training and practical experience in our courses here, I desire to see courses on speech, experimental services and retreats for groups, joint courses for pastor and spouse on issues they may face in the field. A parishoner will try and turn the pastor's spouse into a confidant knowing full well that the trained spouse is available. How will the spouse handle local gossip, alcoholic spouse, wayward kids and personal problems through a person-to-person talk. How do we deal with group issues of leadership, decision-making, interaction, personality clashes.

We have the ASU struggling to attract attention with a variety of programmes where as I and many more of you only stand at the distance and find fault not within earshot.

How can we draw from the years of being in the field from the pastors and their spouses. We need to have this go together on informal basis. Surely wives of faculty can enrich women here in the campus from their encounters in life. Let's rehumanize faculty in our relationships.

Do we know and share what other seminaries are doing? If we do not respond to these urgent pleas for survival, we may be heading for a lasting shock in the outside world!

Let's be involved RIGHT HERE! Lent gives us the chance for self-examination and RESSURECTION.

Let us start now! We need each other.

M. June Chabaku

PARISH MINISTRY IN REFLECTION

I was very much interested in Allen Heckman's concern for some teaching in the practical aspects of parish ministry. I would like to enter into a limited dialog involving two assumptions that I find in his article in the last issue of the Seminarian.

First of all there is assumption that everything that the minister does has to be part of a course in the Seminary curriculum. The implication is that the curriculum is deficient because two students proposed a series of brief workshops dealing with a number of the pastor's ceremonial responsibilities. I think that this proposal by Doug and Charlie was an excellent one. The course model is not the only option for learning in the seminary experience. The very short term nature of these workshops is a very appropriate way in which to deal quite adequately with these concerns.

One reason that teaching some of these practical details is very difficult is because the issues do not lend themselves to class instruction. For example, Allen suggests that all graduates need know what forms must be filled out for a marriage and where to send them. It must be recognized that the form of the marriage license and the papers to be filled out vary from county to county even within a single state. If we could assume that all graduates of the Seminary will go to a single county, it would be possible to instruct them quite definitely as to what forms must be filled out. Since our graduates serve parishes in many locations, what would be an accurate teaching for Lancaster county would be totally misleading for the community in which their parish is located. A three minute phone call to the court house will certainly give accurate information regarding the materials that must be filed in the county in

(Parish, con't.)
which the pastor is serving.

The second assumption in the article is that present Seminary courses relate only to theory and not to practice. I would be the first to agree that theory by itself is abstract and risks irrelevancy. I would further argue that practice by itself is idiosyncratic and anecdotal. Unless theory and practice are linked, the pastor has no sense of why things need to be done and has no basis for flexibility or improvisation.

I can speak directly from my own seminary experience by way of illustration. When the funeral was dealt with in my seminary training, the professor led us through the ceremony and told us where to stand and what to do at the funeral. Some months later I found that when I got to the parish they had a different idea of where to stand and what to do. All that I had was the example of my professor, who unfortunately knew nothing of the first parish in which I would serve and their customs and practices. If I had had a sound theoretical base, I could have responded much more intelligently in this situation. I was able to do no more than fumble through a simple trial and error routine.

Seminary education as I see it is to relate theory and practice in such a way that the person understands what is to be accomplished and is therefore free to devise a number of ways of achieving that objective. Theory always relates to practice, but it may not be able to anticipate in detail every form of that practice which will be encountered throughout one's ministry. The Seminary cannot possibly foresee every situation into which all of its graduates will enter. Hopefully the Seminary can provide a sufficient theoretical basis for each graduate to think through pastoral problems encountered and to devise the most appropriate means for dealing with those situations.

Paul Irion

IMPACT NEWS

INTRODUCING.....

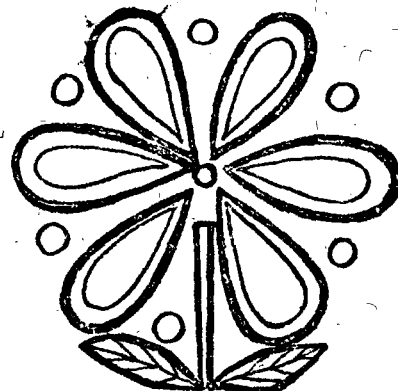
"The General Assembly is in full swing of introducing bills. As of this writing well over 600 bills have been introduced. Many are replicas of bills which died last November. Some are new. Some will pass and make an impact on the Commonwealth and us."

The recent issue of IMPACT is on the bulletin board in the Seminarian Office and lists the bills of immediate concern. Further information can be requested from representatives, senators, or the Office of Social Ministry of the Pennsylvania Council of Churches.

ASW CALENDER FOR THE SPRING

- APRIL 1, Dinner Out at Landis Valley Inn
2, Easter Egg Hunt - 2:00 in the Quad
(Anyone willing to donate prizes,
call Pat Light or Norma Hull, or
donate eggs too.)
15 Chicken Dinner for All
20 ASW Election of Officers Silent
Action
May 14 Installation of Officers
10 Picnic at Buchanan Park

Pat Light



FROM THE EDITOR:

I would first like to say that I am grateful to those who have responded to the last edition. There are many concerns and issues which confront us individually which can be of corporate value if we take time to share them with each other, as has just been illustrated. Yes we all have many private thoughts and emotions which we wish to remain private; but many times we can learn from each other.

My hope is that we shall not tie up all our energies debating minor points of differences, but that we realize our common concerns which has been expressed by each contributor to this paper. I would like to say that I agree with Myers, Heckman, Irion, Diller, and Chabaku. Although we all have expressed slightly different opinions concerning a common topic, the Seminary community and the experiences hereof, we have expressed one strong and common thread. That thread could be called the thread of LIFE. Yes, we are concerned about our community although our frustrations have been manifested in many different areas as could be expected. I appeal to one of June's statement, "is anything wrong with us?" We all differ in character, in personality, in ambition, in goals, and paths. Is it not natural for us to seek out and find the answers we need to find out "who we are?" Should we not demand from each other what we need? And should we not be ready to respond when someone else says that he/she needs something also. The answers blow in the wind more gustily than we realize. For example, Allen, did you realize your questions were answered by Irion in his reply. Now you know and so does everyone else. A small point but a large one for you. Some of my points are large ones for me also, although for you they mean trivia. A little time, a lot of learning.

So bring on your minor points which may be major, bicker and fight, but also learn. Instead of tying our hands, we have seen how some knots can be loosed quite naturally without realizing it. This is my hope. I shall continue to fight and bicker and could cause a lot of trouble, I admit I look out for number one too much to the point that I sometimes forget that you are alive too. Shake my trees and rattle the leaves. One form of noise is music.

My other thought is how we build our castles. The castles are giant structures which contain character and ascetic appeal. Their spires reach sky-ward. Their moats run quickly. The door is open. But the foundations are loose. Must we always react out of defense and not initiative? Yes, I realize many do, we all do. We want to reach our clouds, but sometimes the rungs are loose. And when the rungs begin to crack, we must grab on and fight for our life. I will. But in that fight I have still continue on my climb.

Simply, we all have concerns and fears and needs which may be expressed in many varying ways. As we all differ here and have different ideologies and definitions of community and church, we nonetheless are all of these things, and we should each strive to build our castles within community and without community. So I applaud Heckman for saying what's this. I also applaud Myers for saying what's this. Could the answer to 'what's this' possible be 'both of these.'

