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"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age" (Matthew 28:19-20).

In Defense of FROM THE ASHES OF CHRISTIANITY

Voltaire once made the statement, "I may not agree with what you have to say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it." These words express my feelings toward Mr. Hadfield's review of Mrs. Irion's book very well. I do not agree with what he had to say, but I at least acknowledge his right to speak.

Personally, I found Mrs. Irion's book rather refreshing. She looks at her religion honestly and realistically, and she openly admits that hers is not "an authoritative word on the situation." Nor does she claim that her book has any "Great Answer." Mrs. Irion issues a challenge to the reader to abandon his fourth grade Sunday School religion, and to start looking for a faith which is apace with the times.

It is easy to understand why a person might become angry or upset after having read the book. It causes one to ask questions and seek answers; answers which might possibly suggest that his present religion does not have all it was thought to have. For many people religion is the stabilizing factor in today's uncertain society, and they do not want to find anything wrong with it.

Mrs. Irion's view of history was criticized because she over-simplified the development of Western Civilization. FROM THE ASHES OF CHRISTIANITY was not meant to be a historical treatise or "an authoritative view." Instead, it was meant to whet the reader's appetite so that he would be stimulated to do some searching on his own, and I feel that this goal was attained. Mrs. Irion herself said, "This book can be no more than the thinking of one person who has tried to make sense out of turmoil. It is a statement of position."

Reading a book should be a stimulating, a fascinating, and above all a learning experience. I believe all three of these requirements can be met when reading this book. The reader is stimulated to think and to question, he can (if he so desires) be fascinated by the views Mrs. Irion puts forth, and he can learn that there is plenty of room in this world for thought other than that which is conventional.

FROM THE ASHES OF CHRISTIANITY is a well-written book with an appeal to the educated layman. Mrs. Irion does not reject the Church, but its outmoded views. She challenges the reader to "be concerned for a world in need, and to tear out the heart of past religion; willing its death; daring to let the new be born." Her goal is to make religion and the Church work in new ways.

Karen Easterly

THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT
OF THE
SENIOR CLASS OF 1968

BOB AREGOOD wills his boots to Mary Lou Brodhecker.
GIL BARTHOLOMEW wills his study habits to Karen Easterly.
CLIFF BOLLENBACHER wills his galoshes to John Dech.
BILL CAMPBELL wills his phoney southern accent to David Gene Peeler.
DARRYL DECH wills the cleaning of Harner Hall stairwell to Tom Lammers.
RALPH DERMOTA wills his German guitar to Jack Belsom.
BARRY FILLMAN wills our unorganized institution to anyone who wants it.
BOB HACKER wills the YMCA to Bob Hadfield.
SUE HASSINGER wills her bottle and cigarettes to Dr. Steinmetz.
LISA HOMANN wills her lederhosen to Jean Rosewall.
HARRY KAUFHOLD wills his theological liberalism to Dennis Frederickson.
DAVID KELLY wills his bangs to David Siegfried.
JIM KILLIAN wills his social security benefit payments to Dr. Vassady.
GHULAM NASRANI wills his tea pot and left-over tea bags to Mrs. Englert.
FESTUS OGUNBANJO wills his native costume to the Kutztown Folk Festival.
ED SCHNEIDER wills his McCarthy button to Bill Albright.
RUTH MARY SHAAK wills her Pennsylvania Dutch Accent to John Dieterly.
GREGG SMITH wills his "Manual on Directing Traffic in Europe" to the Seminary in hopes that future seminar abroad groups will be better prepared to cope with foreign traffic - pedestrian-wise that is.
*Stipulation in the Will - This item will be willed only upon the Seminary's agreeing to take my wife and myself on the next seminar FREE OF CHARGE!
JERI SNYDER SMITH wills her dalmation pumps to the Philadelphia Zoo.
ED STEEDLE wills his old suits to Don Smith.
REX THOMAS wills his Greek textbooks to any deserving junior.
FRED WALTHOUR wills his parking tickets to Jim Walters.
GEORGE WANJAU wills his communion wine to Duane Rhoadarmer.
GUY WENCK wills all his ashtrays to the Library of Lancaster Theological Seminary.
BILL ZIEGENFUS wills his hammer and paint brush to Ernest Diefenderfer.

RECOMMENDED READING

THREE STEPS TO BETTER HAIR GROOMING, by Paul J. Achtemeier.
FROM THE ASHES OF MARY JANE IRION, by Elizabeth R. Achtemeier.
FAMINE, THE ONLY ANSWER TO THE POPULATION EXPLOSION, by Alfred
C. Bartholomew.
ONE THOUSAND USES FOR DISGARDED GUM WRAPPERS, by George H.
Bricker
DID JESUS FOLLOW THE TEXT IN HIS PREACHING?, by Robert W. Duke
A BIOGRAPHY OF F D R, OUR LAST PRESIDENT, by Donald M. C.
Englert
LIVING LIKE A KING WITH CLERICS AND A DEVALUED POUND, by Gabriel
J. Fackre
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION MADE IMPOSSIBLE, by Lee J. Gable
THE RESURRECTION: IT WAS ALL DONE WITH MIRRORS, by Paul E. Irion
TAKE IT OFF, TAKE IT OFF, TAKE IT ALL OFF, by Allen E. Kroehler
YOUR ORGAN - THE KEY TO FULFILLMENT, by Frank A. McConnell
I MET MY WIFE ON THE NORTH SIDE OF A TREE, by Robert V. Moss
HOW TO CARRY EXTRA WEIGHT WITHOUT PAYING EXTRA BAGGAGE, by
David C. Steinmetz
I HAVE AIR SICKNESS, by Horace Sills
A GUIDE TO GENEVA HOTELS, by Bela Vassady

SENIOR CLASS PROJECT

The Senior Class of 1968 has contributed as a class project the amount of \$210 to be used for partial scholarships to the Lay School of Theology. The amount of \$30 will be used for a layman of each of the seven conferences represented by the members of the class. These conferences are Penn West, Penn Northeast, Penn Central, Penn Southeast, Ohio, Central Atlantic, and Southern. We recognize the "smallness" of this effort, but it is our hope that this will be of the nature of leaven to stimulate interest in the Lay School.

William Campbell
President, Senior Class

THE ALMA MATER OF THE CLASS OF 1968

Robert Hadfield, 1968

The Tune From
The Church's One Foundation

Ye Gods and little fishes, its the graduation date.
Descending on the churches, its the class of sixty-eight
We share a mental keenness which no one else can boast
We cannot tell the difference 'twixt Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Three years we've toiled and troubled learning to proclaim the word.
Mr. Irion's been helpful telling us the words absurd.
Mr. Duke has been a blessing, our sermons now are swell
But how to preach damnation when there isn't any hell.

We learned about Karl Barth from Bela Vassady.
and from Paul Achtimeier heresy authentically.
We've studied all the diggings and every pile of dirt
From Dan to old Beersheba in the class of Englert.

The Jungle of the City, Mr. B's speciality
can be a rousing challenge to any ministry
Anticipating Philly and the squallor of New York
Imagine our surprise when we found it was Jim Thorpe.

We've cast aside vain glory. We're anxious to proceed.
Into the local pulpit. Sock it to 'em till they bleed!
We're armored with all goodness. Who cares what storms may toss.
We await the consummation - the right hand of Doctor Moss.

SENIOR SOUNDINGS
REFLECTIONS

Evaluation and reflection are always part of the learning process. In order to complete the three years of Seminary education, a number of Seniors contributed their various theological, historical, and practical reflections.

Although not every Senior Class member contributed his written reflection, it is hoped that the following articles will help each Senior in completing his own theological education by evaluating the work he has done.

THIRTY-THREE MONTHS IN LANCASTER

Retrospection is not my cup of tea. I am not sentimental. I have difficulty assessing situations in which I am involved, and I care not for maudlin memories. I have been told that these are not traits of which I should be proud. I have also been told that this kind of attitude is not suitable for a minister. But, in spite of myself, I will have a go at it.

Having been accustomed to the "worldly" life of the working and professional world, it was a little difficult at first to settle down to the slow pace of seminary life. When I first came here in 1965, I found it strange to live in a "brick" tower and not be moving about the city. The first September was one of books, books, and more books. I began to panick a little because I had been warned that this was going to happen. Fortunately, the seminary had some opportunities to offset the studious atmosphere of the secluded school.

I am particularly grateful to the student body for electing me President of the Student Community Council. This has been a chance to gain some experience in a leadership role and has afforded me some honors that come with the office and not necessarily to the individual who holds the position. I also appreciate the various opportunities that have come about through the Seminary for ecumenical contacts. What I am really saying is that the time spent in the seminary has provided me the chance to expand my perspective on the world, the church, and, most important, myself. If this is the function of the educational institution, then for myself it has served well.

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REFLECTIONS

As most Seniors today, I am seriously thinking about my future work. Five months ago I was sure I would be serving a church in a city like Milwaukee or Philadelphia, but it ends up that I'll be in a town with 2,000 population. However, I will be living in the city of Allentown and working with a congregation whose leaders are aware of the urbanization of the country. It is still a strange feeling to see myself in a pastor's role, but each week I'm feeling more at ease. Right now, I am frustrated because I do not know the area in which I will be working. I guess I took it for granted that I was familiar with Baltimore - its culture, politics, economics, personalities, good points and bad points. I lived there for almost thirty years. I have to learn about Allentown and the Lehigh Valley in a few weeks, at the most a few months, and I guess my biggest question is: Where do I begin? I have a sense of rootlessness. I do not know Lancaster well enough to even think of it as "home." I am quickly forgetting about Baltimore. Furthermore, I don't know the least thing about Allentown! The people who move around our country with some regularity must really be in a quandry. It takes some time to develop a "feel" for a city. I am not sure if it can be done any other way than spending time traveling the streets, talking to people, and reading the papers. Re-reading this paragraph reveals a pre-occupation with self. Perhaps my present state could be best identified as anxiety.

A legacy? No such luck. I'm not the one to say work hard, pray continually, and love your parents. I'm out and the siren song of the seminary's sanctum sanctorum shall summon no more.

Edward Schneider

UNDISCOVERED TRUTH

At this point in my life, I feel the way Sir Isaac Newton felt at one point in his life: "I do not know what I may appear to the world; but to myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the seashore, and diverting myself in the now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, while the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me." (Brewster's Memoirs of Newton, Vol. II, Ch. 27).

William Ziegenfuss

HOPE IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

I leave the seminary to begin my ministry with mixed feelings of anticipation, challenge, idealism, fear, and hope. We have been hearing recent proclamations that the local church, to which each of us will be going, is obsolete. It has been said that the people to whom we shall be attempting to minister have little or no knowledge of what the church is. Prejudice, discrimination, insensitivity, egocentricity, complacency, etc. have all been used on many occasions as descriptive characteristics of the local church and the people thereof; and then we hear that this will be our church and these the people of our congregation.

We are often tempted to ask just what it all means and draw the conclusion, "What the heck!" Then our pride takes a bow for the wonderful performance which it has just given. And, as an encore, it acts out the scene of perfection (actor) meeting imperfection (audience).

Is there hope in the midst of such ostensible imperfection? You and I ask this question, and at the same time our decision to enter into this ministry seems to indicate that we are somehow convinced that there is, and that God has and will work through imperfection, even us.

William John Campbell

ON PUTTING FORTH MORE THAN REQUIRED or EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES CAN BE HELPFUL, REALLY!

Lancaster Theological Seminary is certainly experiencing one change after another in its effort to do what it considers the best possible job of educating for the ministry. With some of these changes, some of us have had occasion to find some fault, and we have taken opportunities to express those feelings. Perhaps now, as the days move rapidly toward that day of graduation, we should offer some positive thoughts.

Here, at Lancaster, one of the phases of my education, maybe we could call it the "Unpublished Curriculum," has been being a part, in one way or another, of the extracurricular activities of this school. We are all familiar with the section of those activities called student government. Here is an opportunity to serve, an opportunity to see some positive things accomplished, and, selfishly, to have some "say" in what goes on. From the eternally maligned job of trying to enforce parking regulations (recommended for those who fancy the martyr role) to that of working with The Seminarian, the opportunities are many and varied. This is a good chance to see just how well one works with others, particularly in some task which

ACTIVITIES

lacks in everything but hard work.

One of the most enjoyable, and often ignored extra activities has been the attending of lectures by visiting speakers, or traveling to hear some well-known lecturer. No one who had the good fortune of hearing Dr. Obermann will ever forget the fresh way in which he presented old material. As for traveling, those of us who journeyed to Princeton one evening may not recall what Dr. Käsemann had to say, but the comradeship and feeling that came out while trying to nurse a Ford with a Stanley Steamer complex to and from that institution was again something that sets well in one's memory.

What about other things? The last convocation was surpriselingly good, with us seminarians often learning much more than we figured we could from the laymen and laywomen in attendance. And, lastly, the trip to St. Mary's Roman Catholic Seminary to talk about various selected subjects is anything but dull. The gracious hospitality, the airing of opinions, often in direct contradiction, with others of the group, and the chance "to compare notes" makes this an item that should be a "must" at least once for every-one here at Lancaster.

Now, who goes to those things? Who takes part in student government? Actually, anyone can go, and everyone should take part. Select group? Only, if by select one would mean a person ready to give a little extra time for something that may never happen again in one's lifetime. Please, get involved, say yes the next time you are asked. There's something here for everyone, all that's necessary is a bit of willingness. Make your years in seminary something more to remember than books and papers.

James A. Killian

THEOLOGICAL PRESUPPOSITIONS

I came to Lancaster Theological Seminary knowing something about God, Christ, the Church, man, the world, being, and existence. As I reflect about my seminary educational experience, I am no longer sure I know anything about God, Christ, the Church, etc.

During the course of my studies, I learned that God is dead. Well, I used to pray to God, meditate about God, and preach that God acted and still acts in Christ. But I'm not so sure, now, that God is alive, that he hears my prayers, or that he hears anyone's prayers. Just recently, however, I read that God is again alive and that we can and should have a 'theology of hope.' The question is:

PRESUPPOSITIONS

Who knows? Is God alive and does he give us hope, or is God dead, making our existence totally meaningless. Or, as we now read in Pannenberg, will we only know God existed when the Kingdom finally arrives?

I think that a similar problem confronted the early disciples when Jesus was accused of blasphemy. Was this the Son of God? Is it true that someday man shall be judged? Was Jesus sane when he claimed that the Kingdom of God was in the midst of them? Jesus held no aces or empirical evidence to the claims of his wild vision. If he did, why, then, did Peter deny Christ? Why, then, did the disciples run away when the chips went down? They didn't know if Jesus was who he claimed he was or if he was just an ordinary prophet. At least they were not convinced that Jesus was the Son of God. How, then, can we be convinced that Jesus was the Son of God? How can we believe that God still acts today?

It seems to me that the fundamental problem still existing in my mind as I leave Lancaster Theological Seminary is whether or not God exists, and if he does, what man's relationship to Him must be. Are we to live etsi deus non daretur? Or are we to live in a state of waiting, waiting upon the Lord?

Questions...questions....

Darryl E. Dech

----- ON BUILDING COMMUNITY

Seminarians. Looking back on the three years of living on this campus, I have recently sensed an atmosphere that is refreshing and encouraging to me, even though some students may consider my attitude to be romantic.

This last semester I have sensed a slight increase (by no means a great flourish!) of friendliness, cooperation, and willingness to speak to each other and recognize each other as we meet and pass by each other on campus. Maybe this new atmosphere has started within the Senior Class, because we realize that we will not be seeing each other after June; or, maybe our early, "balmy" Spring helped create this atmosphere, if it does exist at all. But I hope that this fresh atmosphere that I have sensed is from something far more meaningful than what I have just suggested. I would hope that there is a real sense of community and fellowship growing on our campus. I would hope that a real

COMMUNITY

sense of community would grow from our finally realizing that we need to work together and live together in society, not as a cluster of separate individuals. There are a lot of things that I don't like about this seminary any more than anyone else does, but I also feel that many of the school's weak points and problems could be improved and eliminated if we would all just realize that "No man is an Island."

So I would like to leave this summer by strongly urging that the up-coming Senior and Middler Classes strive to build up a stronger sense of community and improve on that which my class, myself included, has failed to do.

Barry Fillman

REFLECTIONS FROM AN ECUMENICAL STUDENT

I take this opportunity to thank all who have helped me in my stay here at the Seminary. I remember especially E.G. Schneider who met me at the Railroad Station and showed me around. His warm welcome paved the way for me and even made me pass my Greek Examination, which I did before I even had time to unpack my luggage!

The courses have been most interesting, especially the practical aspects. The Field Education course which I took under Rev. A.E. Kroehler was an eye opener to the issues that face the Church both here and overseas. In fact, all the courses in this Seminary have helped very much. The British system stresses scholarship with no involvement at all. Here, both scholarship and involvement are combined making theology come to life.

The spiritual life in the Seminary could be somewhat improved. It is true we are all extremely busy, but we cannot be too busy to appreciate each other. The international dinner and the Long Park Picnic were wonderful social occasions for me to get to know everyone. Sometimes, life became a little dull. However, during the Christmas and Easter vacations, I never spent lonely moments in my room. Some other international students did, however, and I think this could be corrected.

Primarily, I came here to be trained as a theological tutor. Now I understand that before I can teach theology, I am required to spend at least a year as a parish minister of St. Andrew's Church in Nairobi. The idea is to get acquainted with the twenty-six nationalities now worshipping there. Any of you who may have a chance to come out for a

ECUMENICAL STUDENT

hunting trip in East Africa, please call at St. Andrew's, Nairobi, Presbyterian Church of East Africa (Church office phone is 25095). Be assured that I shall be delighted to entertain you and to show you around.

Wishing you all a very happy and fruitful ministry,
I am

George Wanjau
Kenya, East Africa

"Obelisk"

"Now you're not alone anymore." The cure for loneliness is a menthol cigarette. Instant community for 40¢. Central Park was yellow-green with the sun and grass of early April. Ivy League-bound children played ball, skipped rope with their nurses. I leaned against the sand-weathered obelisk. To the left, in an enclosing crescent, rose Manhattan's commercial structures. A few hundred yards before me was the Metropolitan Museum. At my feet slept a migrant drunk, curled about two shabby leather bags: his traveling kit. A park cop rode past on a shinning black horse, but did not see the derelict dozgin among the hedges. Behind me on a bench sat a woman who had been talking quite loudly to herself for the past hour. It was late afternoon: soon the sun would set. My body slowly turned eastward, oscillated a bit, and began to walk.

Don Young

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Your church is very strategically placed, right in the middle of a big city...and it's slums. Now it wasn't always this way. At one time this was a very beautiful neighborhood and people were proud of their homes. Then, one day a poor family moved in next door and his house rapidly decayed. From then on it was a quick turn over. Soon there were "For Sale" signs on every house and all your old friends moved out to the inviting suburbs. But you couldn't move. This was your church and you were going to see it through to the bitter end.

Yes, the church has been affected by this change, too. Suddenly, you have to be sure that every room not in use is locked, that pocketbooks are never left in the open. Your regular members are now traveling three to fifteen miles for the Sunday service. Many have left for nearer more convenient churches. But new members - what of them? None! Our problem: how do you get them to come, these poor of your neighborhood. These are the ones who really need you. How can you appeal to them? How?

Now, to help answer the situation, let's pretend that it is a children's home in which you are trying to generate interest. That is, how can you interest children in the immediate church?

Would you go individually to each child and tell them about the church and ask them to come? Do you think they would? Would this approach interest them?

Would you arrange a big carnival for the whole church and then specifically invite these children? Would this interest them? Would they come?

Would you go to them, find out their problems, and try to help? For instance, this children's home never serves ice cream. Could you help the children find a way to earn some money by themselves with which to buy an ice cream maker and then help them learn how to use it?

Return, now, to the poor surrounding your church. Apply these same questions, changing where necessary.

Would you go individually to each poor family and tell them about the church and ask them to come?

Would you arrange a special occasion for the poor children in the neighborhood?

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WHAT DO YOU THINK? (continued)

Would you go to the families and try to discover the prevailing problems and seek to help them? For example, the youngsters are finding it difficult to pass their courses in school. Could your church be responsible for a tutoring program on a person to person basis?

All these are ideas and questions which may or may not generate further ideas. What do you think? But even more important: what would you DO?!

Jane Dech

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FOCUS: Ruth Mary Shaak

AS WE LOOK TO THE FUTURE

If there were any formula for success in the parish ministry, it would have to include a balance of dedication, realism, moderate idealism, confidence, warmth, patience, attentiveness, creativity, and an understanding personality.

As this year's graduating class leaves the sacred halls from which they have received a degree of competence in academic pursuits, we remind them that they will be facing an equally challenging vocation as that which they have experienced as theological students. Some will find particular problems or short-comings a real barrier to them, while others having struggled to reach this pinnacle will face the future with confidence and hope.

As we conversed with Ruth Mary Shaak, we were aware of how much this goal can mean to certain persons. Ruth Mary has always been actively a part of the church and it would be impossible for her to see herself in any other vocation. "My life has been and is the parish," was her initial response to our questions concerning her vocational decision.

As we reflect upon the many possible criteria for a successful parish ministry, we recall some of her comments concerning her future ministry as a woman pastor:

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FOCUS

"You have to find joy in what you are doing. You have to be willing to give your whole life to the church as the church. You have to believe what you are doing. You have to be able to accept other people where they are and for what they are."

We felt that a mature realization of some of the tools and necessities for the parish minister's kit bag were evident in these statements. They are not only a reflection of years of experience in parish work but also of deep reflection on her past three years of theological education.

Many questions have been put to Ruth Mary concerning her desire to become a pastor. After all, there aren't many women pastors around! "Some people say that I am denying my womanhood by not getting married, but to me the parish is my groom. You might say that I married the church a long time ago."

We then asked Ruth Mary if she felt herself at a disadvantage in the parish because she was a woman. Recognizing some of the unique pastoral counseling situations (e.g. pre-marital and male counseling) which she will be facing, she pointed out several very basic advantages she will have as a woman and some of the falacies involved in those statements which persons make concerning her being at a disadvantage. In her hospital training this past semester, she found the relationships she has been able to develop among other women to be invaluable and far overshadow the way some men related in similar situations. "Despite the fact that I am discriminated against because I am a woman, I feel I can do as effective a job as the men and in some respects a better one. For you see, they have the same problem, but in a reverse manner."

We could tell that Ruth Mary was extremely caught up in her course work at the hospital, but moved into a discussion of her parish and how she sees her position in it. The question was raised as to what type of an image her parish will have of its first woman minister. "I'll probably have a mother image for the younger ones and a daughter image for the oldsters. This isn't really much different from the father and son image that most male ministers have."

She feels that a real old-fashioned type of ministry is essential in a rural parish. "You have to know and live with your people. You can't get so wrapped up in the youth that you forget about the oldsters." Also, "I feel that a minister must be with the people through all their crises--literally from birth to death: you have to deal with all ages."

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FOCUS

Ruth Mary is very realistic, however, in recognizing that we do live in a very mobile society and that perhaps she and her congregation will have to change their ideas and ideals. "You have to live and work in the times - but my people will be my life." Concerning their needs, she adds, "Whenever people have doubts, I want to help. We should be willing to try all possible ways to work through the problems."

In reflection on the meaning of ministry today, she says: "The ministry is not just a job; it's a way of life. We must be interested in whoever and whatever the person is. Only when we are, can we gain their confidence. This allows openness with all the parties involved. We must approach a situation unprofessionally - on the basis of persons as persons. After all, the church is persons and if we serve the church we must be aware of the persons' needs."

Anyone who has shared the wonderful experience of knowing our only resident senior woman student can agree with us that she is truly a dedicated, realistic, moderately idealistic, confident, warm, patient, and understanding person.

Many memories will remain with us of the jovial, conscientious person which Ruth Mary Shaak is. We join with her in her joy and her hope for a successful and rewarding ministry.

Good luck, Ruth Mary...and keep the coffee brewing!

Joe Foster
FOCUS Editor

24 May 1968

Almighty GOD
Chairman of the Board
Christianity, Inc.
Heaven, 99999

Dear God,

As the time for Commencement approaches, I have been thinking of my new assignment, and I am not altogether pleased with it. In fact, I would like you to consider this letter as an official request for a change of assignment. After all, I have worked hard. Things haven't been easy for me or my family. I am in debt. I have eaten enough hamburger and macaroni to last a couple of lifetimes, and, well, things have just been rough. I have, however, persisted in my work, and am anxious to begin my work. It's just that I really don't want to go to that little church that "called" me. It's closer to a city, with all its potential problems, than I had realized. There are more than enough Protestant churches in the community, which could cause problems in recruiting new members, and I found out that this little town has a Negro ghetto all its own. It would be just my luck for someone to think that I should get involved with those people.

I want to work for you, you can be sure of that, but can't you find a quieter place, with fewer competing churches, and no racial or poverty problems? After all, people in a place like that need the Gospel, too. With no attempt at coercion, let me remind you that my contract with you was strictly oral with no witnesses but you and me. I can't see how it could be binding at all if I wished to contest it.

Thank you for your consideration. I am sure that you will see my point, and find a suitable place for me.

Sincerely yours,

Simpul Seminarian

24 May 1968

Simpul Seminarian
Any Seminary
Mostanyplace, USA

Dear Simpul:

In reference to your letter of the twenty-fourth. Please be informed that your request for re-assignment is refused for the following reasons:

1. Places or locations with no problems are very difficult to find. If you've ever read Milton, you know that we even had some problems up here in Heaven.

2. You have our deepest sympathies for all the trials you have endured while working your way through seminary. You might remember that my Son had his problems also, with more personal hardship than you have detailed. His first followers didn't fare too well, either. Somehow, your "problems" don't seem too serious in comparison.

3. Our solicitor asks me to remind you that the contract is contract is completely valid. In addition to the two of us when that commitment was made, my Son, Jesus Christ, was present as well as your conscience, and our field representative for earth, Holy Spirit. My Son and Holy Spirit must be considered as fully accredited witnesses. I am sure that your conscience would also give you problems if you were to try to break the contract.

It is not new for a new worker in our organization to seek an easy assignment. Some of our more experienced men sought changes in their assignments. You may remember Jonah, for example.

I wish to remind you that the full resources of the organization are at your disposal. My Son has promised to be present whenever two or three are gathered in his name, and Holy Spirit is always around to lend assistance. In fact, I believe Holy Spirit had a hand in you choosing this line of work in the first place. So, go to your little church. Work with them, work with the community in which you serve, and yes, work with those people in that ghetto you mentioned. Don't forget that our bi-millennial emphasis is Love for our fellowman.

Call at anytime for assistance. Don't wait for the normal Sunday morning times.

Sincerely,

Almighty God

(Jim Killian is the creative writer responsible for the above letters.)

Editorial Note: The following sermon was given in Santee Chapel a few weeks ago. The Editors felt that this "Senior" sermon should be read and heard by all of the present Middlers and Juniors. It seems to identify a continuing problem which we do not want to face in our future congregations. As the hope and expectation of a Fall semester comes into view, we hope that the Word expressed below will be acknowledged and acted upon by all members of the Seminary community.

GAPS
(Romans 13:8-10)

The three-letter word, "Gap," has appeared, and re-appeared in the language of this country, from its pre-federal times, to the times which are already concerned with the Presidential election in the latter part of this year. For those hardy pioneers of the eighteenth century, to whom the wild west meant the territories of Kentucky and Ohio, gap was the Cumberland Gap which afforded a slightly easier way for them to pass through the mountains and seek new lands. The 1930's, in one instance, saw the word gap used to push that wonderful invention, the zipper. Magazines featured full-page pictures showing women whose dresses or skirts suffered from a disease called Gap-osis, which was caused by the use of snaps or hooks and eyes, and could be cured by the use of a Talon zipper. In 1960, gap took on a specific meaning as we heard campaign talks accusing the incumbent administration of a Missile Gap, and now, in this time of unrest, distrust, and dissent, the credibility gap has made its appearance.

What common point of reference can we establish that will allow us to look at all these different gaps and find any kind of similarity? Well, gap always gives us the idea of space, or a space between things, people, or ideas or concepts. The automobile distributor points must have a gap or space between them. The football linebacker "shoots the gap" or open space in the line to hit the quarterback. The Missile gap, and credibility gap tell us of a difference, or space, if you like, between what is claimed, and what is actual.

Today, I would like to acquaint you with another gap, and, we will call this, the Love-Gap. Love-gap sounds like a slogan for the flower children, but it has a definite meaning for us of the commonplace, work-a-day world.

In Paul's letter to the church in Rome, in particular, the thirteenth chapter, we read about Love. The words in this particular passage that we have heard most, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," seem easy enough to understand, and generally, easy enough to comply with, thus, we think, satisfying all demands of our Christian faith. What does this passage say to those who consider themselves already on the side of what we like to call Christian Love?

Reality quickly brings us to the point where we must admit that there is, indeed, a gap, a large gap, between what Jesus Christ, and Paul tells us about love, and what we do to fulfill those demands made on us. There is, really, a love gap. A gap that shows a lack of commitment to Christ's teachings, a lack of desire to fill that gap, and a reluctance to admit that any manifestation of Christian love on our part would "do any good anyway."

Emil Brunner tells us that in the commandment of love, the whole law is summed up, "Yet the commandment of love can be neither correctly understood nor rightly fulfilled as law." Love must flow freely, said Luther, it comes to us through a right relationship with Christ, and in no other way. "It is pure good will to the other."

Pure good will to the other. That can be quite laughable, can't it? Think, if you will, how much good will is shown every day, in this community. So many enter this community with thoughts or hopes of sights of eternally smiling faces, cheerful responses to their greetings, and displays of what they call "Christian consideration." It's sad, isn't it, to know what such ideas will soon be rudely shattered. It is tragic, in the most complete sense, to think that this experience might have a permanent and negative effect on the individual. Pure good will to the other, that's what Brunner says. Do we practice it?

Every September we have a special chance to show our Christian love, as defined by Brunner. Every September, to this campus comes a new class. Young men and women, right out of college, some not really sure if a Christian vocation is for them. A few "older" types who have worked in the world, and have decided to follow a full-time Christian calling, plus the ecumenical students, perhaps one or two transfers, and some seekers after knowledge who are blessed with that wonderful title, unclassified student. The young and old, classified and unclassified, all have their doubts and fears, their hopes and ambitions, and all share one quality, the quality of newness. Newness to new living quarters, new neighbors, new academic standards, and new problems of arranging financing to carry one for the next three years. What a place to prove the existence of Christian love, and sadly, what a place to see so clearly the Love Gap. Every September a new class enters, and every September two classes return, so eager to get to work, so busy with whatever we like to be busy with to give the impression that we are busy. Single students confine themselves to the dorms, young marrieds are so busy, with the breadwinner, Mrs., that is, off to work every morning, and the student, Mr., struggling to find his way to an early class. The older marrieds, in their own special enclave, are so occupied with children getting off to school, and back from school that there is little time to get acquainted. We all know how busy our faculty is, and how there is just about no time for conversation, for the sake of conversation.

And so the love gap widens, and Christian love becomes a quantity to make light of, or to be rationed out in small doses to selected individuals, those we know.

C.H. Dodd tells us that the command to love our neighbor is a test of moral action. The word gap through history brought on tests, such as the testing of the courage and determination of the pioneer as he considered what lay beyond the Cumberland Gap. It tests the desire

of the football player as he runs through that gap in the line, toward a sure tackle, or vicious block. The love gap tests us many times in our daily lives. We are tested when, in response to our greeting to a fellow student, we receive a blank stare and obvious snub. It tests us when we decide that one who doesn't immediately become deeply grateful to us for our show of friendship, is one who is anti-social, and therefore not to be bothered with.

We live in a hectic world. A world of competition in which even the theological student feels the push and pressure of higher grades for the sake of higher grades, of administrative policies which sometimes seem to consider every one but the student. It is an unfriendly world, that we all admit, but what we do not like to admit is that we all help to make this world as unfriendly as it is. We all have the quality of Christian love in us, but for some reason, we refuse to make use of it. We refuse to step across the hall to offer a friendly word, to turn down a loud radio, to say hello because we're too busy, and besides, "We don't know that person anyway."

This is a personal thing, especially on the basis that it is presented here. It's one of those eyeball-to-eyeball things that Americans like to brag about. The demonstrating of Christian love to our neighbor. The demonstrating of a love that is not founded or based in some human emotion or need, but which comes from Christ Jesus Himself through the Holy Spirit which gives us an inspiration and enthusiasm that we are unable to ever equal, on our own.

The most negative definition of this admonition, that of the old rabbinic law, which said, "To love your neighbor means to do him no harm," would be an improvement on many of our actions.

Love Gap? Yep, it's there. What are we going to do about it? Well, the answers could be as numerous as the situations in which we find ourselves. In this particular seminary community, the partial solution might be to put away any thoughts or expectations of universal love or friendliness, and realize that seminarians and all associated with such a school are as human as anybody and subject to all the sins, faults, bad manners and inconsiderate actions that we will later be accusing members of our congregations of having. With that level of understanding reached, the next and really only thing to do to try to eliminate that Love-Gap is to practice what Jesus Christ has told us in the Gospel of Matthew: "Love your neighbor as yourself." We are here to study, to learn, and at times that must take precedence over other activities. It would seem that there should still be time to practice that elusive thing called "Christian Love." After all, we really only have to be as good to others as we are to ourselves.

Love-Gap? Yes, it's here, too, but it doesn't really have to be, does it?

James Killian