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The Concord

Luther Seminary

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The Hate That Hate Produced
How might we respond?

By Daniel Ruen
Staff Writer, The Concord

"On Saturday in Mesa, Ariz., a gunman drove into a Chevron station and shot to death the Sikh owner. The gunman then fired on a Lebanese clerk at a nearby Mobil station and into the home of an Afghan family.

"I'm a patriot," the suspect, Frank S. Roque, said as he was arrested. "I'm a damn American all the way."

Given such attacks on people of color around the nation, how are we as a Christian Seminary to respond to the possibility of similar actions in our own community?

"The first thing we want to do is to make sure we can do whatever we can to assure their safety and security," says David Tiede, President. "But when people are frightened, they're afraid of difference. I think it's a very natural human response, and it takes the health of a community to sift and sort that out. These are all people that we know and love in our community."

While Tiede believes that "we can focus on education [and] host public discussions that are educational" he does not see the

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Community Responds with Worship, Prayer

By Evelyn J.R. Weston
Staff Writer, The Concord

Where were you when you heard the news on September 11? I was home hurriedly working on a project, irriated when my husband called and rather calmly suggested I turn on the news.

Some heard on the way to the campus. Some heard when they arrived. Some were in class from 8 to 10, and didn't hear until they arrived at chapel.

Where were you?
President David Tiede heard the news from his car radio en route to campus.

Details at first were sketchy, but he realized that a significant public crisis was unfolding, and the seminary would need to respond. Upon arriving, he began to gather those who would be leading worship.

Dean of Students Patricia Lull, scheduled to preach, and Campus Pastor Bob

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Statement from Presiding Bishop-Elect

By Bishop Mark S. Hanson
Saint Paul Area Synod
ELCA Presiding Bishop-Elect

Last evening members of Saint Paul Area Synod congregations joined people of faith throughout this community, nation and world in prayer. Pleading for God's mercy, justice and peace is the most appropriate response to a day filled with death, violence, anxiety and rage.

Let us not forget that within our metropolitan community are thousands of immigrants who have fled terrorism and war. May they now teach all of us patience, perseverance and the way of peace. This is a time for mutual respect, not hatred toward our neighbors.

We trust that the heart of God is grieved this day for humanity again having turned to violence. Yet, we claim the promise that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus and those who mourn shall be comforted. Because our hope is in God we will face the coming difficult days and weeks with a resolve to pray and work for peace, to generously respond to the needs of victims, to temper our anger with compassion and our anxiety with hope.

May God sustain all the people of God's creation with mercy and peace.

On the Web @ www.lutherseminary.edu/publications/Concord
Creating Balance in Our Lives

By Lydia Volz
Luther Seminary Parish Nurse
in partnership with Lyphlomen

As we begin another academic year, our thoughts and energies are focused on books and lectures, class and study schedules and for some, adjustment to a totally new environment. I would like to share some thoughts with you on finding and keeping a Healthy Balance in our Lives. Actually, holistic health refers to a process of wholeness that exists when there is balance among our different dimensions (physical, emotional, social, vocational, and environmental). As Christians, we believe that balance is only possible when we base our life on Christ; the spiritual dimension is our real essence.

It is in baptism that we receive the power of the Holy Spirit to live as children of God. In John 10:10 we read, "...I have come that they might have life, and have it to the full." It seems that often we try to create our own "full life" and find ourselves over-committed, under-appreciated, fatigued, frustrated and out of balance. We need to find the "full life" and balance that only Christ can give.

There are many different reasons why we may feel out of balance. First, unfortunately, the human condition seems more aligned with chaos than balance. If this were not true, we would not need a Great Physician to bring balance, peace and wholeness to our broken lives.

Second, we live lives in which demands outpace our time or energy. Some of these demands we place on ourselves, and some are imposed from the outside. We spend our lives trying to 'balance' roles related to the (1) home (spousal and parenting) (2) work place or school (3) church (4) friends and extended family, and (5) community.

Third, our culture seems to over-service others and under-values care of ourselves. Self-care includes keeping in balance the components of holistic health, such as adequate nutrition, regular exercise, sufficient rest and relaxation, social interaction and spiritual renewal. Self-care may seem a luxury, which few of us can afford, yet without it, the "full life" remains out of our grasp. There is no "quick fix." Finding and keeping your balance takes time and effort day by day.

The Bible provides us with several principles, which can be helpful in finding and keeping our balance. First, all we do should be done for the glory of God (ICor.10:31). This is really a primary objective of our lives as Christians, and following this principle can help keep our stressors in perspective. Second, God has created all of life for our good (Mark 2:27). Jesus reminds us that rest (Sabbath) was made for man's benefit; rather than man being created for either work or observance of the Sabbath. Rest and work are equally important dimensions of our life. Third, we are encouraged to not be overly concerned about things, which are temporary (Luke 12:22).

There are several approaches we can use to nourish this gift of balance. First, we can consider our current life in terms of energy investment, values and priorities.

Are we 'spending' our life in activities that have eternal consequences? Second, we can develop an action plan, if we would like to spend our energy and time in a different way.

To be helpful, the plan would need to identify what needs to be changed, what it needs to change to, and how the change will be made. Third, we can live our changed lives with the confidence that "He who began a good work in you will carry it to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Php. 1:6) Use the following as you see fit. They may be more appropriate for the intranet.

Here are more suggestions to help keep balanced:

Yoga classes begin September 27, 2001 for 7 sessions ending November 15 (no class October 11). Class is scheduled from 12 - 1p.m. in Olson Meditation Chapel.

Wear loose comfortable clothing. Bring a towel or mat if you wish.

The cost for seven sessions is $48.00 and may be paid at the first class. You may also attend individual sessions for $8.50. Class limit-12.

The instructor is Linda Schassel.

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I am afraid. After the events of Sept. 11, I can't help it. But I've got a problem.

My problem is that voices from every side of my life tell me that it's not necessary, it's not appropriate, it's not faithful to be afraid.

The voice of popular America tells us that we should act with resolve. Our government will take precautions. We will control the situation.

The most important American message is this: "We will get those bastards!" (Especially mythologized and objectified Bastard #1, Osama bin Laden.)

In the meantime, individual Americans are praised from all quarters when we "blow off a little steam" by going to the Mall to engage in our national pastime of conspicuous consumption—all to save the national economy, of course.

The American response to fear: flex our muscles and try to retain our normal spending habits.

Responses to the question of fear haven't been all that different in the Christian community.

For from the least to the greatest of them, everyone is greedy for unjust gain; and from prophet to priest, everyone deals falsely. They have treated the wound of my people carelessly, saying, "Peace, peace," when there is no peace. (Jeremiah 6:13-14)

Each of the above responses to the fear of the American people (and, truly, of the world) has the shared distinction of treating the wound of God's people carelessly.

And most insidious is the last. The retreat into religious language neglects reality and, therefore, neglects people where they live their lives. This approach to Christianity—feigning compassion but promoting self-sufficiency—leaves people utterly alone in their pain.

The underlying cause of our patriotic flexing is fear of our neighbor. Underlying the response of civil religion is the awful suspicion that God might not be on our "side." The underlying cause of our collective retreat into religious language is a fear of reality as it has come to us in these days.

We need to address this fear directly. Remember: a theologian of the Cross calls a thing what it is!

And by addressing this directly, we can call others and ourselves to compassion, a "feeling with" that tolerates no avoidance or retreat. While for decades we Americans have been able to shield ourselves from the realities of this world, maybe now we can call on our communities to have true compassion for others.

And so this is what it is. Things have not been merely modified ... things have been changed. We have entered a new era.

If you aren't afraid, you aren't facing the reality that the American giant has tripped.

And while it was in fact merely an illusion, we have been stripped of our illusion of safety.

I know that God is with us, yes, but I also know that I follow a God who was capable of sweating blood.

Maybe this is what it's like to follow Christ to the margins.
"The Frugal Seminarian"

By Evelyn J.P. Weston
Staff Writer, The Concord

This is my second time through seminar. The first time around, while I completed my MA degree and my husband worked on his MDiv, we lived frugally, as most seminarians do. We lived frugally, but, other than the joys of studying, it seems like we didn’t have much fun.

Now we’re back for my senior year as an MDiv student. My husband is a CPE resident, and we have three kids with us. We certainly need to live frugally. We also need to have some fun.

After living in a non-metropolitan area for eight years, our family is committed to taking advantage of opportunities available to us here during this one year in the Twin Cities.

The question is: how do we enjoy our time in the Cities while still living frugally?

In this recurring column I hope to share some of what I have learned, and provide a forum to share your ideas, too.

Books

One purpose of a seminar education is to help future church leaders build their theological libraries. Along the way we acquire many books, in addition to books we had before seminar and books given to us as gifts.

When my father-in-law helped us move to seminary, he thought we should get rid of some of our books. Note that this was after our moving sale at which we sold about eight boxes of books. We still have a lot of books.

In setting up our “library,” I discovered that we had duplicates of a few books, others we no longer needed or wanted, and some given as gifts that we were embarrassed to own. We didn’t want to move them again. What to do?

That’s when I discovered selling used books on Amazon.com.

Amazon will list your used book on the same page where it sells a new book. That means that someone looking at a specific title can see whether the same book is available used.

You set the price. If the quality is good and few others are for sale, you might set your price a little higher. If you want to get rid of the book fast, you might sell it cheap. If it isn’t selling, you can lower the price. If it doesn’t sell at all, you owe Amazon nothing.

If it does sell, Amazon takes a 99 cent commission, plus 15 percent of the selling price. They also add a shipping credit to cover the cost of mailing. The money you earn is transferred to your checking account electronically every two weeks.

Believe it or not, the theological books I’ve listed have sold well. Older books that are no longer in print can often be listed. Remember to check through your novels, cookbooks, kids books, as well as some videos and CDs.

In the two months I’ve been listing items on Amazon, my net sales on eight books has been almost eighty dollars-real money my family will use to have some fun in the Twin Cities.

Do you really want to move all those books again? Would you like a little extra money to play with? Consider the benefits of carefully taking stock of what’s on your bookshelves!

How seminarians can live frugally or have fun on the cheap? Please send your ideas to eweston@luthersem.edu

Opinion

Attack on America: Did We Get What We Deserve?

By Robert Buck
MDiv Middler

You may have heard the comments by Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson, who said in the wake of the recent terrorist attacks that America had received “what we deserve.” They blamed this horror, of course, on civil liberties groups, feminists, homosexuals, and abortion rights supporters.

According to Friday’s edition of the Washington Post, Falwell went on to accuse “all … who have tried to secularize America,” and said “I point the finger in their face and say, ‘You helped this happen’.”

Well, of course I certainly do not agree with Falwell and Robertson, nor do I condone the horror that was visited on so many “non-combatants” in this “new war,” but I do nonetheless find merit in the notion that this tragedy was not without cause.

For too long we in this “Christian nation” have acted as if we were somehow special, that we are the object of God’s favor and protection, “a new Israel.” Proponents of this view read their history selectively, of course, ignoring the reality that many of the most notable of our “founding fathers” were deists, not Christians.

Furthermore, any serious reading of the Biblical witness must lead to the conclusion that God’s choosing of Israel was for the purpose of bringing about the Christ. Abraham was “blessed to be a blessing”. Israel was chosen so that all nations might be saved, and in Christ this has occurred, yet in America we still confuse genuine discipleship with the cultural trappings of an imperialistic civil religion that invokes the name of God when it’s convenient, such as during this time of national tragedy, but otherwise behaves as if there is no God. Our President has said many times over the past week that America was attacked because we are the world’s greatest symbol of freedom, and others have said that at all costs, in the face of this danger, our way of life must be preserved.

Yet it is our way of life that is precisely the problem. You may have heard the grim statistics: in 1992 the UN estimated that the richest 20% of the world, including, of course, America, controlled over 80% of global income, and the income of that richest 20% was 61 times greater than that of the poorest 20%.

These rich nations, of course, also consume a majority of the world’s resources and produce a majority of the world’s waste. As Ron Sider put it, “Our standard of living, compared with that of over a billion very poor neighbors, is at least as luxurious as was the lifestyle of the medieval aristocracy compared with their serfs.” In 1981 the U.S. Presidential Commission on World Hunger was perhaps prophetic when they said that “the most potentially explosive force in the world today is the frustrated desire of poor people to attain a decent standard of living.”

As a “Christian” nation, have we responded to this situation with generosity? The answer is an unequivocal “No!” In 1993, in fact, the U.S. ranked “dead last” (in percentage of GNP) among major Western donors of foreign aid. Combine these grim facts with the actions of an imperialistic and arrogant U.S. government that presumes to act unilaterally on the world stage in pursuit of its own best interests, and you have a certain “recipe for disas-

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Community Responses to Hatred

logic in mandatory discussions for seminary students. "You can't require everybody to show up for a remedial course in Islam. Although, we have had the conversation about having some sort of public forum with Jews, Christians and Muslims about how we are dealing with one another and with the world in what is becoming an increasing spiral of violence. We're all caught up in it."

Tiede expressed hope in Luther's utilization of its own expertise in the realms of education and international representation. "Most of our resources come from the international students themselves-they really know better about this than most of us."

Dean of Students Patricia Lull also expressed concern for our international students. "Our first responsibility is to make sure our immediate community is safe, which means we address how we respond to one another." Lull stressed the idea of "pulling in and pulling together." As one leader of a large seminary, representing many perspectives about our current situation, Lull referred to actions we can take together. A specific endeavor would be "to work on theological leadership on very complicated religious issues given our lack of background in terms of world religions. I think the seminary has a great opportunity, and we will respond to this."

However, Lull made a point of leaving no one behind during this process. She brought up the fact that Luther has members of the student body who are affiliated with the armed forces in different capacities. "Some of them are already being called up in the National Guard or active duty, some are distance learners in the military" and Lull wants to keep our focus on "being the kind of community that doesn't forget people." She also made reference to students and faculty suffering from personal losses that do not pertain to the bombings. They may feel as if their pain is not as significant, Lull says, and that we must provide everyone with an equal amount of love and support. "We have to be prepared to really listen well to one another for a long time."

Magdi Gendi is a Doctoral Student in Old Testament. He is from Egypt, and has acknowledged his own appearance as one that could bring reprisal from angry Americans. He does not have fear for himself-but he certainly fears for his family. "Any foreigner who looks Middle Eastern is targeted now for anger, hatred, revenge-anything like that."

"This is the time to show our faith," he emphasizes, "to love our enemies and to review our faith-if we are really Christians or not." Specifically, Gendi highlighted the power of communal prayer as an education in itself. "We should humble ourselves before our God to pray and seek the true face of God."

Gendi believes the Seminary has a responsibility to sponsor discussions about this event and the possible repercussions against people from other nations. "We should not only ask how it happened but why it happened. And as Christians: what can we learn from this lesson? This is the right time to come together to show our solidarity, our love and our faith."

Neeraj Ekka, a Ph.D. student in Systematics, has a fresh perspective for Americans trying to understand our present situation. "In India terrorism is part of our daily national experience. We deal with it in a much more mature way, and that helps us to distinguish between the perpetrator of the crime and the religious followers."

In order to address the problem of attacks here, Ekka believes "we must try to raise our voice in the community using whatever channels we have, to say that this response is wrong. We as Americans, who value all the high ideals of this country, should not become terrorists to our own ideals." Ekka expressed dismay at the fact that two students have already approached him to ask him what the difference between 'Islam and Muslim' was.

Did America Get What It Deserves?

Did we get what we deserve? Well, no. As Christians we know what we and everyone else "deserve," Falwell and Robertson included, and because this is so I prefer such questions to be left the gracious God who judges with His mercy, the God revealed on the cross. But ... are we innocent?

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Worship Response

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Brusie were in a staff meeting. Lull had heard something was happening, but didn’t realize the severity of the situation. Tieke found them around 9:20.

Tieke, Lull, and Brusie met with Paul Westermeyer, seminary cantor, and Robert Smith, M.Div Senior, who was scheduled to serve as assistant minister. Debbie Car-nahan, student spouse and flutist, arrived later. All realized quickly that what had been planned would not do.

"Any Christian community has to figure out how to respond to public events," Tieke explained. "This seminary educates all graduates to think of the ministry of the Gospel as [ital] public [ital off] ministry. Especially in events like this, the Church has a public voice, a different access. Part of that is through the public worship of the commun-ity of faith."

With less than half an hour to plan, the five gathered to pray and consider what an appropriate response might be. Not panic ked, they were stunned and deeply con-cerned, but calm. There still was confusion about what was happening, so no definitive response could be articulated. According to Lull, the fact that all five leaders could agree how to go forward on such short notice was a sign of God’s presence among them.

Tieke began with an announcement of the crisis. Lament provided the basis for the ser-vice. As Westermeyer said, "As soon as the reality of evil bursts into our lives, the com-munity needs to lament. It goes to the center of whatever tradition is being used." Psalms were sung and spoken. God’s Word was proclaimed, giving voice to our hope in the midst of despair. Prayers were lifted to God.

The week continued with other opportuni-ties to gather at the seminary-prayer vigils, Holy Communion, a pastoral care confer-ence, informal conversations and classroom discussions.

"The task now is to figure out how to move from this tragedy into a pattern that brings us into the next phase as a commu-nity," says Pastor Brusie. "The same is true after other losses; we can’t continue on the same as before, ignoring what has happened. We have to move on into other patterns of life. As our national leaders are saying, if we only mourn and are paralyzed, the terrorists win." Now we must begin moving forward in faith, “from tragedy to hope.”

Things You Can Do to Help

Mark Swanson, Director of the Islamic Studies Program at Luther, has provided several tips for students regarding how they can help out in the midst of this crisis.

* Participate in an Interfaith Service of Readings and Prayer among the Christian, Muslim and Jewish communities, Sunday, Oct. 21, at 7pm.
* Concerned students and faculty may also call the Solidarity Network, a group of citizens who wish to act in a supportive, non-violent manner in response to any incidents of anger or intimidation. Contact the group by email at crn@luthersem.edu.
* The Bloodmobile will be on campus on October 9, Tuesday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. You may reserve a time by calling x537. Allow an hour for check in, blood draw and recovery.

Community Responses to Hatred

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With that low level of awareness “it’s hard for people to have a holistic understanding of their neighbor;” he said.

Although this concerns him, he and he asserts that without explicit gestures of solidarity "the possibility exists that others may react with violence." Ekka also emphasizes the positive aspects of our crisis in relation to his home country. “In India, such tragedy would possibly have given way to a dramatic increase in violence, but here, because of the American values of individualism, free-dom and liberty [people] have been largely restrained. I have great appreciation for this response so far.”

Mark Swanson, Director of the Islamic Studies department, also celebrates this restraint. Swanson made a point to share the initial reactions of friends like Dr. Hamdy El-Sawaf of the Islamic Center of Minne-sota.

“When I asked my associates in the Islamic community about this issue their first stories were acts of solidarity toward Muslim folks, messages of encouragement and being welcomed by other people.” Pleased with the stance our leaders have already taken, Swanson felt the “messages from the State Capitol were first rate. I am especially proud of our Bishop for saying ‘You will be safe here’ at the vigil last Sunday.”

“Having said that,” Swanson continued, “people are still apprehensive. There have been some ugly things said. We hope and pray that there will not be incidents of phys-ical abuse. It is our duty along with other church institutions to stand in solidarity with the Muslim and Arab community and with all variety of ethnic communities. We must sustain our friendships and be very alert. We need to monitor the situation-to think and react wisely.”

When asked what specific actions stu-dents can take to alleviate the potential for fear and violence Swanson replied, “I would advise fairly simple sorts of things. What can an individual do? Things like visiting friends, letting them know you’re there, and that you can be called upon if they need help. Simple, personal, human gestures have been made and these are greatly appreci-ated.”

In terms of education Professor Swanson asserts, “This changes the way we teach, too.

“My task has always been to have students experience the beauty and power of the Islamic faith, and allow that to interro-gate us as Christians, to become a partner in a genuinely theological enterprise. Now we might have a more serious discussion on the extremists’ claim to be acting in the name of Islam. There’s a lot we can do right on campus.”

If Professor Swanson was to leave the seminary with a final entreaty, it would be "an exhortation to members of this community to reach out to your friends and class-mates around the world, to come to the Wednesday Eucharist, and as you come to the Lord’s table reflect on the incredible diversity and international character of our community-to marvel at the way we have been made one body of Christ.”

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Palestinians Express Grief Over US Tragedy

With deep sorrow and profound grief we write this message to offer our heartfelt condolences to the mothers, fathers, children, friends and families of the thousands of innocent people who have been the victims of the terrorist attacks yesterday morning on the USA. We would like to reach out to all of our American friends to assure them that we stand by them at this difficult and tragic time. Constantly, for the past eleven months, we have received many massages from our friends from America expressing their solidarity and sharing with us our grief. Never in our worst nightmares did we imagine that we would be witnessing such a horrendous event and human tragedy inflicted on our American friends. We care for every life and we pray for all those who are mourning the loss of loved ones taken away by this indiscriminate act of organized terror. Our thoughts and prayers are with you all.

We are aware that the media has shown President Arafat’s shocked reaction to this act and his strong condemnation of it. Unfortunately, the media has also shown scenes of a few Palestinians celebrating this tragedy. We want you to know that these few do not speak for or represent the entire Palestinian people. What the media failed to acknowledge was the majority of Palestinians who were shocked, saddened and mournful. We believe that this media campaign is biased and aims at dehumanizing the Palestinian people. Such a campaign follows the same logic of the terrorists, since it deliberately attempts to punish innocent people indiscriminately. In our grief, we are asking ourselves why did the people immediately associate us Palestinians with the perpetrators rather than the victims.

As Palestinians, we can very well understand the pain of our American friends. We know what it means when political leaders are targeted and are not safe in their own offices. We understand what it means when planes attack security headquarters. We know how it feels when the backbone of the economy is assaulted. We do not want to compare suffering, since every suffering is unique and this particular tragedy has such hideous dimensions. Yet, never before have Americans and Palestinians shared so much.

We express our solidarity with the American people. We invite people all over to:
1. Hold vigil prayers for the victims and their families.
2. Raise awareness and sensitivity to the brutality that the media perpetrates through the images projected.
3. Monitor the way that certain nations and peoples are stereotyped (The Americans, The Palestinians, etc.), thus inciting hatred and legitimizing aggression.
4. Develop alternative media that will set new ethical standards in reporting.
5. Actively participate in the WCC’s “Decade to Overcome Violence” so that future generations will have compassion, do justice and value life.
6. Commit to Prophet Micah’s vision that “they shall sit every person under his vine and his fig tree and none shall make them afraid.” So that no American, Palestinians, Iraqi, Israeli, Japanese, etc., will be afraid to be in his/her office, home, or airplane, no matter what nationality they hold.

May the peace of Christ be with us all.

Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb
Pastor of Christmas Lutheran Church-Bethlehem

Dr. Nuha Khoury
The International Center of Bethlehem

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Day of Service • August 28th • 2001

Called

to study and serve

Luther Seminary + First Week 2001

Following the call to ministry in Christ’s church is to follow a call to service. And that’s exactly what this year’s entering class at Luther Seminary experienced on the first day of First Week, a “Day of Service.”

The day started with a service of gathering and sending in the Chapel of the Incarnation. Patricia Lull, the Dean of Students, spoke to the Juniors about what she called the “Theology of the Broom,” where one seeks to do what is needed, not what one thinks ought to be done.

Accompanied by faculty and staff from the seminary, Juniors fanned out to numerous sites throughout the Twin Cities area—some painted houses, others filled boxes with food, all experienced first-hand what it means to serve.

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