Developers of Anti-Racism Initiative Earn Award

By Todd Hawkins
Staff Writer, The Concord

Longtime advocates of diversity and community, Nadine (Hairston) and James Addington will receive this year’s Race, Church & Change award from Luther Seminary. They will be honored Thursday, April 11 at 10 a.m. in the Chapel of the Incarnation. The award recognizes individuals who have facilitated reconciliation among diverse people and demonstrated commitment to constructive change that heals and nurtures community.

“They are both people whose lives have been committed to justice on a variety of issues,” Rev. Peg Chamberlin, executive director of the Minnesota Council of Churches, said. “Literally thousands of Minnesotans have gone through the training work they have done. Many, particularly in the white community, have come to understand racism as a systemic issue as they never understood before.”

The two will be recognized for their work in developing the Tri-Council Coordinating Commission’s (TCC) Minnesota Churches Anti-Racism Initiative (MCARI), noted as a cutting edge initiative in the U.S. for dismantling racism. TCC is supported by the Minnesota, Greater Minneapolis and St. Paul Council of Churches.

Nadine Hairston Addington is co-director of TCC and has played a significant role in the development of the anti-racism initiative. She is also a seasoned teacher and workshop leader in both cultural and religious studies and has worked with a number of organizations in the U.S. and around the world, including Jamaica and Africa.

Nadine served several years in Luther Seminary’s department of contextual education. In 1988, she helped design and establish the seminary’s Race, Church & Change award she now receives with her husband.

“It’s interesting that Nadine Addington was one of those who helped plan the first program and award,” Rod Maeker, director of cross-cultural education at Luther Seminary, said. “It was an effort to lift up models of significant cross-cultural minis-

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AN INVITE TO NON-VIOLENCE AT LUTHER

By Paul Koch
MDiv Middler

On March 19th, eleven members of the seminary community gathered in the OCC Board Room for the first meeting of INVITE (Integrating Non-Violence into Theological Education). In a general sense, the group had its beginnings in the thoughts and concerns of people around the seminary who were interested in and committed to non-violence. In a more particular sense, the group grew out of a conversation back in February at Manning’s Cafe, where Nick Uphall, Scott Williams and I drank beer and voiced our discontent with violence in the world and our hopes for the possibilities of peace. In that conversation, we struggled with the question of how pacifism and non-violence might fit into Christian and Lutheran theology. Was there room in these belief systems for the voices of people like Martin Luther King and Gandhi who believed that violent means only produce violent ends?

We had already run into problems trying to articulate non-violent beliefs in classroom discussions. Indeed, we ourselves understood some of the problems involved in bringing Christian and non-violent beliefs together. For example, the Bible tells of God commanding Saul to destroy the Amalekites, sparing neither men, women, nor children; John the Baptist does not tell the soldiers to stop being soldiers, but simply to be honest in their work. We Lutherans have inherited the Just War and Two Kingdoms doctrines, which have been used more often to give blessing to wars than to produce a serious critique of them.

Furthermore, we wrestled with what measures of non-violence one could implement in one’s life: what would be the most effective, the most ethical? What would best harmonize with Christian teachings? Practically speaking, how realistic could non-violence be? The conversation was frustrating, because it seemed that we were getting tripped up by all the complications. The three of us shared a belief in non-violence, but we felt an imposing wall of objections that hindered our ability to express that belief.

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I was thrilled when I saw that Ravi Zacharias was chosen to speak at Luther, and also surprised. Being a “non-Lutheran”, United Methodist, on campus, I notice certain tendencies with the Luther community in regards to other denominations and thoughts.

While I have never been overly offended by any comments here, I have noticed that some people, students and faculty, seem to have a disdain for “conservatives” or “fundamentalists.” I find it amazing that we, 21st century Christians in a world where Christianity is mocked and ridiculed by popular society, are still separated by theological viewpoints and minor beliefs. Should we not all be united under the banner of Christ? Luther Seminary has stressed that we are an ecumenical community, but how much are we?

Just look at the title of an article in The Concord this month: “Fundamentals Asserted at 2002 Aus Lectures.” Why is it “fundamentals asserted” and not merely “Ravi Zacharias at 2002 Aus Lecture?” Why does Luther Seminary seem to hold different views with contempt? Isn’t one purpose of our education is to be exposed to different ideas and opinions as our own?

I’m not trying to be overly critical of this. I am delighted to have chosen Luther for my seminary and plan on graduating here. Perhaps we all need to step back and look at what all Christians are trying to say and proclaim with their beliefs. I think we could make a real difference in the world if we all are united once again.

CRraig NEHRING

And while the public conversation on homosexuality present in issues past seems to have died down a bit, here’s an expression of appreciation for the entire affair:

Coming to the Table, cont.

A big thank you to Keith, Magdi, and Jamie for their willingness to begin an open discussion on a topic that is not going away for the ELCA or any other Christian denomination. One of my greatest concerns is that we as brothers and sisters in Christ keep our hearts open to the moving of the Holy Spirit in our time. We Christians have come to new conclusions regarding interpretation of Scripture on many topics that we, the church, believed and taught for many centuries. And while we lived with those misunderstandings and misinterpretations many of our brothers and sisters were excluded from full participation as members in the Lord’s body. The body of Christ still suffers because of it. Have we not come to understand...
Where Lies Your Heart?
Engaging Difference in Ourselves and Others

By Robert O. Smith
Managing Editor, The Concord

One day into our season for the communal celebration of Christ’s resurrection-Easter Monday-I got into a fight with my father. Well, maybe it wasn’t a fight so much as an argument. You know: the kind of conversation where people talk past each other without communicating.

The scene was set for our squabble when we sat down together to watch one of his many 24-hour news channels. The topic of the day was the Israeli military action in the West Bank—which at the time was escalating beyond anyone’s expectations … except, maybe, Sharon’s.

After about a half hour of saturation coverage, the station decided to provide a soundbite or two from the Palestinian perspective (as opposed to the perspective of Israeli or American interests).

Internationally recognized Palestinian spokesperson Dr. Hanan Ashrawi was the content provider of the moment. I mentioned to my dad that I held a high opinion of her. He doesn’t.

From his perspective, she’s nothing more than an apostate for Palestinian suicide bombers. That is evident in her sympathetic recounting of the roots of Palestinian rage.

As Daniel Pipes—columnist for the New York Post and director of a think-tank called the Middle East Forum—has argued, any exploration of the causes of Palestinian extremism is an endorsement of its effects.

When we eventually did communicate, I criticized his uncritical acceptance of the Sharon/Bush rhetoric: “you’re either with us or against us” in this war against terrorism and anyone who fights us is a terrorist. (For instance, France, as was announced on Saturday Night Live, is now a part of Bush’s “Axis of Evil.”)

I expressed my concern that he was being dismissive of the Palestinian plight.

And then he said it. He described how he’s been told certain things about Israel for 50 years—that the Jewish people are destined to return to and reclaim their homeland, that the state of Israel is essential for the fulfillment of biblical prophecy, etc. He didn’t mention other things like the currently fashionable maintenance of a “Judeo-Christian ethic” or Western Christian guilt for the Holocaust.

(For a good run-down of factors contributing to American Protestant support of the Zionist project, check out the balanced discussion in Herman J. and Rosemary Radford Ruether’s recently reissued The Wrath of Jonah.)

It seems that my father-in keeping with many of you who will read these words and with the majority of the parishioners we will serve—is a typical American.

There can be no question that a significant component of the Zionist effort has been the systematic dehumanization of the Palestinian people. It shocks many of us that these efforts at dehumanization have fit so well into the American political scene of recent decades. However, it has been observed that a basic characteristic of our present political mood is that we refuse to respect those whose opinions differ from ours. We tolerate some public discussion, but do not take seriously the positions of foes that we have vanquished.

Such is the message of a recent article in the New York Times titled, “Debate? Disent? Discussion? Oh, Don’t Go There!” We have been conditioned to tolerate positions that differ from ours—if we have one—but hardly ever think to allow an experience of difference to shape how we think and act.

This mood of conversation has come to dominate the majority of our relations—on interpersonal, communal, national and international levels.

Consider this from an April 8, 2002, article titled “A Deepening Disorder” from U.S. News & World Report Editor-at-Large David Gergen:

“The unrelating that we see in the world should give us pause to wonder whether we have the right balance in our approach to others. In recent years, we have been relying mostly on two ideas: one, that we will be safe if we build big enough military arsenals, and two, that others will be fee if they just follow us in adopting free markets. We have given only sporadic and often minimal attention to how we could help others in a serious way and have shown diminishing interest in old alliances. We like being the world’s superpower but not its leader.”

It’s ironic that these comments come at the end of an issue with a cover that, in an article on the Crusades, promises “The truth about the epic clash between Christianity and Islam” and makes the ominous announcement, “Israel Strikes Back.” (Is this “Empire” of George Lucas’ making or our own?)

Here we are. We’ve witnessed the end of empire. And now, as Douglas John Hall has tirelessly proclaimed, we’ve witnessed the end of Christendom.

Even the Roman Catholic Church can no longer mitigate the violence of critical minds.

Pay no attention to the people with the Bibles! We have been officially disestablished.

We may be disestablished, but we’re still stinkin’ wealthy and we’ve got more brute power than we ever imagined. We’ve got a lot of pride and feel a little underappreciated (like the first half of Driving Miss Daisy).

And we’ve got a bully pulpit.

The problem is, we’ve used it for little else than merely bullying. Here’s the end of Gergen’s article:

“The world’s population now stands at roughly 6 billion. In the next half century, the total will increase by an estimated 3 billion more—95 percent of that growth will occur in developing countries. Cities in the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America will teem with the young, poor, and resentful. We have a choice. We can continue to tell them their poverty, their violence, and their AIDS are their problems, not ours. Or we can re-engage as we did after World War II, sharing our technologies, our largess, our doctors, entrepreneurs, farm experts, and young volunteers. Which choice do you think will make the world safer for your

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LS Faculty Votes to Suspend Bible Ph.D.

By Robert O. Smith
Managing Editor, The Concord

During their meeting of March 20, 2002, the faculty of Luther Seminary voted to suspend the Ph.D. program of the Bible division.

Students currently enrolled in the program will be allowed to complete their course of study. Following this Fall, no new students will be admitted to the program.

The Concord has obtained a memo containing the Bible Division faculty’s initial proposal to the greater faculty. That division’s proposal recommended that the program be eliminated.

At the faculty meeting, the language of the Bible division’s proposal was changed to denote the “suspension” of the program instead of its “elimination.” The vote in the Bible Division was 9 to 3 to eliminate the Ph.D. program. Among the entire faculty, the vote was 28 to 14 to “suspend.”

On April 3, 2002, a meeting was held between the Bible Division and doctoral students concerned with the ramifications of the faculty’s decision. Many doctoral students not directly under the Bible division attended the meeting as well.

Arland Hultgren, Professor of Old Testament and Chair of the Bible Division, opened the meeting with a set of official remarks intended to clarify the process of discernment regarding this decision.

According to Hultgren, a “sense of unease” about the program was first expressed within the division during March of 2001. “Several new initiatives are taking up the time and attention of the faculty,” he explained, noting that the seminary has changed dramatically in the 15 years that have passed since the program was inaugurated 1987.

Personnel issues—retirements, sabbaticals, and some faculty taking on the responsibility of being associate deans—have made the concerns more immediate.

All of this, according to Hultgren, meant that the program “cannot offer enough courses for Ph.D. students to take.”

“The decision we made and brought to the faculty has not been an easy one,” Hultgren assured the doctoral students. “We have exercised great care in the matter.”

Following Hultgren’s opening remarks, members of the Bible Division faculty were invited to voice any other salient points.

Craig Koester, Professor of New Testament, echoed Hultgren’s description of the discernment process that led to this decision. Noting the program’s limited number of students, he explained that the division had to “weigh strength of the program and the challenges we face in sustaining it effectively.”

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Editor’s note: This document, obtained by The Concord, is being published to facilitate full disclosure. No other source contains every point leading to the suspension of the Bible Ph.D. program.

TO: Members of the Luther Seminary Faculty
FROM: The Bible Division
DATE: February 20, 2002

The following resolution was passed by the Bible Division at its meeting on February 13, 2002, for deliberation at the Faculty Meeting on February 20, 2002, and for possible action at the Faculty Meeting on March 20, 2002:

“that the Ph.D. program in Scripture be eliminated, the status of students admitted and enrolled prior to the year 2003, however, will not be affected by this action.”

Supporting Points:

1. While the program attracts outstanding students—who enroll, complete their studies, and receive appointments to positions for which they are prepared—it does not attract a sufficient number of high quality, well prepared students in any given year to provide a setting for a doctoral program with the strength and quality that is desired.

2. The program has required an inordinate amount of work and attention of certain members of the division who have had to provide unanticipated remedial work in too many cases.

3. Financial support of students is insufficient. Some of the most promising students admitted have received much higher support elsewhere and have consequently not enrolled here.

4. Apart from a few exceptions, members of the division do not sense a vocational commitment to and interest in teaching in a Ph.D. program in biblical studies. They are committed and interested instead in teaching primarily (but not exclusively) within those degree programs that lead to the M.A., M.Div., and M.Th. While all members teach and work with students in those degree programs, not all have participated in leading the Ph.D. seminars or taught courses designed for Ph.D. students. The result is that teaching in the Ph.D. program has become, in effect, optional in terms of course planning for members of the division. Some do not want to lead a seminar or teach a course with only two or three students.

5. The division has not been able to offer a sufficient number of courses for Ph.D. students. Students have had to upgrade courses and half-course electives designed primarily for M.A., and M.Div., students, or they have had to do independent studies, in order to fulfill course requirements. Both of these courses of study require time and attention from faculty members that could be directed elsewhere more productively.

6. Students in a Ph.D. program in biblical studies are “high maintenance” in terms of faculty time commitment. Faculty members must be committed to work intensively with students in advising, independent studies, examining (including both biblical languages and comprehensive exams), and supervision and reading of doctoral dissertations. Since 1987, when the doctoral program was inaugurated, the seminary has taken on more and more commitments, which have required greater demands on faculty time and energy. As more things have been added, other things have not been discarded. There is a sense within the division that “something has to give.” The Bible Division has concluded that the Ph.D. program is one area where a cutback can be made.

The faculty of the division wished to make it clear that this decision does not reflect on the rest of the seminary’s programs.

“There are a lot of offerings around the country in Bible that can do better than the Ph.D. program at Luther Seminary,” said

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Suspension

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Diane Jacobson, Professor of Old Testament. "This does not serve as a sign for other divisions' programs."

Paul Brookens, Ph.D. student and student representative at faculty meetings, was the first student to speak during the meeting. Brookens was present when the faculty voted to suspend the program.

"I perceive that in the faculty there is conflict that needs to be addressed," Brookens said of this decision. "I think there is a conflict in our vision for the [Bible] division, the seminary, and our place in the mission of the greater church."

The faculty seemed to dispute Brookens' reading of their discernment process. "The votes weren't unanimous, but all of the cards were up on the table," Koester said. "The process didn't lead to unanimity, but there was sufficient consensus."

Dr. Gaiser on the Faculty's Decision

Following the April 3 meeting, Professor of Old Testament Fred Gaiser talked with The Concord about the faculty's decision to suspend the Bible Ph.D. program.

"There was considerable disagreement, but never rancor in the discussions," Gaiser said of the Bible Division's long process of discernment.

"Each one of us is committed to the Bible as the heart of the curriculum," he explained. "We’ve got all kinds of valuable stuff happening here. The problem is that we can’t do it all well."

While not necessarily agreeing with the faculty’s decision on this matter, Gaiser did dispute the content of the memo which contained the Bible Division’s recommendation. "The supporting points are all true," he said.

"When you consider all of those things, it’s clear that you’ve got to do something," he added. "The program can’t continue as it is."

Gaiser was also clear about what he thinks is needed to ensure the future of doctoral-level study of the Bible at Luther Seminary: "There was certainly no top-down axing of the program, but if it’s going to be salvaged, it will need top-down support."

Jacobson added that they tried to discuss the program from the perspective of "our resources, who we are, what it needed ... and what we can best do."

Michael Brands, President of the Doctoral Student Association (DSA), raised the question of student involvement and input.

"What is—past, present, and future—the role of the students in this process and in this decision," he asked the faculty. "We need to know. It has not been clear."

Brands' question was fielded by Sara Henrich, Professor of New Testament and Associate Dean for Missional Pastors. "This degree program in Bible has been suspended. The DSA could do whatever it wanted to—it’s limitations are only in your own imaginations," she said.

"What happens with your suggestion, however, is limited by our own imaginations," Henrich continued. "There is space for those kinds of conversations to take place."

Paul Lokken, Associate Dean for Graduate Theological Education, commented on the rules surrounding these sorts of decisions.

There is currently no place for students to have input in these sorts of decisions, unless it is asked for," he said.

"Students need to be more proactive in organizing themselves to have an impact," he added. "My feeling about this place—as a student and now as a member of the staff—is that nobody feels that the student voice should be excluded."

Lokken further noted that since this was a curricular decision, it would not have to be ratified by the Luther Seminary board.

Overall, the faculty of the Bible Division takes a hopeful stance regarding the Ph.D. program’s future. "We’re saying ‘we cannot commit ourselves to more people right now,’ at least with the resources we’ve got," Hultgren said, minimizing the apparent severity of the decision.

"There is definite hope for resuscitation," said Mark Hiltner, Professor of Old Testament, noting once again that the vote was to ‘suspend’ rather than ‘eliminate’ the program. "It will come back, newly configured, newly and better funded."

This hope for the program’s future was echoed among the students who were present. "It would be excellent if we could have informal discussions about how we can address these problems," said Ph.D. student Magdi Gendi. "This program is a gift ... please don’t lose it."

Where Lies Your Heart?

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children? Which do you think is moral? ... Where lies your heart?"

No doubt, these are crucial questions for the development of American attitudes and foreign policy in the coming years.

However, Gergen does not deal with this insidious problem with his hopeful analogy with post-WWII Europe: the rest of the world that will be contributing to that figure of 9 billion isn’t Western Europe.

A typical American—like George W. Bush, for instance—has long been conditioned to believe that Western Europe is civilized and the rest of the world is barbaric at best. (Sure, they’ve had centuries of warfare, but they were fighting for principles.) They are not our roots. Unlike Western Europe, we don’t owe our history to them. And besides, they’re so very ... different and we don’t handle difference so well.

For Christians, however, difference is no cause for apathetic disengagement.

We must engage difference because we—even in our oxymoronic hostile apathy—have been engaged by God. (Rom. 5:8)

Observation of our modern and fast-becoming postmodern world confirms Martin Luther King’s call for us to exist in a web of interrelation. But Christian interrelation doesn’t depend on free markets or political alliances. Instead, our interrelation depends on the radical relatedness of God with God and God with us.

If all of us are related by extension—in a “6 degrees of Kevin Bacon” sort of way—the ultimate relationship we have is that of Christ who is in relationship with all humanity and, indeed, with all creation.

Microsoft business software calls it “1° of Separation.” We Christians might do well to think of “1° of Christ.”

Because we are radically related to Christ, no person or community may be dismissed out of hand.

I must listen to Ariel Sharon and the wails of mourning throughout the land he inhabits. My father must listen to Hanan Ashrawi and the cries of the community she represents. And we must listen to each other. But it goes further than that.

Beyond merely entertaining difference, we all of us have a responsibility to debate, to critically engage one another with an expectation that we also will be changed ... just as it is with Christ.
By Eric Nelson
MDiv Senior

"Then I came to Carthage where I was surrounded by a bubbling cauldron of lust." Augustine, Confessions, III.i.1.

A self-defined "scholar" told me that although this quote may make Carthage appear to be a decadent cesspool, we must remember that this condemnation was uttered by a saint. Therefore, by Augustine's standards, what constitutes a "cauldron of lust" would probably also give Saturday morning cartoons a profligate label as well. I, however, beg to differ.

Augustine, the often-called Father of the Western Church, was anything but lily-white. A steadfast intellectual, his dualistic thinking in his youth led him to a life of debauchery, concubines, and ultimately unmarried fatherhood. "I had no motive for my wickedness," he later reflected, "except wickedness itself. It was foul, and I loved it. I loved the self-destruction, I loved my fall, not the object for which I had fallen but my fall itself. My depraved soul leaped down from your firmament to ruin." Confessions II.iv.9. Anyone who can admit to embracing a life of sin so fully is certainly a man in touch with people's struggle with real sin and temptation.

It is for this struggle and how it shaped his view of God's action in the world that I admire this man. He had the most developed doctrine of sin (and consequently grace) of his time. For Augustine, it is how our depravity worms around in light of God's provision that is at the root of all theological issues. And as a parish pastor—that's what bishops were back then—he ran into many theological issues.

Augustine brought his doctrine of sin and grace onto bear some of the most controversial issues.

- Manicheanism: Go into any internet chat room, Christian or otherwise, and I guarantee over 90% of the people you find are operating Manichees.
- Pelagianism: Probably the most prevalent heresy of the modern church. Free will is not even a topic of debate, but rather an assumption. Today's parishioners don't want us to preach to them the Gospel; they want us to tell them what to do with their free will.
- Donatists: Not only do most parishioners assume that the Lord's Supper is ineffective without an ordained person present, I've met more clergy Donatists on both sides of the CCM debate than you can shake a stick at. Remind me, is it the Word that makes preaching effective, or is it your affiliation with the apostolic line or Word Alone?

These issues may seem overly heavy, but all three are all realities in the everyday life today's parishes. All three compromise the very Gospel we are here to study. So for the sake of the well-being of those we serve, we must continue to proclaim the truth of the Gospel for "the human soul lies weak and prostrate when it is not yet attached to the solid rock of truth." Confessions, IV.xiv.23.

In light of our charge to be a people called into a world of sin, we must turn to this world with the Word in hand. We must trust in the promises and seek to be instruments of God in his battle against the evils of sin. For me, of all the non-biblical writers I've been exposed to, Augustine's writings offer the strongest reminder of my place in God's creation. Ever conscious of our sin, he advocates for a ministry of God's grace. And never does he attempt to do it without listening to God's Word.

"For such is the depth of the Christian Scripture that, even if I were attempting to study them and nothing else, from boyhood to decrepit old age, with the utmost leisure, the most unwearied zeal, and talents greater than I possess, I would still be making progress in discovering their treasures." Augustine, Letter to Volusianus, CXXXVII.iii

By Sister Rachel A. Mueller
Dearness Candidate: MASR

As a student at Luther Seminary I have early on discovered that seldom can one's theology stand on its own merit in the classroom: it must have been influenced by someone (preferably dead) who has produced book(s) and is known to other producers of books. I thank The Concord for giving me the opportunity to express my views without being confined by those qualitifiers.

Without a doubt the theologian who has influenced me most is the Rev. Armin Gerhardt Mueller, retired pastor/chaplain (living) published, but little well known notoriety. For me the most important offices he holds are pastor, preacher, catechist, father, friend; and this semester I have become aware of yet another appropriately descriptive name for him: God-bearer. Interestingly enough, some well-known theologians (including those on this campus) would most likely have welcomed Mueller into their theological conversations for the past 60 years, but like most parish pastor/theologians of his day, he was busy living his theology 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Write it down? Only in your dreams.

So what is Mueller's theology, you ask? Pretty simple. He isn't afraid of the Law. He preached it from the pulpit and used it wherever it was needed: committee meetings, congregational spas, family issues, community statements. He showed parishioners and "non-" alike that the Law is a mirror and a curb; he taught the Law cannot save. He didn't open the Law without bringing Grace to the hearers through opening the Gospel to them. He listened. He still does. He hears people's hearts. He quietly stands with the down-and-outers. He lives a disciplined life, strong, sure, full, rich, content, joy filled. He uses the Law on himself and accepts the Grace for himself that he bestows on others. Most of all, he lets the names of Jesus roll off his lips as if Jesus were a reality, not some notion or topic for inquisitive minds. For Mueller, Jesus is the Beginning and the Ending. All things have their "Yes" in him. He has lived enough years to know that theology moves around, it's slippery, it's illusive and illusory. Think of the theological and political situations that Mueller must have encountered as pastor/preacher/chaplain over the past 60 years: heresies then that now are theologically and politically correct, and vice versa. How much harm could he have done wieldling the Law while dispensing Grace only to those he or the Church thought were worthy, rather than trusting that God could figure it out and would work in the hearts and lives of the people, as well as bring truth to light for the leaders? Mueller's theology, it seems to me, is to make both the Law and Gospel available to the people, and then to shepherd the sheep as they feed at the Manger. Shepherds use their staves and rods in keeping the larger, more aggressive sheep in line, prodding the slow and distracted ones, warding off danger, examining each sheep for disease and injuries. Mueller's theology tends to trust that in guiding the sheep along right paths and in leading them to the good grass and water, the sheep will remain within the safety of the flock and the fold, and within hearing of the shepherd's voice. The rod and staff are welcomed by the sheep; indeed, they comfort them. The picture of the shepherd in the psalm is a comparable image to the theology lived out in Mueller's ministry. The rod and staff were not used to beat the flock into submission or to injure, demean, or segregate, but to build up and to make a safe environment for the flock to feed and grow on the best food and water Source around.

(I am happy to say that this is not being submitted posthumously, in the case of my father or myself. Where does that leave this paper and it's authenticity?)
The Concord's essay contest haunts me. I sit up evenings, pondering this lonely question, "What theologian has influenced me the most?" Which becomes, in my innermost chambers of thought, a host of questions: "What theologian am I capable of writing about in 650 words?" "If I'm writing for the Luther Seminary reading public, is there a particular theologian I should choose?"

At first, my mind runs through some of the most "obvious" choices. Martin Luther's name lips off my tongue often enough, so is he the one? Certainly his thought (or his thought, as it has formed itself in my own appropriation of him) has been influential. But why would I write about Luther, since some readers would yawn and most theologians would pay attention to her literature to gain insight (and rightly so) because I would not get Luther right. The same might go for Paul, or Melanchthon, or Augustine.

My next "Aha!" moment was the happy discovery, the possibility of choosing some obscure theologian most folks on campus have never heard of; thus assuring safety from the rigorous gaze of experts, and praise from those who would then think I was stunningly erudite. To prove this erudition, I will list here those theologians who raced through my brain. I thought of the homiletician P.T. Forsyth. I considered the liturgical theologian Catherine Pickstock, the historian Gary Dorrien, the Vineyard theologian Telford World, a few of the Germans (not so obscure) like Eberhard Jungel and Gerhard Sauter. This mix-match of names kept echoing in my brain like a chant, but then faded off into a horizon of forgetting.

Of course, The Concord's wily suggestion of picking a seminary professor did not fall on deaf ears. I pondered briefly writing a rambling rave of Roy Harrissville and his teas, or Gary Simpson and his book on critical theory, or Mons Teig and the LBW (and you know, this last one really might work, as the LBW has been formative in my theology, for good or for ill). But how could I pick just one, and did I need their permission to wander about in their theology, mixing it up and getting it wrong and all that.

Then it hit me! Don't write about a theologian in the traditional sense, Clint. Instead, pick somebody you can transmute into a theologian. Pick one of the theological skeptics of the 19th century, like Emily Dickinson, or Herman Melville, or George Eliot (who translated The Essence of Christianity by Ludwig Feuerbach, thus assuring that future theologians would pay attention to her literature to gain insight into, well, you know...). Or pick those profoundly theological writers of the past generation who taught me my roots as well as my theology, like O.E. Rickvaag or Bo Gieritz. Or those famous Catholics of the 20th century, like T.S. Eliot, W.H. Auden, or Flannery O'Connor. And if the particular corpus of an enigmatic poet or novelist of the 19th or 20th century is too difficult to digest in a few paragraphs, then pick somebody younger and newer and less profound. Pick Jonathan Rand man, one of your former classmates at Luther College, who at the stunningly young age of 29 has already recorded several albums, one of which, Sound Theology, is a 52-song compilation of pieces reflecting on the liturgical church year. Yes, pick Jonathan.

Or go really oblique, and appropriate somebody who has no connection to theology whatsoever, and find whiffs of theology in their thought. What about the crypto-metaphysics of The Matrix, or the liberation theology of The Simpsons? Which then leads to this reflection, is it the movie or television series that functions as the theologian, or the authors and designers thereof, or do these modern mediums of communication in the end shatter our conception of the availability of a singular theologian and a comprehensive thought emerging from that singular theologian? Can we discover Barth's thought in his Church Dogmatics, or is our situation the desperate one described by Yeats, "Turning and turning in the widening gyre/The falcon cannot hear the falconer/Things fall apart; the center cannot hold/Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world?"

But I'm at my word-limit, and it may be the case that you as a reader have observed what I meant to confess at the beginning, but can now confess in a more poignant and ironic tone. Apparently, my favorite theologian is me.
Concern for Fair Media Representation in Middle East

By David G. Larsen
MDiv Senior

Many citizens in America rely upon television, radio, and newspapers for their international news. When it comes to fair and balanced media coverage of the current violence and crisis in Israel and Palestine I find that the major media outlets have failed miserably. The Israeli government has managed to place itself into a position to dominate American media outlets to the extent that most news stories portray Israel as the victim and Palestine as the terrorists. This is not an accurate portrayal of the situation.

Four years ago my wife and I visited the Middle East and lived with Palestinian and Lebanese families for several weeks to gain first-hand knowledge of the work of the ELCA in that region. We interviewed Muslims, Jews and Christians. We heard from Palestinians, Lebanese and Israelis. We talked with representatives of the Israeli government and the Palestinian Administration. We not only garnered valuable insight, but we made many life-long friendships.

As the crisis continues to escalate between Israel and it's Palestinian and Lebanese neighbors, our friends have attempted to keep us accurately informed. On March 10th I was directed by one of our Christian friends in Bethlehem to the web site at http://www.annadwa.org/ which is the public information site for the International Center of Bethlehem (ICB). On this site you will find stores and photos of the Israeli's occupation of Palestine. Photos of Israeli tanks in Christian school playgrounds and damage done by F-16 fighter aircraft to Christian homes and institutions are well documented.

The reality of the situation, from my personal perspective, is twofold. First, Israel is not a peaceful country. Israel professes to use military force for defense while at the same time it uses military force to acquire additional land beyond the limits established for Israel in the United Nations Mandates. Israel is one of the few modern governments in the world who's Supreme Court formally approves use of torture during the first fourteen days of confinement on suspected enemies of the Israeli state. Israel traditionally over-reacts with undue force whenever it wishes.

During my last visit to Palestine, as I was standing about 100 yards away from the entrance to Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem, I witnessed Israeli soldiers use grenades against young boys armed with stones. As I took photos of the Israeli use of excessive force, I saw two boys killed just for lobbing stones. An explosive grenade used against stones is not a reasonable response. It is a strategic response on the part of Israel to eliminate its neighbors permanently.

While visiting the Al Ali Arab Hospital in Gaza the emergency room doctors reported that a majority of the teenage male patients admitted for gunshot wounds had been shot in the testicles by Israeli soldiers. It would seem that the Israeli strategy is to eliminate not only its current neighbors, but future generations as well.

The second aspect of reality in the Israeli crisis, from my personal perspective, is that of oppression. The Zionist segment of the Israeli population is interested in land and economic opportunity at any cost. The costs that they are willing to endure are not their own, but the costs to their neighbors. Water is used as a means of oppression against the Christian and Palestinian in the West Bank and Gaza. By turning the water completely off for days and by limiting the flow of fresh food and vegetables into the West Bank and Gaza, the Zionist hope to make living in these areas so unhealthy and difficult that residents will vacate their land and make room for Israeli "resettlement." The population that seems to suffer most under this form of silent oppression are the little children and infants. United Nation records document that birth weight and infant mortality are extremely high in both the West Bank and Gaza because of the shortage of clean water and adequate food supplies.

I pray that peace will come to the Middle East. I pray that more Americans will want to become accurately informed about the real situation in the Middle East. The reality is not all! The reality is injustice suffered by an oppressed people at the hands of an overly powerful nation that receives financial and military support from America. I ask that those who read this humble cry of concern consider becoming more accurately informed and evaluate your own responses to the reality. Look beyond the popular media presentation to the reality of people's lives. Pray for all people in Palestine, Lebanon, and Israel that they may stop doing violence against one another. Communicate with our Christian brothers and sisters so they may know that someone in the world hears their cries.

Editor's Note: On Friday, April 5, KSTP television (channel 5) reporter Jason Davis presented a special piece on Mtri Raheb, pastor of Bethlehem's Christmas Lutheran Church. Earlier, Davis' "local angle" segment had reported how the church's organ had come to be rebuilt in Minnesota as part of a multi-million dollar restoration project. The April 5 piece contrasted this restorative work with the damage caused by the Israeli Defense Force's military action in the West Bank, especially around Manger Square. The report included a phone conversation with pastor Raheb.

Unfortunately, throughout the lead-in, the anchorpersons kept referring to Raheb as a "priest" in Bethlehem. We suppose it was the clerical collar that threw them off.

Letters to the Editor

that color and race do not determine who does and who doesn't participate in Christ's body? Nor was it God's will that gender determine full participation in ministry to the body? Are we, the body of Christ, willing in our generation to put aside our personal understandings long enough to allow God's breath to blow where it will and to lead us to God's answer for our generation?

I do not speak as one who is sure of anything regarding the question we are now faced with, but I know that I have to open my heart to the Spirit for the simple reason that I have benefited from other Christians in the past waiting for the Spirit's direction regarding women's participation in ministry and in other functions of the corporate body. Blow, Spirit, blow! Amen.

SISTER RACHEL MUELLER
MA Senior

Is conversation on the matter of homosexuality now finished in our community? We at this venerable institution (The Concord, that is) would hope that it will continue ... for your sake as well as ours!

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Twenty Years of Change

By Robert O. Smith
Managing Editor, The Concord

Can you imagine what it will be like to visit Luther Seminary in 20 years? How will things have changed? What will have stayed the same?

Now imagine that you were invited back as a special guest to preach in chapel and spend a week visiting classes so you could share your perspective with students who were just like you ... when you were 20 years younger!

That’s the sort of experience Mark Reitan, class of 1971, had during the second week of March. Now pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church in Lynnwood, Wash., Reitan was invited to be this year’s Alumni in Residence.

“I always love coming back to Luther,” Reitan said. “But it is very different.”

Being with students was one of Reitan’s objectives for the week. “I’ve been really impressed with the variety—of ages and the even mix of men and women—as well as their inquisitiveness and the ways they’ve asked questions,” he said.

Some asked me to sit down and talk with them about their call or parish life,” he added, noting that his time on campus came just after regional assignments. “I’ve been able to pray with students in the cafeteria as we finish our conversations.”

Reitan was also able to spend considerable time with seminary faculty and staff. “It was great to visit with President Tiede and Dean Lull; it wasn’t perfunctory but lengthy and meaningful,” he said. “They were really interested in what was happening with the work I’m doing and they shared what their work was like and what they’re excited about.”

During their week on campus, Alumni in Residence have opportunities to attend and contribute to several classes. “I’ve been surprised that professors are willing to give up entire class periods for a pastor coming back to talk about what’s relevant in the parish,” Reitan said.

One recurring theme throughout Reitan’s visit was the content of one’s “call.” “The whole business of call and resisting call is a very real thing,” he reflected, after listening to a lecture by Fred Gaiser on the topic of Jonah. “You have to decide if you’ll stay where you are or if God is calling you to another place.

“On occasion, I’ve had calls when it’s become clear that God wanted me to accept it, but I didn’t want to.”

His current call presented just such an occasion. “I had every reason to want to stay in southern Arizona,” he said. “But God really made it clear, and he made some promises: ‘He promised that he would bless the parish in remarkable ways if I’d go, and with all of these people in the Beckman boarding room.

“When you’re studying the real stuff of life, you make friendships that last forever,” he said, looking around what is now the multimedia instruction room in Beckman Hall. “And when the need is there, those friendships are fresh and alive—they’ve been there all along.”

While such relationships are crucial in personal crises, they can sustain the body of Christ in public conflicts as well. “During Wednesday’s class on the prophets, I encouraged the students to not be afraid of conflict, to not sidestep controversies,” Reitan said. “Invite conflicts to the door; don’t let them sneak up behind you—they’ll do you much more harm than that way.

“There ought to be nothing we’re afraid to talk about in the church,” he continued. “One of the things about controversial issues in congregational life is that people don’t always have to get their way but important for people to get their say. Process is so valuable; it almost becomes more important than the result.”

The church doesn’t always put such ideals into practice. “What hurts us is the kind of disrespect, the demonizing of the competition, the unkindness spoken behind the scenes in congregational life and in church-wide issues—it’s like the body inflicting damage on itself,” Reitan said. “My hope and prayer is in diversity on these issues, our oneness in Christ will sustain us.”

Along with the seminary, the church in which today’s seminarians will serve has undergone 20 years of change. Reitan encourages those students to be responsive to God’s call.

He suggested that students interviewing for first calls should “come with a willing spirit, ready to serve and not be served.

“The congregations that are reaching out and putting themselves on the line are thriving,” Reitan added. “We need leaders who approach life in the same way, leaders who give their lives for Christ’s sake who aren’t concerned with protecting, holding onto themselves.”

This sacrificial, visionary leadership is not limited to clergy or rostered leaders. “This is a calling to which all of God’s people are called,” Reitan said.

“I remember George Aus saying to us, ‘what a privilege it is to speak on behalf of the Lord Jesus! This is the top job of all God’s people. And think about it, you’ll get a salary for doing this!’”

FUN ALUM TIME — Mark Reitan & Clint Schneekloth in conversation that he would take care of my daughter.”

His daughter, Julie, was a student athlete at the University of Arizona. “He promised he’d take care of her,” Reitan repeated. “What I didn’t know is that he would take care of her in heaven. A little less than two years later, she died.”

Faith in the midst of crisis was the theme of the chapel service over which Reitan presided during his week at Luther and could be said to be the theme of his life. “It is important to proclaim how real and relevant faith is in the midst of life’s crises,” he said. “It isn’t always what we expect or anticipate, but God keeps his word.

“The love of God in Christ is sure and does not waver; that is the kind of solid foundation upon which life is lived,” he added. “Everybody needs to hear it and know it’s the truth. It became important for me to proclaim that truth in the midst of crisis, for the parish and for me. Now, crisis is no stranger to any of us.”

The importance of one’s relationships is made apparent in crisis. “When I was in my deepest need, the deepest darkness of grief, those friends I made here helped me the most,” Reitan shared.

“They came to my side. Rick Foss sat with me for three days. Jim Nestingen would call and weep with me,” he added. “I ate meals with all of these people in the Beckman boarding room.

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Race, Church and Change Award

Continued from page 1

try here for students at Luther. This award is one way of reminding us all of what God calls the church and leaders of Christian communities to be and do in God’s diverse world. “

Nadine is delighted to receive the honor. “This award affirms the work that we’ve been doing for quite some time,” she said. “It also opens the doors for further conversation.”

Racism today is like the deadly gas carbon monoxide, Nadine has said. “You can’t see it, you can’t smell it, but it could kill you.”

Nadine is an accomplished soloist in the Black gospel tradition and comes from a nationally distinguished family, the Hearstons. The Hearstons: A Family in Black and White, by Henry Wieneck, explores the history of one of America’s largest families as a reconciling force in the development of U.S. society. The book was recently featured on CBS’ 60 Minutes. Nadine has also served on the board of directors of the Walker West Music Academy in St. Paul.

James Addington, current director of TCC, is the lead designer of MCARI workshops and primarily oversees the program. He also serves as co-chair of the board of directors for Crossroads Ministry in Chicago, an interfaith ministry for racial justice that provides training nationwide to dismantle racism.

“The value of our work happens on many levels, the first of which is personal,” James said. “As parents and grandparents, we’re committed to our children and our children’s children not having to deal with racism.”

James is happy to receive Luther’s Race, Church and Change award. “This award signifies recognition by Luther seminary of the importance of dealing with the issue of race,” James said.

For more than 30 years, James’ work has focused on local community development, leadership training, organizational development and strategic planning. He spent 10 years outside the U.S. in a variety of local and regional development projects in Jamaica, Venezuela, India, the Philippines and Nigeria. He served for nine years as the director of the Lutheran Coalition for Public Policy in Minnesota, an advocacy and public policy education arm of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

Chamberlin said that the anti-racism work of Nadine and James has reached beyond divisions of polity, denomination and history. “This the kind of work that doesn’t need denominational identity around it. The evil that we work against is so broad,” she said.

MCARI was developed shortly after the 1992 Rodney King verdict and the subsequent crisis in South Central Los Angeles. These events added urgency to efforts already underway by the Minnesota, Greater Minneapolis and St. Paul Council of Churches. At the time, each council sponsored separate efforts aimed at racial reconciliation and anti-racism training and organizing.

In May 1993, the board of the Minnesota Council of Churches endorsed a statewide anti-racism initiative. In 1994, the Greater Minneapolis and Saint Paul Area Council of Churches added their endorsement and sponsorship of the Initiative. A year later, the three councils merged efforts and financial support through their coordinating body, the TCC, which provides programmatic oversight of MCARI.

Chamberlin affirmed the board’s decision to support the three councils’ efforts. “It is the council’s mission to promote anti-racism and to support the work that others do,” she said.

The group INVITE was started as such a response. At our first meeting, the group agreed on a threefold purpose: “Understanding God to be active in our world, our purpose will be to 1) discover the implications of violence in our world, 2) discuss and learn about active non-violence, and 3) work together to promote non-violence.”

The first meeting of INVITE was productive. After opening in prayer, a few of us shared our own histories and commitments to peace issues, and then the group dug into organizational details. We talked about our hopes for the group. We discussed how to structure our meetings. We planned ahead for this month’s meeting. The details were tiring, but we needed to tend to them, and at the end of our meeting, we treated ourselves to a quote potluck. Everyone brought in a quote to share with the group, and we heard the wisdom of figures such as King, Bonhoeffer, Maya Angelou, and John Groeder.

It has been encouraging to discover that others on this campus are concerned about violence and want to work non-violently to care for our war-torn world. It is my hope that our lives will be enriched as we learn about the paths of non-violence that others have taken, and I look forward to finding ways to incorporate those paths into our own lives. It is my deeper hope that we who are learning about non-violence would be able to serve the world by what we learn.

Our meetings are open to students, staff, faculty, family and friends. Although there are particular questions that will be addressed in our Lutheran context, we welcome people from any denomination. Our next meeting will be Tuesday, April 16th at 7:30 in the OCC Board Room. We invite the energy and enthusiasm of anyone in this community who would like to join us in our purpose.