4-6-1971

Balaam's Ass - Issue 2

Fuller Theological Seminary

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Recommended Citation
Fuller Theological Seminary, "Balaam's Ass - Issue 2" (1971). Balaam's Ass. 5.
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WILL THE REAL PRIORITIES PLEASE STAND UP!

On Thursday evening, March 25, Dr. Shelby Rooks, director of the Fund for Theological Education, addressed the Board of Trustees and a small group of faculty and students. He urged FTS to consider the pressing issue of black theological education. As support, Rooks offered the following observations:

1. There is "a need for understanding on the part of both black and white." America is in a crisis of polarization.
2. "Theological schools don't do an adequate job unless they take into account the vital pluralism which takes place in this country." Whether ministers serve in the black community or not, they ought to take cultural pluralism seriously in an attempt to understand the ideas and aspirations of black people.
3. Seminaries must recognize the black church as the most viable institution within the black community. A recent survey indicated that 93% of all black ministers have no theological education. Seminaries have a tremendous opportunity to train black ministers.

As a plan of action, Rooks suggested that FTS establish a black studies program with one or both of the following foci. First, white students ought to be informed of black culture and its value to the church and nation. This emphasis might comprise the whole task of a program at FTS. Rooks contended, however, that a total commitment to black education ought to include training black ministers as well. This second focus would encourage a black presence at FTS while offering a training ground for black evangelicals who wish ministerial preparation.

Rooks offered Plan 1 which consisted of a black faculty member, an exhaustive black bibliography and structured experiences for white seminarians in the black community. This program, designed to develop awareness and appreciation of black religious experience, would cost roughly $20,000 according to Rooks. Plan 2 would be aimed at training black ministers as well as including the focus of Plan 1. Its constituent parts would include approximately 10 black students, a black administrator, a black faculty member, scholarship finances and additional courses relating to the black religious experience. Rooks estimated that this program would cost a minimum of $80,000.

Can FTS train black ministers? In his address Rooks stated, "I don't know of any seminary in this country that has a better opportunity than this one (FTS) to train black evangelical leadership."

What was the response to Rooks' proposal? An informed observer noted that the trustees dispensed with the issue in a couple of minutes the following morning. If faculty attendance at the Rooks address was any indication of their interest, the situation is bleak. Less than half of the faculty attended the meeting. Students have demonstrated little wide-ranging support in spite of the ethnic involvement committee's concerted efforts. The administration has shown interest as evidenced by Dr. Hubbard's appointment of a com-
The creation of a black studies program is clearly a question of priorities. In what direction should institutional energies and finances be directed? Rooks' rationale for black theological education is both compelling and feasible. FTS ought to begin implementation of a black studies program. The most obvious source of funds is the present Capital Funds Campaign. Certainly the anticipated funds have already been carefully budgeted, but is it too late to incorporate black theological education as an essential part of that program? New buildings and facilities offer the greatest promise for theological education when coupled with newly constructed relationships in the minority community.

-- D.L.T.

CRISIS RE-VISITED

The crisis in personhood at FTS is not just an abstract concept. It is very much alive as I discovered this past week in talking with three upper level students. These students make above average grades and two of them plan on graduating next June. The first student said, "My feelings never touch this place any more. I got really involved in the education conference last year, but they (FTS) didn't want to change." The second student said, "I've withdrawn my emotions from Fuller. This school hasn't helped me in my struggle and searching as a student or as a Christian." The third student who will graduate in two years commented, "I got more time, help and consideration in five weeks from Dr. Thomas F. Torrance than I got in almost two years from all the Fuller professors I've had so far. It's a shame they have to bring a man six thousand miles to give us a more personalized education."

These comments indicate a real loss of community and Christian caring at Fuller Seminary. This is tragic since Fuller describes itself as a "community of scholars." Perhaps the first step towards a greater sense of Christian community at Fuller would be to describe ourselves as a "community of learners" since none of us has obtained his final "prize" (Phil. 3:14). We all must realize that we can learn from each other -- students from students, faculty from faculty, students from faculty, and faculty from students. Learning requires interaction, not just study in quiet isolation. Interaction sharpens ideas, polishes one's presentation and refines truth. Interaction can also be a source of support and encouragement. It can aid one through periods of struggle and doubt, promoting growth and maturity. However, this type of interaction does not take place in a class of 60 to 100 students, but in much smaller groups and personal encounters where students and professors can discuss the questions and frustrations which are plaguing them. This requires time, energy, and yes, fewer faculty publications, but the alternative is a continuation of the frustration and emotional withdrawal noted earlier. Secular society is reacting against the present technological depersonalization. People are crying for the personal touch, for people to take an interest in them and care for them. If we in this seminary are unable to do this now, how are we going to be able to form our parishioners into groups which reflect the Christian tradition of caring, sharing and learning together. Christ gave us an outstanding model to follow. He invested most of His time...
in twelve men so that they would be prepared to take the Good News to the ends of the earth. This model of discipleship must be emu-
lated at PTS.

---D.L.S.

LAST WORDS

In secluded piety with an uptight God,
The touch of mankind poses a terrifying threat.
Those foundered worldlings, weighed down with a multitude of sins,
Keep them away,
Or I perish with my uptight God.

---D.L.T.

STANDING ON THE ACADEMICS

In spite of massive presidential support, the SST was defeated last week thus signalling a challenge to America's established tech-
nological priorities. While the nation has reconsidered its prior-
ities, Fuller Seminary has not. FTS students and faculty continue to over-emphasize the academic, while allowing the practical and applied aspects of the ministry to take second place. Two contrasting examples will clearly indicate this: the Church in Mission Com-
mittee and the publication of the Studia Biblica et Theologica.

The Church in Mission Committee comprised of classes in social concerns, cross cultural ministries and para-church ministries was instituted to provide students with course work and research in areas which were not covered by the normal ministry courses. The focus of the classes varies from year to year depending on student interest. Students receive three units per year, averaging one unit per quarter. Students pay the usual unit price; however, faculty serve in an advisory capacity without pay. The progress of these classes during the school year has been varied, partly depend-
ing on the commitment of the advisory professor. One can hardly expect an unpaid professor, having his own time priorities, to grant much time and energy to this particular course. The courses are not funded by course fees, they are financed by the student council, which sets aside funds for the Church in Mission Committee. Students pay both course fees and student fees, the latter going to the student council, but have no paid advisor.

In September of 1970, $300 was allotted to each of the three classes to fund projects and publish research. These classes have been involved in the Faith At Work Conference, Twentyonehundred, ethnic involvement committee, Black History Week and a survey of Pasadena community problems. The Church in Mission Committee not only has attempted to fill gaps in FTS's ministry curriculum, but has contributed much as an important informative agency. Might not the administration's lack of sensitivity towards the Church in Mission Committee reflect a lack of institutional commitment regarding the practical and applied aspects of the ministry?
The SBT was primarily conceived to allow students "to break into print." Secondary motives were student recruitment and an explication of Fuller's theological stance. Those responsible for its publication felt that a well-written student theological journal could add much to the Fuller community and the greater evangelical community.

From its inception the student council gave top priority to the publication of the SBT and the proposals received overwhelming approval. The council first allotted $600 after the inception of the SBT during the spring of 1970 for its publication. In February of this year the council rejected a cheaper format in favor of a bound format "similar to other technical theological journals." The council voted an additional $700 "to assure publication" of the journal. Dr. Hubbard also authorized additional funds to continue publishing the journal. A total of approximately $1600 has been spent to date.

The cases cited delineate the issue of priorities. First, I question the institutional commitment to the Church in Mission Committee in that the three classes do not have paid faculty members. On the other hand, the support for SBT, both student and faculty, seems to reveal a continued emphasis of the academic over the practical.

Monies spent on the Church in Mission's three classes numbering about 25 members per quarter have supported many worthy endeavors, while SBT expenditures have produced a bound journal containing five student articles. A less expensive format could have been chosen and would have sufficed for the Fuller community. I seriously doubt wider paid circulation. Technical theological journals are many and varied and it will be difficult to find a place for a student journal among the many scholarly journals. Clearly there is value in the content of SBT. My point is not demeaning the content, but rather in questioning the priorities which brought about such an expensive publication. The emphasis on academic excellence should be balanced with an equal emphasis on the social and practical aspects of the ministry.

--A.E.T.

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The steady support of faculty on the ethnic involvement committee provides an indication of their concern for students. We wish to express our appreciation for these faculty who are persistently seeking change at FTS.

--The Editors: D. Lee Stoltzfus
Alan Tomasso
Dave Toyocen
Typist: Linda Smith

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Graffiti: Fuller Seminary - Love It or Leave It (seen in faculty restroom)
Fight anti-Semitism, drop Hebrew (seen in the student restroom)