

The Mercer Cluster

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Tuesday, Nov. 24, 1959

The time-worn, wooden door of the Castle Church at Wittenberg has nothing on the center column of the most-used lounge in the MU Student Center.

In fact, less commotion was probably made over that famed door during the week after Luther posted his 95 Theses than was made last week over the MU version of the Protestant "Declaration of Independence."

Although not yet having the earth-shaking impact of Luther's Theses, there remains the hope that powerful repercussions will be felt, which is entirely possible if the Baptist Chronicle ever publishes the Mercer version.

Students gathering around the clever handwritten document had various reactions. Deep-throated chuckles came from the throats of many faculty members—until their eyes came across some poignant proverb that hit close to home base.

Hyperbole, irony, litote and satire enough to give any English major a deep thrill were scattered throughout this duplication of an epoch-making manuscript.

One was reminded of Swift's A MODEST PROPOSAL as he read the "gentle" satire found in these Ninety-Five Theses. One striking difference is noticeable.

Instead of offering roasted Irish babies to the English market, broiled Mercer professors, fried seminary presidents, and stewed Southern Baptist preachers are offered on the plate of criticism to the naturally cynical.

Who planned this masterpiece? We don't know. Honestly, we don't. Various loyalty oaths have been tested around campus in rituals designed to seek out the culprit or culprits, but these attempts have been unsuccessful.

Many of these "Theses" were humorous, especially when one thinks about the "head-counting" and "cultivated ignorance" in some circles. But something about a few of them reveal minds not clever enough to conceal satire in less direct statements.

Some might say that these 95 Theses seem to epitomize the atmosphere found on college campuses as one begins to think about and criticize his background. And this attitude is not bad if it is used to introduce something better.

But what happens if this is not the case, and everything in the existing system is flagrantly condemned? Perhaps one could be prejudiced against prejudice to the extent that he is intolerant, or dogmatic.

Could it be possible that something might be wrong with the critical attitudes which we pride ourselves on possessing?

Are the good aspects of existing institutions overlooked in our efforts to pinpoint sore spots?

We don't offer any answers, just questions.—TR

ED. NOTE: The 95 Theses are published, in full, elsewhere in this issue for the benefit of those who did not get to read the scroll or those who couldn't make out the writing.

Reminder To Students: Sign For Library Books

Books are indispensable, especially to college students. The biggest portion of our time in school is spent with them, either texts, outside reading assignments, or research work.

There are some among us who do not cater to the idea of all of us having equal opportunities in our book work. These are the people who have been taking books home with them from the reserve and fiction shelves without checking them out at the desk.

The purpose of call slips and the other routines in the library is not just to give students something to do, but is essentially a system to keep the librarians informed as to the whereabouts of each book in case it is needed.

Students are reminded that they are supposed to sign the card in the reserve books and leave it at the desk if they take the book to a table. It should be unnecessary to remind them to check the books out if they plan to take them out of the library.

THE TATTNALL Square

The proposal is being bandied about that the Student Senate petition the student body to have Nov. 24 established as Reformation Day at Mercer.

It occurred to me on the way to class the other morning just why the Mercer University treasurer isn't titled, as he is at many other colleges, the bursar. If he were, he'd be the Mercer Bursar.

Montgomery Ford walked into my room the other day all hung up on the subject of advertising.

"You can't fight it!" he wailed. "For instance, you watch Playhouse 90. What do you see? You see some 75 minutes of drama and maybe fifteen minutes of commercials. Five minutes after the show's over what do you remember? You remember the commercials!"

"You wake up in the middle of the night with the urge to play mother to a poor little lost Renault bleating its heart out into the darkness of a used car lot.

"Oh, there's sex symbolism, too. You see a guy driving a Renault through downtown traffic and he blows that horn. What do you hear? Way off in the distance, blocks away in the heavy traffic on another side of town, you can hear the faint replying cry of another little Renault seeking another of its kind.

"How could anyone hate a Renault?"

Have you seen the cartoon with the two beats sitting in full lotus position in their pads and one of them is saying: "Well, if Billy Graham chooses to ignore Zen, Zen chooses to ignore Billy Graham!"?

BUDDY HURT

Not Enough Support



Some weeks ago, the president of the Georgia Baptist Convention spoke to that body on the quality of education that they are sponsoring.

Dr. Howard P. Giddens told the Convention: "We are not doing what we can do in the support of . . . our educational institutions.

"For instance, we are sponsoring six colleges in Georgia, and none of them are adequately financed, I dare say, adequately staffed. We are majoring today in quantity rather than quality with the multiplicity of our schools. As a result, we do not have any one great, outstanding Baptist university in this state.

"Surely, the day of reckoning will come and we will find ourselves hard pressed to operate all of our schools. We will lose some of them by default, as we have done in the past. Georgia Baptists have organized innumerable institutes, academies, and colleges. The majority of them have not survived the years. Certainly they rendered a great and heroic service before they expired.

"History seems to point up the fact that any institution which survives must have money, students, and faculty, as well as buildings and equipment. I hope that we will do some hard, clear, and positive thinking about our educational institutions.

"We must make up our minds as to whether or not we shall be satisfied with a large number of inadequate schools, or move toward the goal of a few strong institutions. Whatever the goal, we must give them the tools, the money, and the faculty, to do the job required."

These excerpts were part of his Presidential Address, that Dr. Giddens delivered to the Georgia Baptist Convention upon completing his first term as conventio presidet.

And these words are most welcome. The wisdom of the Convention in sponsoring a handful of schools has been questioned for some time, as well it might be. Certainly Convention support, as Dr. Giddens said, has been spread too thin.

At Mercer, our interest in the words of the Convention resident is natural. Our school is already in need of much greater financial backing, and we would surely welcome increased appropriations from Georgia Baptists. As it is, Mercer's enrollment is greater than all other Baptist colleges combined. Yet our appropriation is less than the total amount received by other Baptist schools.

With a crisis rapidly approaching at Mercer,

LETTERS

These Theses

Editor The Mercer Cluster
Dear Sir,

This is not to comment on the quality of thought, poor as it may be, in the "95 Theses" (which were) in the student center, but Martin Luther wasn't ashamed to sign his name to his.

Albert Studdard

About Sigma Nu's

Dear Editor,

Someone has said: "It's not so much what you say as how you say it."

This saying and its truth was brought rather forcefully to my attention of late in connection with an article I wrote the Wednesday, Nov. 18, edition of the Macon Telegraph. The story was concerned with members of Sigma Nu fraternity, which I am a member, who held roles in Peter Ustinov's Romanoff and Juliet presented by the Mercer Players.

In talking to Miss Needles, drama instructor, the evening on which the article appeared, I learned that there were some persons who might think, after reading the account, that Sigma Nu's have a monopoly on the parts in Mercer production and that they are the only organization on campus which actively supports the work of the drama department.

This is an erroneous implication and let me offer my sincerest apologies to those who may have been influenced to think in this manner.

In publishing the article, I did not in any way mean to imply that Sigma Nu is the only organization on campus making a real and plausible contribution to the welfare of the college community. I would among the first to admit that the good which the university accomplishes is achieved only through the cooperative effort of those who make up our university.

In writing the article, I did not violate the cardinal law of newspaper reporting that is, the account was factual. The charge of a "slanted" article is invalid in that the article was written from a feature angle. The angle which made the story different, and thus worthy of reporting, was that an unusual number of the cast members were from one distinct campus group.

However, to imply that this is the norm would be misleading.

If my article has caused some people to think that the Mercer Players could not continue to function without the active interest of the Sigma Nus, then I have been in error and I offer my apologies. It is for the benefit of these people that I submit this letter.

Byron Foster
Macon Telegraph

Orchids

Mr. Buddy Hurt, Executive Editor,
The Mercer Cluster,
Mercer University,
Macon, Georgia.

Dear Mr. Hurt:

For some time now I have been receiving The Mercer Cluster and I want to thank you for placing my name on the mailing list. I can assure you that I read it with a great deal of interest. You and your associates on the staff are doing an excellent job.

Sincerely,
J. E. Denmark

Editor, The Mercer Cluster,

Dear Mr. Ellis,

I wish to thank you for sending The Mercer Cluster to me. I enjoy every copy and read thoroughly. The 40th Anniversary edition is superb journalism. The cuts are all so clear. There is nothing "amateurish" about The Cluster. I am proud that Mercer University has so fine a weekly paper, manned by so capable a staff.

Cordially and Gratefully,
Mrs. Frank F. Jones

and as the problem of attracting good teachers worsens to that of retaining the ones we have now, we have a particular stake in the issue Giddens so well expressed.

It is surely our hope that our new president will receive the support from the Convention so sorely needs to carry out the plans for improvement of Mercer he has already indicated.