

The Enquirer

Southeastern Baptist Seminary, Vol. 111, No. 7, February 9, 1967

PILOT PROJECT IN D.C.

A Four-week Seminar on Urban Studies will be held in Washington, D.C. from June 12 to July 8, 1967. The pilot project, exploring the challenges of Christian ministry in the modern city, is sponsored jointly by Southeastern Seminary, the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, and the District of Columbia Baptist Convention.

Three courses will be taught: (1) Christian Dialogue Within the International and Inter-faith Community, (2) The Church in the Secular City, and (3) Resources for the Church's Community Ministry. Students will become directly involved in the life of the city through study projects, in addition to the class lectures. Five hours of credit will be given by the Seminary.

The faculty will be E. Luther Copeland, professor of Missions, Thomas A. Bland, professor of Christian Ethics, and C. Emanuel Carlson, Executive Director of the Committee on Public Affairs in Washington. Dr. Carlson has a doctorate in Political Science.

Eight scholarships of \$200 each will be provided by the Home Mission Board. The scholarships will cover food, fees, and travel. Washington churches will provide rooms for the students.

Seminary students who are interested in the seminar are requested to direct their inquiries to Dr. Sandusky by March 1, 1967. Enrollment for the Urban Study project is limited to 32 students.

MUST FOR SEMINARIANS IN NEW YORK CITY

During the 1967-68 academic year, the Metropolitan Urban Service Training Facility (MUST) will offer the Metropolitan Intern Program for theological students.

MUST is a work and study program on the mission of the Church in an urban world. The focus of the program will be upon understanding the life of the modern metropolis through involvement in a secular job, participation in one or more groups working on the problems of the city work as a layman in a church, and focused by study and seminar programs.

The Metropolitan Intern Program began in 1964, sponsored by Union Theological Seminary under the direction of Dr. George W. Webber of the East Harlem Protestant Parish. In 1965, Dr. Webber became the Director of the Metropolitan Urban Service Training Facility and the Metropolitan Intern Program became a MUST component. As a MUST program, MIP was expanded to four units located in East Harlem, Manhattanville, Lower East Side, and Newark, N.J. Thirty-eight interns, representing fourteen seminaries, are participating in the 1966-67 academic year.

Each participant pays MUST \$250 for enrollment in MIP. The fee is payable in two installments, September and January.

Interns pay 11 of their own living and other expenses. Rent in the inner-city tenement is minimal for New York, normally around \$75 per month.

(Continued on page 3)

Official Student Publication of
Southeastern Seminary
Wake Forest, North Carolina

EDITORIAL

The just-opened session of the North Carolina General Assembly has attracted much more interest from churches and religious leaders across the state than is usual. Indeed, one might conclude from all the speeches, resolutions, and letters of religious leaders and people that the

cause of Christ has never been so seriously threatened in North Carolina as it is today, that an issue of life-and-death importance to the churches is pending in the Assembly. Surely nothing in recent years has brought so much open pressure on the General Assembly from segments of the state's religious leadership.

The issue of course is liquor. A recent decision of the North Carolina Supreme Court outlawed the popular custom of taking bottles into restaurants to pour one's own drinks (liquor-by-the-drink sale being expressly forbidden). The desires of some to restore this custom (called "brown bagging") to legality and even to permit the sale of liquor by the drink has aroused this strenuous opposition from religious groups.

One of the common arguments against legalized liquor sales is simply that alcohol consumption is prohibited by the Bible. However, aside from the fact that the Bible is not a rule book for Christians, much less for state legislatures, the Bible nowhere condemns drinking. The famous passages which are often cited as condemning alcohol--such as Proverbs 23:29-35--do not actually condemn alcohol, only the excess use of it. Indeed, the Christian Gospel has the effect of setting men free from such regulations:

Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink.....

Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?

Colossians 2:16,20-22.

It is true that Paul recommends to the Christians at Corinth that they abstain from certain practices if they offend the consciences of weaker brothers. But even if we accept that principle as applicable to the issue at hand, then all we have done is give Christians a way, by abstaining from alcohol, to show consideration for certain weaker brothers. Clearly, however, that gives us as Christians no excuse to impose upon the general population by force of law an ethical principle which applies only to Christians, and to them only as a privilege, not an obligation. Surely as Baptists, who have stood so long for the separation of church and state, we would not be guilty of using the churches to apply political pressure to enact laws compelling obedience to a religious principle! Alas, we are the most guilty of all, and the blood of our spiritual forefathers who died for religious liberty is upon us. There are some leaders of the religious opposition to liberalized liquor who claim to be motivated purely by a concern for the public health and welfare. They are familiar with the destruction caused by drunk driving, and many of them are acquainted as pastors with the heartbreaking effects of alcoholism. Yet their claim also has a hollow sound, for if they had no religious interest, why are the church leaders the ones who are leading the fight against liquor? Why is this the only issue affecting the public health and welfare which they choose to become aroused over? Clearly it is either because they are in fact trying to impose a religious principle on the population (thus breaking down the wall of separation between church and state) or it is because they think they know something which others don't know about the harmful effects of alcohol, so that they must warn us. Yet surely after centuries of defeat at the hands of science, churches ought by this time to have learned they cannot claim any special knowledge about the universe and how it works, including man and his society. Such knowledge is the province of science, not religion. Yet when we turn to the issue at hand we find no scientific evidence to indicate that brown bagging or liquor by-the-drink will in any way aggravate the problems caused by alcoholism and drunk driving. There is historical evidence to indicate that even prohibition won't solve the problem but will create greater evils,

February, 1967

There are some people who know more about alcoholism than preachers--for example clinical psychologists who make a life's work out of the study of alcoholism and the treatment of alcoholics. There are some people who know more about the causes and control of drunk-driving than preachers do. Yet, so far as we have been able to tell, these people have not rushed to Raleigh to oppose liberalization of the liquor laws. Alcoholism is a complex and serious malady which affects a small percentage of the drinking population. It is obviously not caused or controlled by the availability of alcohol, for the alcoholic gets his alcohol no matter how hard it is to get. It is difficult to see how permitting the use of alcohol in restaurants will increase alcoholism, since the alcoholic does his drinking in private anyway. Indeed, from the standpoint of problem-drinking, liquor--by--the--drink would be preferable to liquor--by--the--bottle, which we have under present law.

We think the real reason for the religious opposition to alcohol is neither biblical nor based upon a concern for the public welfare. We think it is instead a scapegoat which religious leaders have discovered can be attacked and abused with delightful hostility and hatred. We remember, for example, the last session of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. Speakers stood up to denounce not only liquor but those who favored its sale and the denunciations were bitter and even vile, so bitter and vile that they would not have been tolerated if they had dealt with any other topic. Yet it was these denunciations, steeped in hostility and aggressiveness, thoroughly unchristian toward those who might disagree, which received the loudest, most enthusiastic applause. One could feel the waves begin to swell at the Convention coliseum, the same kind of waves one sees sweeping over a KU Klux Klan rally, the only difference being that the scapegoat was the liquor salesman instead of the Negro. In both cases, all the evils of society are blamed upon the scapegoat, which is particularly tragic for Christian preachers, who are thus kept from seeing the real evils of society. It is not coincidental that those denominations, such as the Baptists, which have protested the loudest about liquor are usually the ones which do the least about other pressing evils of society such as racism of either extreme.

There is clearly something wrong with

the present liquor laws. They do nothing to discourage alcoholism; in fact they encourage it by making liquor something which can be consumed only in the home where a whole bottle is already paid for, opened, and instantly available while denying the moderate use of liquor by the drink in restaurants. In addition, the law seems to make out of alcohol a surreptitious, unrespectable commodity--the very sort of thing a person who wants to escape from society or to "put one over" on society would be expected to seek and use. The brown bag itself is a symbol of a pitiful and doubtless unhealthy attempt to hide the bottle. A five-minute look at the people coming out of an ABC store and the way they carry their bottles is enough to confirm the impression that we have made the wrong sort of thing out of liquor.

We hope the General Assembly will legalize the sale of liquor-by-the-drink in bona fide restaurants which meet certain standards which they Assembly may set. We think that legalizing brown bagging would only be a half-way solution, for it would retain the "brown bag" complex which we think is undesirable. Nevertheless, even legalized brown bagging would be preferable to the very restrictive law we now have, a law which we think simply confirms the alcoholic in his isolated drinking.

We hope the Assembly will not be pressured by the opposition which religious leaders, especially Baptists, have stirred up. Who not think it represents enough votes to worry about, so that if the Assembly forthrightly amends the laws in the direction we have suggested, these leaders are not going to be able to punish the legislators who do so by seeing to it that they are voted out of office. Any attempt to do so is bound to backfire. But more importantly, we think their opposition is unfounded, either on religious or on public-health grounds and we hope it will not keep the Assembly from acting to improve the liquor laws.

** ** * ** * ** * ** * **

(cont. from page 1)

Further information and applications may be received by writing to:

Metropolitan Intern Program

MUST

235 East 49th Street, 10th Floor
New York, New York 10017

PEACE VIGIL

The Social Action sub-committee of the Ethics Committee has indicated its support of the Peace Vigil initiated by ministers in the Raleigh area. The following is the text of the statement and invitation to participation drawn up by the committee:

"Religion is at the very heart of the basic problems and concerns of man. It is a life and death issue. That is to say, it concerns those things which are of significance to man. No sector of existence is to be exempt from the realm of Christian witness. Therefore, we affirm the need for the Church to stand where the legitimate interests of man are manifest. The Social Action Committee of Southeastern Seminary finds such a religious concern to be the Peace Vigil now initiated in Raleigh.

"This vigil will begin on Wednesday, February 15, at 12:00 p.m. and will last one hour. It will continue on each following Wednesday from 12 to 1:00 p.m. Its purpose is to express sorrow for and criticism of the United States' participation in the Vietnam War. It is hoped that both faculty and student members of Southeastern Seminary will become a part of this standing testimony for peace.

"Students and faculty are requested to meet in front of the cafeteria at 11:20 on Wednesday for departure to Raleigh. A second departure will take place at 12:00 for those who are unable to make the first one. Those students leaving at 11:20 and having a 1:00 class will be returned in time for their lecture. All other students will return from Raleigh shortly after the Vigil.

"The Social Action Committee sees this Peace Vigil as one of those instances where the Church needs to be a part of our world's struggle for peace with itself."

The statement also indicates that further information may be obtained from members of the Social Action Committee: Paul Clark, Bob Clyde, Jeff Kelley, Randy Mishoe, and Everett Thomas.

SCC and ENQUIRY

In its most recent session, the Student Coordinating Council considered the status of the Student newspaper and made some proposals regarding its future. It was deemed appropriate to begin making plans now for next year's Enquiry rather than to wait until the end of the Spring semester to do so.

Publications procedure states that during the week following the general SCC elections applications would be received for the positions of editor and associate editor. These applications would then be considered, and a person to fill each position would be selected. The recent SCC action, however, has made it possible for this selection to be made earlier in order to provide a firm foundation for the beginning of next year's work.

This leads to the Enquiry's present invitation to anyone who might consider the editorship of a newspaper which has the freedom to be a vital medium for the expression of student affairs and opinion to express his or her interest to some member of the editorial staff of Student Coordinating Council.

It has been appropriately suggested that the possibility be investigated of delegating a work scholarship to the newly elected editor.

EMERGENCY

As this is being typed, there is still an urgent need of sleeping space for the college students who will be here for the Missions Conference this weekend. If you are able to provide sleeping accommodations for any of these, please contact the Housing Committee chairman, Miss. Brenda Taff.

-
- Editor.....Frank Wood
 - Associate Editor.....Colin Harris
 - Assistant Editor.....Lester Ariail
 - Secretary.....Lindy Roberts
 - Faculty Advisor.....Max Smith
-

ALL ARE INVITED TO ATTEND OUR NEXT "DIALOGUE WITH THE WORLD" ON FEBRUARY 23 IN THE CAFETERIA FROM 6:30--9:30 P.M. MOVIE, NO DOWN PAYMENT, FREE ADMISSION. GROUP LEADERS: DRs. PORTER, TULL, MOORE, OWENS, SHRIVER, AND BLAND.