

9-1-1934

Theological Observer. - Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

P. E. Kretzmann

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm>



Part of the [Practical Theology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Kretzmann, P. E. (1934) "Theological Observer. - Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches," *Concordia Theological Monthly*. Vol. 5 , Article 81.

Available at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm/vol5/iss1/81>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Print Publications at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Concordia Theological Monthly by an authorized editor of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact seitzw@csl.edu.

Theological Observer. — Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches.

I. Amerika.

Aus der Synode. Die Berichte der bis jetzt stattgefundenen Distrikts-synoden sind recht ermutigend. Hat sich die Finanzlage im großen und ganzen auch noch nicht erheblich gebessert, so redet man doch im allgemeinen mit viel größerem Mut von einem freudigeren Vorgehen im Werk des Herrn. Besonders erfreulich ist die Tatsache, daß man mit der Missionsarbeit energisch vorgeht. Wenn sich jeder Pastor der Synode schon jetzt an die Arbeit macht und jedes einzelne Glied seiner Gemeinde besucht, um mit ihm die Sache unserer Reichgottesarbeit zu besprechen, dann ist kein Zweifel, daß der Vorschlag unsers Board of Directors Erfolg haben wird. (Siehe „Lutheraner“, No. 15.) Christen sollten aber nicht nur um Geld angesprochen werden, sondern es sollte ihnen auch genau erklärt werden (dem einzelnen Christen), wie es mit der ganzen Arbeit steht. — Besonders interessant und wertvoll sind die Nachrichten, die von den verschiedenen Sommerschulen und Instituten eingelaufen sind. In St. Louis wurde auch dieses Jahr eine Sommerschule für Pastoren gehalten. Trotzdem diese gerade in einer der heißesten Wochen des Sommers stattfand, so brachten alle Beteiligten der Sache doch ein sehr reges Interesse entgegen. Die obligatorischen Fächer waren die folgenden: „Die große Erweckung zu Anfang des 19. Jahrhunderts“, Prof. Theo. Hoyer. „Die Lehre von der heiligen Taufe in ihrer Anwendung auf die heutigen Verhältnisse“, D. J. T. Müller. „Biblische Theologie des Kolosserbriefs“, D. P. C. Strehmann. Prof. Theo. Lätich und die PP. W. Will, W. Maschhoff, P. König und D. Rich. Strehßmar hielten in dieser Reihenfolge von 11 bis 12 Uhr vormittags je eine Bibelstunde. Wahlfächer waren die folgenden: „Praktische Winke für die Ausarbeitung der Predigt im Anschluß an neuere Werke über Homiletik“, Prof. C. J. Friedrich. „Ausgewählte Abschnitte aus dem Evangelium St. Marci“, Dir. D. Krüger. „Das zweite Kapitel des Propheten Jesaias, mit Berücksichtigung chiliastischer Irrtümer“, Prof. Theo. Lätich. Der Segen solcher intensiver theologischer Arbeit ist nach den Aussagen vieler der Beteiligten sehr groß und sollte andere ermutigen, solche Kurse oder Institute einzurichten. — In unserer Anstalt in River Forest wurden dieses Jahr zwei Sommerschulen abgehalten. Mehr als vierzig Lehrer und Lehrerinnen hatten sich eingestellt, um drei Wochen lang in intensiver Weise besondere Studien auf dem Gebiet der christlichen Pädagogik zu machen. In der Woche vom 16. bis zum 21. Juli (inkl.) wurde ein Institut für Sonntagsschullehrer abgehalten, das von mehr als 120 Pastoren, Lehrern und Sonntagsschullehrern und -Lehrerinnen besucht wurde. Sieben Fächer standen auf dem Programm, und die Arbeit, die von den meisten der eingeschriebenen Studenten geleistet wurde, war wirklich anerkanntswert. Auch von dieser Arbeit gilt: „Es ist ein Segen darinnen!“ P. C. S.

Norwegian Synod Declares Unequivocally against Unionism. When our Norwegian brethren during their convention received a copy of the resolutions adopted by the Lutheran Men's Association of Chicagoland urging all Lutheran bodies to unite, they sent the secretary of the asso-

ciation the following clear, definite reply, published in the *Lutheran Sentinel* of July 4: —

"The Resolutions on Lutheran Church Unity, sent to our annual convention, have been received and read before the synod assembled. But in view of the fact that your so-called unity is not the expression of a God-pleasing 'oneness in Christ,' but rather a man-made union, which permits and fosters fellowship with those who openly flaunt the doctrines of Christ (we refer in particular to the address delivered by one of your members at the Century of Progress Hall of Religion when it was dedicated last year), we cannot enter into any fraternal relationship with you. But we would plead with you, on the basis of God's inviolable Word, that you give diligent heed to that Word of Truth, which admonishes all who would be the true disciples of our blessed Savior: 'Mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them,' Rom. 16, 17. The union which alone will find favor with God is that unity which is 'perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment,' 1 Cor. 1, 10. Even a casual perusal of the official organs of the various Lutheran church-bodies will afford evidence sufficient that no one can truthfully say, as you do in your overture: 'The different Lutheran bodies in America, in all essentials, are one in doctrine.'

"May God spare us from ever giving the right hand of fellowship to those who will make the words of Dr. Joshua Oden, in the Hall of Religion address, referred to above, their own! 'Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful,' Prov. 27, 6.

"Unanimously adopted by the Norwegian Synod of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church, in convention assembled at Mankato, Minn., June 6—12. — C. J. QUILY, *Secretary, Norwegian Synod.*" A.

Is Missourian "Aloofness" Justifiable? — In the *Lutheran* of July 19, 1934, an editorial appeared having the caption "Why the Church Loses Members," which we feel we must submit.

"Recently, in connection with a wedding at which the bride was a member of a congregation of the Missouri Synod and the groom a non-Lutheran, but a regular churchgoer, the young lady was advised by her pastor concerning future church connections. Inquiry revealed that no parish of the Missouri Synod is located in the place in which the couple plans to live, but that there are congregations of the United Lutheran Church. The bride's pastor, loyal to the regulations of his Synod, could not commend her connecting with one of these.

"As a result, either they will become 'church tramps' or go to a congregation of the husband's denomination. The polity of this latter is highly legalistic, and its clergymen are reputed to be shot through with Modernism. The U. L. C. A. pastors, whose parishes are easily accessible, are not lodge-members nor advocates of unionism. In short, exactly what the Missouri Synod condemns in a sister Lutheran body is what her blanket ruling accomplishes. Instead of promoting fidelity to Lutheran doctrines and loyalty to catechetical teachings, lukewarmness or change of faith is made the only practical option.

"Dr. L. W. Boe, member of the Norwegian Lutheran Church and president of St. Olaf College, is entirely correct when he demands such an

amendment of the rules of altar- and pulpit-fellowship as will locate the application of the principles involved in the parishes and not in the General Body. The existent attitude among our Lutheran synods rests on past controversies, suspicions, and overemphasized, fallaciously interpreted incidents. Nothing of profit to religion or Church accrues from such rules."

We could not read the above without a sigh. How grand if nothing separated the various Lutheran synods in our country except the recollection of past controversies, unfounded suspicions, and "overemphasized and fallaciously interpreted incidents"! In that case it would not be difficult to tear down the barriers and to proclaim that fellowship has been achieved. The facts are different, however. Thinking now of the U. L. C., which the *Lutheran* represents, we have to say that, if it is judged by what we observe in the attitude of its pastors and congregations, it is tolerant of, and indifferent toward, error to a degree which makes it impossible for us to speak here of isolated incidents and merely occasional aberrations. When we raise this charge, we have in mind both error disseminated by teaching and practise. If the notorious D. Delk, a member of the U. L. C., who boldly espoused some of the views of Modernism, was ever made to recant or was excluded from membership in his synod, it has escaped our notice; and that pastors and congregations of the U. L. C. do not refrain from holding union services with Reformed churches is at least in our part of the United States such common knowledge that the citing of individual instances can be set down as entirely unnecessary. Similarly U. L. C. churches in these parts are known for their willingness to receive Freemasons into their membership. While Missouri has been insisting on an uncompromising adherence to the truth, members of the U. L. C., without incurring the censure of their church-body, have given errorists brotherly recognition. This is the main gulf dividing the U. L. C. and the Synodical Conference, and there can be no union till it is removed. That conscientious ministers of the Missouri Synod advise their parishioners not to join U. L. C. churches is a fact; but is it something to be reprimanded? It simply betokens faithfulness to the teachings of the Scriptures, which inculcate whole-hearted loyalty toward the grand doctrines revealed by God, a loyalty which is incompatible with an easy-going, *laissez-faire* attitude toward error. It may happen, it is true, that undiscerning Lutherans, unable to appreciate such loyalty, will turn their back on their Church entirely and join some other denomination; but clearly the fault in such instances does not lie with the conscientious pastor, but with the misguided church-member. To be influenced by considerations such as the *Lutheran* here points to we cannot but characterize as indefensible opportunism.

A.

"Dominican Conservatives."—Reviewing in the *Lutheran Church Quarterly* a book on Archbishop Soederblom (*Hagkomster och Livsintryck: Till minnet av Nathan Soederblom*. Edited by Sven Thulin), Vergilius Ferm hands Swedish conservative Lutherans a bouquet which cannot but attract our attention. In speaking of Soederblom, he says: "Theologically he was both conservative and liberal. His conservatism was never pig-headed, and his liberalism was always of the mellow kind. He could fit

into the most diverse situations. (While in America, he appeared acceptable to all but Dominican conservatives among Swedish Lutherans; and yet he could easily reveal the unconstrained freedom of thought among those who held advanced views.) However, he was far less the theologian and philosopher to any one acquainted with his public expressions. (His recent Gifford lectures will bear this out in many places.)" Since we know the prejudices of Mr. Ferm, we cannot conceive that deep affection dictated the strange epithet "Dominican conservatives," whatever it may be intended to express. But we should like to assure him that, if the Augustana Synod is to fulfil its real mission in this country, it had better listen to these "Dominican conservatives." And here is wishing them a tremendous increase in power. A.

Union between the U. L. C. and A. L. C. Proposed. — The Synod of Ohio, one of the District synods of the U. L. C., at its meeting several months ago passed resolutions which are intended to bring about a union of the U. L. C. with the American Lutheran Conference. The resolutions will be submitted to the approaching convention of the U. L. C. at Savannah, Ga. We quote a part of the memorial in which the resolutions mentioned are embodied: "Whereas there is wide-spread conviction among both pastors and laymen of both the United Lutheran Church in America and our sister churches of the American Lutheran Conference that a merger of these two groups of American Lutherans would make more effective the testimony of our pulpits, press, and people; now, therefore, be it resolved by the Synod of Ohio of the United Lutheran Church in America that we hereby affirm our belief that the time is ripe for initiating a movement to bring about a merger of the churches hereinbefore named and that definite steps toward that end should be taken by the United Lutheran Church in America at its next convention; be it further resolved that we memorialize, and we hereby do memorialize, the United Lutheran Church in America to take action at its convention to be held in Savannah, Ga., in October, 1934, to initiate negotiations with each and all of the churches of the American Lutheran Conference with the end in view of merging the aforesaid churches into one great united American Lutheran Church and to that end to appoint a commission empowered and instructed to confer and negotiate with similar commissions of the various churches aforesaid, or of any of them, whenever such commissions shall have been appointed."

We little doubt that the U. L. C. will act favorably on this memorial. If it does, what will be the course of the A. L. C.? In the interest of conservative Lutheranism we hope that the members of the A. L. C. will carefully study the character of the wooer before they will say yes. While in a way they have given their consent to such a union by various joint ventures mentioned in another section of the memorial (National Lutheran Council, the Lutheran World Convention, the National Lutheran Inner Mission Conference and its affiliated agencies, the Lutheran Home Missions Council, the Lutheran Foreign Missions Council, the Lutheran Students' Association of America), a merger has not yet taken place. An endorsement of the proposed merger by the A. L. C. would mean for this church-body another big step forward on the road of unionism. A.

The Child Labor Amendment.—In the *Commonweal* of June 8 we find a long communication written by Clarence E. Martin dealing with this amendment. Mr. Martin is defending himself against the strictures of Monsignor John A. Ryan, who had attacked him for criticizing this amendment. We cull a few statements from the long communication:—

"Monsignor Ryan is compelled to admit that under the proposed amendment Congress would have the power to prohibit or regulate labor under eighteen and thus prohibit agricultural and domestic service under that age, etc. But he is willing to trust Congress not to exercise its full power. When a Federal bureau is created, such, for example, as the Children's Bureau and the Bureau on Education, and Congress federalizes the educational system, it will be too late to object. When the young man of seventeen is taken from the farm and made to go to a camp for military or other character of training, the father may object, but what right will the parent have? . . . Senator Walsh took the view that the word *labor* means manual labor only. Mr. Wm. D. Guthrie, a learned and competent constitutional lawyer, in his brief filed this winter before the New York Legislature, takes the opposite view and, citing respectable authority, asserts that 'labor may be physical or intellectual or a combination of the two.' . . . Under it [the amendment] Congress can prohibit the performance of the slightest task, agricultural, home work, or otherwise, of a person to the age of eighteen. . . . Monsignor Ryan seems to assume that the amendment intends to give Congress the power only to *prohibit* labor. He should read it again: 'limit, regulate, and prohibit' is its language. And as I pointed out, . . . the word *regulate* gives the power 'to foster, protect, control, and restrain' as well as 'to enact all appropriate legislation for the protection and advancement of the subject.' . . . Unhesitatingly I repeat that under the amendment, if ratified, Congress would have power to federalize education. It is an incident to the power granted. It is appropriate legislation for the advancement of the subject. If this were not so, . . . why is the National Education Association so strongly in favor of it? . . . To me one of the worst features of the effort to get control of the children of the country and direct their lives from Washington instead of in the home is the fact that Congress must give a bureau power to execute any statute it may pass in pursuance to the amendment. Of necessity, when this is done, the power to make rules and regulations is generally given. These rules and regulations, when not inconsistent with the act and in furtherance of the power conferred, have the force of law. This feature is known as administrative law. The average citizen has little or no conception of the proportions to which this branch of the law has grown in recent years. It is what is popularly known as 'bureaucratic government,' bad at best. The Children's Bureau would then have all the power essential to carry into effect the statutes passed."

Needless to say, we are submitting these quotations, not because of the great interest this amendment has for us as a social measure, but because of the religious aspect of it, inasmuch as it, if adopted, apparently would constitute a threat to the Christian training we are endeavoring to give our children.

A.

Southern Presbyterians Accumulating Surpluses. — When the Southern Presbyterians recently held their General Assembly at Montreat, N. C., an astounding bit of news was published in the daily papers, to wit: "Presbyterian boards, with one exception, able to accumulate surpluses." This subject was enlarged on as follows: "All of the Southern Presbyterian boards except one not only paid in full for last year's work, but were able also to accumulate surpluses against their indebtedness incurred during years of prosperity." Is not this food for thought for us, who are not accumulating surpluses, but debts? A.

Latest Statistics. — Dr. George Linn Kieffer, president of the Association of American Religious Statisticians, published the statistics on the churches in America in the June issue of the *Christian Herald*. As shown in the *Lutheran Herald*, the religious bodies showed a total net gain of 655,482 in 1933. The grand total of all denomination membership is 60,812,874, about 48.37 per cent. of the total population. So almost every other American belongs to some kind of a church.

The Methodists had the highest increase, with a total gain of 213,662. Next were the Baptists, with a gain of 193,571. Lutherans gained only 65,782 in the course of the year, and the Roman Catholics gained even less, only 53,426. Presbyterians lost ground, as did the Congregationalist-Christians.

It might interest our readers to see the figures of some of the main church-bodies.

Denominations	Ministers	Churches	Membership Total
Adventists, 5 bodies	1,590	2,955	176,859
Baptists, 18 bodies	62,634	62,891	9,866,209
Catholics, 3 bodies	29,838	18,241	20,324,144
Church of Christ, Scientist	4,198	2,099	202,098
Congregational-Christian	6,321	6,233	1,024,887
Disciples of Christ	7,190	8,193	1,566,772
Jewish	1,751	3,118	4,081,242
Lutheran, 17 bodies	11,788	15,469	4,381,094
Methodist, 19 bodies	45,905	61,136	8,766,017
Presbyterian, 9 bodies	14,404	15,720	2,674,875
Protestant Episcopal	5,865	7,424	1,876,390
Reformed, 4 bodies	2,471	2,721	755,881
United Brethren, 3 bodies	2,072	3,238	421,597

Northwestern Lutheran.

II. Ausland.

Kontinentale Missionskonferenz. Die im Jahre 1866 gegründete Kontinentale Missionskonferenz tagte vom 3. bis zum 7. Mai zum 17. Male in Bremen. Die 70 Teilnehmer, Abgeordnete von 35 Missionsgesellschaften und Missionsfachleute, vertraten 7 Staaten des europäischen Kontinents mit 2,500 Missionaren. Die Berichte aus den einzelnen Ländern gaben einen Einblick in die Gesamtlage der Mission der Gegenwart. Eine allgemeine finanzielle Notlage wurde festgestellt; aber auch der unbeugsame Wille, das Werk allen Hemmungen durch den vordringenden Islam und die zunehmende römische Propaganda und die aufdringlich vorwärtsfließende weltliche Kultur

zum Troß unbeirrt fortzuführen, wurde sichtbar. Denn immer noch sind die Türen weithin geöffnet. Nur fordert der zunehmende Drang nach Selbständigkeit nicht allein bei den asiatischen Völkern gebieterisch, den jungen Kirchen mehr und mehr die volle Verantwortlichkeit für den Aufbau ihrer Gemeinden zuzuschieben. Die eigentliche Missionsarbeit an den noch unerreichten Volksmassen wird dann noch mehr als bisher die besondere Aufgabe der fremden Missionare sein. Damit ist die Mission aber nicht der Notwendigkeit enthoben, Gefahren und Aufgaben der im Entstehen begriffenen missionarischen Volkskirche ins Auge zu fassen. Auf Grund reichster Lebenserfahrung gaben in dieser Beziehung D. Warneck und D. Ansl Richtlinien für die missionarische Praxis. D. Ansl, der die aktuelle Frage, wie weit die Missionskirche völklich sein müsse, behandelte, unterstrich mit Recht, daß gerade die deutsche Mission von jeher auf den völkischen Charakter der jungen Gemeinde stärksten Nachdruck gelegt habe. Eine innerlich vertiefte Überprüfung der finanziellen Noilage wurde durch Dr. Hartenstein durchgeführt. Man darf sich nicht damit begnügen, sie aus der wirtschaftlichen Weltlage allein abzuleiten. Auch die Bedrängnis durch die dem Evangelium widerstrebenden Geistesströmungen der Gegenwart wird an diesem an sich äußeren Punkt sichtbar. Darum sind nicht nur größtmögliche Sparsamkeit, Beschränkung auf das Notwendige und sorgfältige Überprüfung der Arbeitsmethoden, vor allen Dingen aber unermüdete Versuche, das evangelische Missionsleben fester zusammenzuschließen, am Plage, sondern auch eine beständige Neubefinnung über Grundlage und Verfahrensweise der Mission. Hierüber sprach Prof. Dr. Westmann-Upsala. Denn die Missionspraxis muß, wie übrigens alle kirchliche Betätigung, fortwährend von der theologischen Neubefinnung über ihre Normen und ihre Ziele und vor allem über den Inhalt ihrer Verkündigung begleitet sein. Auch die jetzt entstandene Spannung zwischen der Ökumenizität der Mission und der Betonung der völkischen Eigenart ist im Missionsleben der Gegenwart als belebender Faktor zu werten. Sie lehrt nur, Unchristliches und Unbiblisches sorgfältig von der Verkündigung fernzuhalten, aber auch die völkische und rassische Eigenart in die werdende Kirche einzubauen.

(Allg. Missionsnachrichten.)

Rußland. Nun ist auch Bischof Meyer, der Oberhirte der Lutherischen Kirche in Rußland, gestorben. Der teure Mann, der um 1920 zum Bischof gewählt worden war, hat Schweres durchgemacht. Das Schwerkste war, daß er, obwohl er selber unangetastet blieb, seine Kirche gegen die Gewaltakte des Staates nicht schützen konnte, sondern zusehen mußte, wie sie immer mehr zerstört wurde. Ist wirklich unsererseits alles geschehen, was geschehen konnte, um das Los unserer Glaubensbrüder in Rußland zu mildern? Haben wir uns hier nicht eine Schuld aufgeladen, die uns noch schwer drücken und uns den Segen Gottes rauben muß?

(M. N. in „Kirchl. Zeitschrift“.)

Dean Inge Retires. — On account of the prominence which attaches to Dean Inge of St. Paul's, London, known as the "gloomy Dean," it is proper that we chronicle his retirement, which will take place in October, and that we mention the name of his successor, Dr. W. R. Matthews, who at present is the Dean of Exeter. Both of these men belong to the liberal wing of the Anglican Church.

A.