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Miscellanea

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Miscellanea

Eine neue Übersetzung der Bibel in die Suahelisprache

Über diese Bibel wird folgendes berichtet: Um der Bedeutung gerecht zu werden, welche dieser Bibel, ganz abgesehen von ihrem religiösen Wert, auch als Kulturwerk zukommt, muß daran erinnert werden, daß die Suahelisprache eine Weltsprache ist, die an siebter Stelle steht und von 50 Millionen Menschen gesprochen oder doch wenigstens verstanden wird. Diese Sprache erobert sich unaufhaltsam immer mehr Boden im tropischen Afrika. Es vollzieht sich hier vor unsern staunenden Augen die Ausbreitung einer Sprache, wie die Geschichte sie noch selten gesehen hat. Suaheli, noch vor dreißig Jahren den großen Völkern von Innerafrika fast unbekannt, wird heute im italienischen Somaliland, in der englischen Kenjafolonie und in Uganda, unserm alten Deutsch-Ostafrika, dem heutigen Tanganjika Territorium, in dem portugiesischen Mosambik, im britischen Zentralafrika nebst Nyassaland und in dem ganzen Osten des belgischen Kongo gesprochen. Heute schon hat es auch den mittleren Kongo erobert; in absehbarer Zeit wird es desgleichen an der Mündung des Kongo an den Küsten des Atlantischen Ozeans gesprochen werden.

Man wird die Zahl der eingebornen Christen mit insgesamt 300,000 nicht zu gering schätzen. Dabei ist die Christianisierung im Fortschreiten begriffen. Deutsche, englische und amerikanische Missionsgesellschaften teilen sich in die Arbeit. Seit etwa fünfzig Jahren gibt es eine Bibelübersetzung in der Suahelisprache, in der Hauptsache von dem verdienstvollen hochkirchlichen englischen Bischof Steere (in Sansibar) hergestellt. Die Schaffung dieser Suahelibibel war einst eine Großtat; aber das tiefste religiöse Bedürfnis der heute im Machtbereich des Suaheli stehenden Völker Afrikas vermag sie wegen ihrer geradezu artfremden Sprache nicht zu befriedigen. Und so konnten sich die deutschen Missionen auf die Dauer der Pflicht nicht entziehen, eine eigene Bibelübersetzung in der so wichtigen Suahelisprache zu schaffen, die schlicht und einfach zu den Völkern Afrikas redet und statt der vielen Arabismen Suahelivorte und -ausdrücke gebraucht, die, um Luthers Wort zu gebrauchen, „wie der Hans auf der Wasse redet“.

Es hätte für diese Übersetzerarbeit kein Besserer gefunden werden können als der im Missionsdienst Ostafrikas ergraute Sprachforscher und Missionar Dr. Röhl. Er hat den größten Teil seines Lebens in unserm früheren deutschen Kolonialgebiet zugebracht; auch während des Krieges war er dort; so kennt er wie kaum ein anderer die Suahelisprache. In mühevoller langjähriger Arbeit hat er die ganze Bibel übersetzt. Was dieser Übersetzung ihr besonderes Gepräge gibt, das ist neben der wissenschaftlichen Treue gegenüber dem Grundtext die Wiedergabe des Bibeltextes in klaren, verständlichen Suahelivorten, die im Gegensatz zu der erwähnten englischen Übersetzung von den Eingebornen nun auch wirklich verstanden werden können. So kann gesagt werden, daß die Röhl'sche Übersetzung in der Reihe der fremdsprachlichen Bibelübersetzungen mit an erster Stelle stehen wird.

P. E. R.

Martyrs Nikolai and Gregor

Condemned on the basis of the laws of 1523 and 1525, "Lutherani comburantur," Filip Nikolai, pastor of Dobroniva, and Teacher Gregor of Zvolen were put to death by burning in August, 1527. The record of their death, found in the church-record book at Lubietov, was written in Latin by Pastor Andrew Messerschmidt in the year 1637 and in translation reads as follows: "The examples of martyrs are very instructive, not only when their anniversaries are commemorated by the Church, but also when they are willingly, diligently, and more frequently brought to the attention of the people in order that they become deeply rooted in the memory of the people. Timid souls will not falter and be frightened away from the teaching of Christ by such executions. The constancy of the confessors, the steadfastness of the martyrs, not only strengthens others by this wonder of God which endows a weak person with strength peacefully to bear all terrors and death, but also clearly shows that the power of the Gospel is active within them. That person therefore merits much for the Church who by his writings preserves for posterity a faithful, accurate record of the tortures of those pious sufferers. It is truly peculiar that other nations have a more accurate and diligent description of their martyrs, whereas ours, in its ingratitude and forgetfulness, forgets them and is silent about them — examples of which there are perhaps more than would be believed. But we shall describe only that which happened at Zvolen and Dobroniva in Zvolen County to our pastor and teacher as it was related to us by those who remember it and of which they were eye-witnesses.

"The Turkish ruler Solyman invaded Hungary after he defeated King Louis [of Hungary and Bohemia] near Mohács in the year 1526. Ferdinand [King of Austria] claimed that the kingdom [after Louis's death] belonged to him; but he had a rival aspirant to the throne in John of Zápolia, the Transylvanian duke of Spis. The discord between the two brought on war, which to the Germans and the neighboring nations was sad and fateful. The Turkish ruler took him under his protection and, giving him Budin, made him a dependent ruler. This happened in the year of the Lord 1526.

"In the following year pitmen and miners complained that they were not being paid on time, that they were being cheated, that their wages were being held back and shortened, and therefore they, by common agreement, armed themselves and camped below Králová near Radvani. Duke John of Zápolia sent Michal Szobora, Stephen Magocs, and Gaspar Ruttkay to quiet the uprising and make amends.

"At this time the light of the Gospel began to appear in Hungary, particularly in the mining towns, especially in Lubietov, through the work of Filip Nikolai, a minister of God's Word. He was a learned man, of a heroic spirit, and had at his side the teacher from the same town as a zealous helper, who was whole-heartedly for pure religion.

"It hurt Satan that his darkness was being dispersed, and he allowed himself no rest until with his tongue he inflamed this royal commission to hiss down the so-called modern apostles. The commission was sent to Lubietov, and it demanded the delivery of the minister, whom the

commission, bound by duty and pledge, was to reprimand as the worst heretic. The citizens of Lubietov at first refused to do this and advised their pastor to depart to a safe place, at least for a time, until this rash attack would quiet down. The pastor heeded their advice and went to Staré Hory. But the commission armed its aids and gave the command to attack Lubietov. They seized six members of the magistracy and also the teacher of the school, who was not sufficiently on his guard. The captives were bound in pairs with chains and led away to Avolen. Here, being examined concerning their faith and religion, they confessed the truth openly and sincerely. First they were admonished that they should recant the devil's heresy and return to the Catholic Church. This they refused to do, not desiring contrary to their convictions and conscience to deny the truth, which only a fanatical and spiritually blind person could do. The commission then tried to frighten them with all kinds of terrors, but in vain. Seeing the steadfastness of these 'heterodox' believers, the commission unanimously agreed that they were worthy to be burned. They seized the teacher who had been answering his antagonists more self-consciously and had enthusiastically called upon his fellow-brethren and -sufferers to be firm. He was led to the stake near the stocks on the city square. When he was placed on the pile and tied to the stake, they told him to invoke the help of Mary and he would be freed. But this they could not compel him to do, for he replied that his one and only Mediator he considered Jesus Christ, with whom he was satisfied, and that he did not desire other mediators. Filled with such steadfast spirit, he was executed by fire, giving up his spirit in prayer.

"The others, bound in fetters, were led out to look upon the spectacle. They were threatened that they also would burn unless they revealed the hiding-place of their pastor and in humble repentance would forsake the heresy and return to the Mother Church. In the mean while messengers came from the mining town and implored the commission not to hasten with the execution. The pastor could not remain in hiding very long. They led him out of the mine which he had entered, and soon he fell into the power of the inquisitors. After holding long and frequent meetings, they decided to bring him before the king at Budin. After a mile's journey they came to the Dobroniva Castle, and here, I know not with what evil spirit they became filled, they changed their minds. In various ways they admonished him to stop in his intention, and if he returned, they would promise him freedom. Finally they attempted to change his mind by threatening him with fire and — with what is worse than fire — damnation in hell. But he, filled with the Spirit of God, remained unmoved and undaunted. The verdict stood, wherever God commands he was ready to go and undergo even a worse death. He added that he was fully aware of the fact that the true path leads to heaven and that it was therefore unnecessary to retract or retreat one step from this way. He did not detain them, did not desire any mercy or a promise of charity from the king. As greater mercy he considered the infinite mercy of Christ, the Savior, which is offered to all who approach Him in true faith. He added that he was not afraid of the hellish fire. Christ was his consolation; He

would bring him to the heavenly paradise and would scatter the present flames and pains. Upon this reply they pierced him with the sword and condemned him to the fire. And thus, in true faith confessing the Son of God, in whom he believed, and calling upon the name of God, he died. This took place on the day of St. Bartholomew the Apostle, in the year 1537 after the birth of Christ."

The introductory note to the record is as follows: "*Tunc Liber ECCLESIASTICUS per me Andream Massachusettensi Schol., Brevissum Americanum, est studio conscriptus, quantum mihi notum erat ad annum revolutis m. anno 1537 in die S. Jacobi Ap.*"

B., in *The Courier of the Slovak Luther League*.

Branch Offices — Auxiliary Offices

There are customs and usages in the Church which have no particular bearing on any doctrine and are not in any way connected with examples taken from the Word of God. Many of these are *adiaphora* in the true sense of the term. For that reason any expressions connected with such usages have no particular significance one way or the other. Teachers of the Church simply choose some word or invent an expression which in their opinion is best suited for the particular needs of the occasion. It is clear, for example, that many of the vocables employed in the New Testament have been taken over from secular use, but invested with a new meaning, as, *e.g.*, the word *ἐκκλησία*, in all passages but Acts 19.

On the other hand, it is well for us to give some thought to exact nomenclature in connection with doctrines which have been misunderstood or wrongly applied. Thus in the doctrine of the Church and the ministry it is clear that God instituted only one office in the Church, namely, that of the Christian ministry. (Cp. Pieper and Hoenecke on this *locus*.) Hence, no matter how many assistant offices a congregation (or, in the wider sense, a church-body) may see fit to introduce, the final responsibility rests with the incumbent of the ministerial office; for to him is entrusted the *whole* flock, Acts 20, 28, the church of God, 1 Tim. 3, 5. If a congregation therefore finds it advantageous to establish the office of elder or deacon, of parish-school teacher, of Sunday-school teacher, etc., it is merely providing the necessary assistance for its pastor; but the spiritual care of the church-members in charge of these assistants rests fundamentally and primarily with the pastor, who will have to give an account for their souls, 1 Thess. 5, 12; Heb. 13, 17. For that reason it is better, wiser, more fitting, to speak of *assistant* or *auxiliary* offices rather than of branch offices (*Hilfsaemter*, not *Zweig-aemter*); for the former expressions rightly designate the relation between such ancillary offices and the Christian ministry, while the latter may carry the connotation, and for some people have carried the significance, that the branching off from the one office instituted by Christ made such offices independent of the ministry and gave their incumbents rights and privileges with which the called servant or minister of the congregation had no concern, regarding which he was not responsible.

If conditions are as they should be, the pastor never gives up his essential responsibility for the spiritual welfare of every soul in his parish and hence also not for the spiritual work that is done for every soul in his charge, whether the actual work be done by an assistant pastor, a deacon, a parish-school teacher, a Sunday-school teacher, or some other person entrusted with such assistant office. P. E. K.

Nurse, Deaconess, Social Worker

There seems to be some misunderstanding in the minds of some of our men as to the specific functions of Lutheran nurses, Lutheran deaconesses, and Lutheran social workers. To what extent is there an agreement between these offices, and in what respect do they differ?

A Lutheran nurse is given a training to fit her primarily for the task of taking care of persons who are physically ill, who are under the care of a physician for bodily ailments. Her training as a Lutheran nurse will simply emphasize the Christian principles connected with the care of the sick. Incidentally she will also be given some advice and training with regard to the proper spiritual comfort and admonition for the sick, especially in cases of emergency, when a Lutheran chaplain is not available. But this part of her training is merely a somewhat more intensive course in applying Christian truths than that given to the average attendant at a Bible class. It is not the chief or distinctive function of her calling. Her Lutheran faith will, as a rule, show itself more in the spirit with which she attends to her duties than in the conversation which she carries on with those who are committed to her charge.

A Lutheran deaconess is distinguished by the fact that her work is primarily or largely in the spiritual field. She may have a full training as a registered nurse, or as a teacher, or as a practical nurse, or as a parish secretary; but in each case it is expected of her that she be the assistant of the pastor or the missionary in charge with reference to the spiritual needs of the persons concerned, no matter whether or not her outward work is connected with material needs of the poor and under-privileged.

As for the Lutheran social worker, her work is analogous to that of the Lutheran nurse in this respect, that, whereas the latter is primarily concerned with the physical welfare of the patients entrusted to her care, the social worker deals with mental aberrations, especially with abnormal psychology of a temporary kind and with social maladjustments arising from such an abnormal condition. Sometimes these maladjustments are connected with some difficulties in the religious field, and then it stands to reason that the Christian social worker will treat the difficulty from this angle. At other times the underlying cause of the abnormal condition may lie in another field, and then the social worker may find it to her advantage not to bring in the religious element too soon, if at all. But all her work is done from the standpoint of a believing Christian, who will also be ready at all times to point out the specific benefits of the Biblical point of view and to show the way of salvation. P. E. K.

Baccalaureate Services

The inquiries concerning baccalaureate services in schools functioning under the auspices of the State, and in particular regarding the participation of pastors in high-school baccalaureate services, have multiplied in recent years, a fact which seems to indicate a growing perplexity on the part of many members of our clergy as to the attitude they ought to take with regard to such services.

Our first consideration in judging such participation is that growing out of the principle of the *separation of Church and State*, as this is generally acknowledged in our country, not only by the Federal Government, but also by the individual States. The Augsburg Confession rightly states: "The magistracy defends not the minds, but the bodies and bodily things against intruders and coerces men by the sword and corporal punishment that it may uphold civil government and peace. Wherefore the ecclesiastical and civil powers are not to be confounded." (Art. 28.) The function of the State concerns the bodily welfare of its citizens and their moral behavior under the laws of the State; but the State is not to take care of the souls of its citizens. That principle seems now to be universally recognized in our country, although some Calvinistic sects have been mingling Church and State in various ways, including that of baccalaureate services in state-supported schools and invocations in political meetings.

Another question which enters in here, especially from the standpoint of the Lutheran pastor, is that of *unionistic practises*. The *Concordia Cyclopedia* has the following sentences sub "Unionism": "Religious unionism consists in joint worship and work of those not united in doctrine. In effect it denies the doctrine of the clearness of Scripture. It would treat certain doctrines as fundamental or essential and others as non-essential to Christian unity—a proposition which could be defended on only one of two premises: that God either was unable to reveal His will and mind in such a manner as not to be misunderstood or was not willing so to reveal Himself." Another definition and description of unionism is the following: "Unionism is every evidence of agreement and cooperation with opponents in doctrine which is not based upon the Scriptural demand of unity of spirit. This includes: 1) any form of *common worship* in the proclamation of the Word of God, the use of the Sacraments, or prayer, by which we unmistakably unite with those who differ with us in doctrine; 2) any *cooperative undertaking* in the field of church-work, by which we actually acknowledge the false position of our opponents and identify ourselves with their errors; 3) *joint, common, or promiscuous prayer* with those who deny any doctrine of Scripture and with those who belong to a church-body confessing error, especially if the latter are acting in a representative capacity."

In whatever measure baccalaureate services conflict with the principles set forth in the above statements they are not to be sanctioned. The best move would be to discontinue the customary baccalaureate services in all State schools, whether of elementary, secondary, or higher degree, and to substitute a purely civic meeting, opened with "The Star-

spangled Banner" and closed with "America the Beautiful" or some other appropriate song. The suggestion has been made that a high-school baccalaureate service might be held in a Lutheran church, provided that the Lutheran pastor and his congregation are in charge of the entire service from beginning to end. In this case the question of unionism might not be urged, but the contention might be brought that the Lutheran pastor would then be an ἀλλοτριόεπισκοπος, since through his sermon he is performing pastoral work in the case of such as are not his members and as are not attending fully of their own free will and are not in his pastoral care. A case which would have to be branded as unionistic is that of a Lutheran pastor's participating as speaker or invocator in a baccalaureate service when his address or prayer integrates with the rest of the service. It is clear that in such instances no one would invite a Lutheran pastor to speak for the Lutheran Church or to present its distinctive doctrines and that he could not escape the odium of identifying himself with the errors of false teachers and denominations participating in such services. P. E. K.

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