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Theological Observer. – Kirchlch Zeitgeschichtliches

J. T. Mueller

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

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Theological Observer — Kirchl. Zeitgeschichtliches

The Resolutions of the U. L. C. A. Pertaining to Lutheran Union. — We reprint here the recommendations made at Omaha last October by the U. L. C. A. Commission on Relationships to American Lutheran Church-bodies.

"1. We recommend that the United Lutheran Church in America, in convention assembled, approve the three Articles of Agreement with the American Lutheran Church submitted with this report, believing that, when similarly approved by that body, they will lead to full pulpit- and altar-fellowship between us.

"2. We recommend that the United Lutheran Church in America approve in principle the considerations set forth in the second section of this report, herewith recording its understanding that the three Articles of Agreement herewith submitted do not in any wise alter the fundamental positions of the United Lutheran Church in America and that they are not contrary to, or contradictory of, the positions set forth in the Washington Declaration of 1920, the Savannah Resolutions of 1934, or the Baltimore Declaration of 1938.

"3. We recommend that the United Lutheran Church in America continue its Commission on Relationships to American Lutheran Church-bodies with a view to the organic union of all our Lutheran forces in America, on the basis of our Lutheran Confessions alone."

The three Articles of Agreement referred to in these recommendations are the so-called Pittsburgh Agreement, dealing with lodge-membership, pulpit- and altar-fellowship, and the inspiration of the Scriptures. All three recommendations were adopted, although the first and the second did not receive unanimous approval. After the above action had been taken the following additional resolutions were adopted:

"WHEREAS, The agreements reached by the Commission on Relationships with American Lutheran Church-bodies and the similar commission of the American Lutheran Church have been approved by this convention; and

"WHEREAS, Said agreements involve statements on matters of practice and doctrine which, the commissioners of the American Lutheran Church have represented, were the only matters of difference between our two bodies and the only obstacles to the establishment of pulpit- and altar-fellowship between said bodies; and

"WHEREAS, The United Lutheran Church in America has not recognized heretofore, and does not recognize now, any obstacle to the establishment of pulpit- and altar-fellowship or even to organic union with the American Lutheran Church; now, therefore, be it

"Resolved by the United Lutheran Church in America, That it hereby declares itself ready to establish pulpit- and altar-fellowship with the American Lutheran Church and authorizes the President to declare such fellowship established upon the adoption by the American Lutheran Church of a resolution of like effect; and be it further

"Resolved, That the United Lutheran Church in America hereby reiterates its request to the American Lutheran Church to authorize its commission, or appoint another commission, to negotiate with our commission with a view to the organic union of our two church-bodies; and be it further

"Resolved, That the President be, and hereby is, instructed to bring these resolutions to the attention of the American Lutheran Church at the earliest possible moment, so that it may have them for consideration at its convention now in session in Detroit."

Dr. Reu (*Kirchliche Zeitschrift*, December, 1940) comments as follows:

"Auf diese letzten drei Beschlüsse bezog es sich — und nicht auf die drei Sätze des Pittsburgh Agreement, wie man aus dem Bericht des Lutheran (30. Okt., S. 21) schließen musste — dem Pittsburgh Agreement stimmten Bagger, Krauss und Miller zu; sie waren ja Glieder der Pittsburgher Kommission; die Delegaten der Zentral-Pennsylvania-Synode dagegen werden zu denen gehört haben, welche gegen dies Agreement stimmten — wenn in der Schlussitzung am 16. Oktober drei Glieder der Pittsburgher Kommission: Dr. H. Bagger, Paul Krauss und Clarence Miller, und die 70 Delegaten der Zentral-Pennsylvania-Synode unter der Führung ihres Praesidenten Dr. M. R. Hamscher ihren Dissensus zu Protokoll gaben. Sie gaben ihn gesondert, weil sie offenbar aus ganz verschiedenen Gründen diesen letzten drei Beschlüssen nicht zustimmten."

After Dr. Reu has reported the action of his own synod, the American Lutheran Church, on relations to the U. L. C. A. and on future negotiations in general (see *CONC. THEOL. MONTHLY*, Dec. 1940), he submits these comments, which should be made known to our readers:

"Was sollen wir zu all diesem sagen? Wir freuen uns natuerlich von ganzem Herzen, dass die Vereinigte Lutherische Kirche die drei Sätze des Pittsburgh Agreement mit grosser Majoritaet angenommen hat, und erkennen darin auch wirklich einen Beweis dafuer, dass das konservative Element in dieser Kirche erstarkt ist, wofuer wir besonders Praesident Dr. Knubel zu danken haben. Aber die Wahrheit verlangt es auch, zu sagen, dass diese unsere Freude doch noch durch allerlei getruemt ist. Der erste Beschluss billigt wohl das Pittsburgh Agreement, fuehrt aber mit der Hinzufuegung des Partizipialsatzes "believing that [the adoption of the Agreement] will lead to full pulpit- and altar-fellowship between us" einen eigentuemlichen Grund fuer diese Billigung ein. Zur Annahme des Pittsburgh Agreement sollte nur eins fuehren, naemlich die Ueberzeugung, dass es mit der Schrift stimmt. Kirchenpolitische Gesichtspunkte sollten dabei entweder ueberhaupt nicht in Betracht kommen oder doch nur in ganz sekundaerer Weise. Hier ist es der einzige Grund, der erwaeht wird. Nun haben ganz gewiss viele fuer die Annahme der Sätze gestimmt, weil sie von ihrer Schriftgemaessheit ueberzeugt sind, aber genannt ist nur die Hoffnung auf die aus der Annahme resultierende Aufrichtung von Kanzel- und Altargemeinschaft."

"Auch der zweite Beschluss enthaelt Elemente, die einen stuetzig machen. Damit, dass er sagt: We 'approve in principle the consideration set forth in the second section of this report,' scheint er die Annahme

derselben doch stark einzuschraenken. Man wird aber noch mehr stutzig, wenn man die Fortsetzung des zweiten Beschlusses liest:

“Herewith recording its understanding that the three Articles of Agreement herewith submitted do not in any wise alter the fundamental positions of the United Lutheran Church in America and that they are not contrary to, or contradictory of, the positions set forth in the Washington Declaration of 1920, the Savannah Resolutions of 1934, or the Baltimore Declaration of 1938.”

“Soll das heissen, dass das Pittsburgh Agreement nur eine durch die Verhaeltnisse wuensenswert gewordene weitere Ausfuehrung des im Konstitutionsparagrafen niedergelegten Bekenntnisstandpunktes ist und dass auch der im Pittsburgh Agreement enthaltene Satz ueber die Schrift zwar ueber die bekannte Baltimore Declaration von 1938 hinausgeht, aber doch nicht in Widerspruch zu ihr steht? So moechte es die Liebe auslegen, und wenn diese Auslegung richtig ist, wuerde der zweite Beschluss sein Befremden verlieren. Eines will bloss nicht recht dazu stimmen, naemlich der Umstand, dass die Baltimore Declaration gerade im Unterschied und Gegensatz zu der damals schon von uns vorgelegten Form ‘ohne Irrtum und Widerspruch’ angenommen wurde, waehrend man jetzt zu dem ‘irrtumslos’ sich bekennt. Ich kann sehr gut die Ruecksichten verstehen, die zur Vorlegung dieses zweiten Beschlusses gefuehrt haben, aber sie scheinen mir wieder auf kirchenpolitischem Gebiet zu liegen, und Ruecksichten solcher Art sollten in Dingen, von denen das Agreement handelt, nicht bestimmend wirken. Sie schaffen auch keine wirkliche Ueberzeugung, und nur feste Ueberzeugungen werden das auf diesem Gebiet nicht immer leichte praktische Handeln erzeugen und zum Beharren dabei fuehren. So, wie der zweite Beschluss lautet, klingt er als eine Einschraenkung des ersten, und der kuenftige Kirchenhistoriker, der einerseits das Handeln in Baltimore genau kennt und Einsicht in das Protokoll unserer letzten Sitzung in Pittsburgh nimmt, wird schwerlich anders urteilen koennen. Das Pittsburgh Agreement ist in seinen ersten zwei Saetzen allerdings nur Wiederaufnahme der entsprechenden Washingtoner Erklaerung, aber in seinem dritten Satz, der Ausfuehrung ueber die Schrift, geht es in dem Sinn ueber die Baltimore Declaration von 1938 hinaus, dass hier ausgesprochen wird, was auszusprechen man sich in Baltimore noch geweigert hat. Wie gut und notwendig war es unter diesen Verhaeltnissen, dass es von unserer eigenen Kirche in Detroit unmissverstaendlich ausgesprochen worden ist, in welchem Sinn und Umfang sie dem Pittsburgh Agreement zustimmt: ‘with the definite conviction that this agreement is in complete harmony with our Declaration and the Brief Statement.’

“Am dritten Beschluss faellt auf, dass die Kommission der Vereinigten Lutherischen Kirche mit allen andern lutherischen Kirchenkoerpem ‘with a view to organic union’ verhandeln soll. Hier verfolgt man ein Ziel, das wenigstens vorderhand noch phantastisch und vielleicht fuer immer bedenklich ist. Jedenfalls hat unsere Kirche durch ihre Kommission von Anfang an erklaert, dass sie mindestens zur Zeit an keine organische Verbindung mit andern Kirchenkoerpem denkt, und die be-

schlossene, aber noch zu ernennende neue Kommission hat keine Autorität, in dieser Richtung zu handeln. Verstaendlich ist, dass als Basis fuer solche Unionsverhandlungen nichts anderes als die historischen Bekenntnisse der lutherischen Kirche dienen sollen. Es bleibt bloss die Frage, was damit gemeint ist. Soll das heissen: Der Umstand, dass ein lutherischer Kirchenkoerper nach seiner Konstitution auf den symbolischen Buechern unserer Kirche steht, ist ausreichende Grundlage, auf der man sich mit ihm organisch zusammenschliesst; oder soll damit eine gegenseitige Vergewisserung verbunden sein, dass die *doctrina publica* und das kirchliche Handeln der in Betracht kommenden Kirchenkoerper den Bekenntnisschriften unserer Kirche entspricht? In welcher Form diese Vergewisserung vor sich geht, ist von geringer Bedeutung, sie selber aber ist unerlaesslich. O wie wuerden wir uns gefreut haben, wenn die Omaha-Beschluesse nicht so bedenkliche Limitationen in sich zu tragen schienen; und wie wuerden wir Gott danken, wenn sie in der gesamten lutherischen Kirche unsers Landes — auch bei uns selber fehlt es vielfach — ohne Einschraenkung durchgefuehrt wuerden!" A.

The "Journal of Theology" Report on the Fifth Biennial Convention of the American Lutheran Conference. — As many of our readers know, the *Journal of Theology* is the official organ of the American Lutheran Conference. It is edited by a committee on which the various synods composing the American Lutheran Conference are represented. Its editor-in-chief at present is Dr. J. M. Bruce of the seminary of the Norwegian Lutheran Church at St. Paul, Minn. In the December number of the *Journal*, on three and one half pages, an account is given of the events at the meeting of the American Lutheran Conference held November 13—15 at Minneapolis, Minn. We submit some of the chief items.

The convention was opened with a divine service on Wednesday morning, November 13, in which the sermon was preached by Dr. E. E. Ryden, the president of the body. In the various devotional services, addresses on topics pertaining to doctrine or the religious life of the Church were delivered. The subjects discussed in these addresses were: "Open Doors for the Church in the World Today"; "Dangers to the Church in the World Today"; "The Hope of the Church in the World Today." At a fellowship banquet Dr. Conrad Bergendoff, president of the Augustana College and Theological Seminary, Rock Island, Ill., spoke on the topic "The Lutheran Church in Today's World." The officers of the American Lutheran Conference as elected at this convention are: President, Dr. E. E. Ryden, Rock Island, Ill.; First Vice-President, Rev. Alfred Wilkie, Minneapolis; Second Vice-President, Rev. Clarence J. Carlson, Minot, N. Dak.; Third Vice-President, Rev. Karl Wilhelmsen, Racine, Wis.; Secretary, Rev. L. M. Stavig, Northfield, Minn. Subjects discussed on the basis of committee reports were: "Church Unity"; "Student Service"; "Parish Education"; "Social Relations"; "Home Missions." Since the American Lutheran Conference has now been in existence for a decade, anniversary addresses were given by Dr. P. O. Bersell, president of the Augustana Synod, speaking on the subject "Ten Years of Fellowship in the American Lutheran Conference," and Dr. T. F. Gullixson, president of Lutheran Theological Seminary (Norwegian),

St. Paul, Minn., on the subject "The American Lutheran Conference in the Future."

An editorial in the same number of the *Journal* contains a few paragraphs which we here reprint because they are the nearest approach to a discussion of the difficulties confronting the Conference that we find in this issue. "From expressions heard in private conversation and in groups, it was evident that many had come to this convention with more or less pronounced misgivings as to the character, success, and results of the convention. We are confident, however, that no one left this meeting without a sense of gratefulness to God for the heartening fellowship enjoyed, the fine spirit that prevailed, and the significant accomplishments achieved. No one could leave the convention without the feeling that it had brought Lutherans of five independent church-bodies affiliated in the Conference to understand one another better, to experience an increased sense of unity of spirit and a recognition of the fact that a closer and warmer bond of fellowship had been established between them. The convention was in the best sense a love-feast, a cloud-remover, and a workshop. Whatever misgivings and doubts may have been entertained beforehand seemed to vanish like dew before the sun as the convention advanced from session to session. The voices of the few fearful members which voiced warnings and tabus, restraint and repression, were soon silenced, not by rebuke or censure, but by the very spirit that prevailed and gradually placed its spell over all. Even the voice of a rather officious and superior-minded church official, who rolls out his words with ponderous accents on every syllable, even when uttering the most puerile thoughts, and pours contempt and scorn on the opinions and work of others, tapered off materially from session to session as the impact of the real convention spirit made itself felt with increased power and effect.

"One clerical representative came to us and confided that he had prayed much for this convention, saying that he had prayed God to give the Scandinavians and the Germans sense enough to part company, for they were not of the same spirit. We assured him that God would not hear such prayers, and we are confident that the last day of the convention especially vindicated our assertion. We need not close our eyes to racial differences or to differences in traditional, cultural, and religious backgrounds, for knowledge and recognition of these should enable us to evaluate one another more correctly and deal with one another more intelligently and sympathetically; but we need to emphasize the barrier-destroying, unifying, equalizing, and harmonizing power of the Spirit of God more, so that the oneness in Christ, the communion of saints, which we confess, may become more apparent and effective in our mutual relations."

It will be noticed that this report, like the one we submitted last month, makes no mention of any earnest endeavor to come to grips with the questions pertaining to doctrine and practice which agitate the Church at present. We cannot understand the course which is being followed. How can true unity be established if there is no discussion of great pending issues?

A.

What Constitutes Unionism? — Under this heading the *Australasian Theological Review* (July-September, 1940) which just reached our desk contains a brief but exceedingly lucid and informing "help toward the solution of the very real, very perplexing, and very painful difficulties" arising in connection with the problem of unionism, by the able pen of Prof. Henry Hamann. Defining unionism (syncretism) as the "establishment or practice of religious fellowship where there exists no true union based on doctrinal and confessional unity," the essayist first states five "fundamental Scripture axioms" that must be considered at this point, namely: 1. Only Scripture is the source and norm of all teaching in the Church; 2. the Church must be a confessing body, declaring all truth of God and Christ and rejecting, and bearing witness against, all error; 3. no one has the right to teach otherwise in the Church than God's Word teaches; 4. persistent false teaching, continued against all protests, instruction, and admonition, must at last lead to separation, either through the withdrawal of the orthodox from the heterodox or through the exclusion of the heterodox from the orthodox Church, where toleration of the error, in the sense of bearing with the weakness of some members, is no more possible; 5. such separation excludes or precludes church-fellowship on the part of the two factions now represented, that is to say, the mutual recognition by word and (or) deed as Christian brethren and members of one spiritual family. Judging according to these principles, Professor Hamann next tabulates "what is always and necessarily unionism," namely: 1. church union without doctrinal and confessional unity; 2. pulpit-fellowship, or the exchange of pulpits, on the part of those differing in doctrine and confession, though not every filling of a heterodox pulpit by an orthodox preacher is unionistic; 3. altar-fellowship, that is, "open," or "mixed," Communion, since Holy Communion is justly regarded as a symbol of unity (1 Cor. 10:16, 17); 4. union services, united services, combined services, of every kind, participation by pastor or congregation in such services; 5. united prayer on the part of officials or representatives of various churches; 6. the support of heterodox churches and missions and of union endeavors which are evidently of a religious nature; 7. remaining in heterodox bodies and in communion with them in spite of better knowledge. "All these and similar instances constitute unionism, since they represent a public and official exercise of church-fellowship or religious fellowship."

The writer, however, readily admits that sometimes there is room for doubt even if there is public or even official connection with heterodox or unionistic bodies. Here the principle obtains: "Not the external presence, contact, or connection but the unwarranted fellowship is to be avoided." The canon applies: "Whatever clearly violates our duty to confess the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth of the divine Word, and hence also violates the corresponding duty to denounce and reject every error opposed to that truth; whatever compromises or contradicts our confession of the truth and, on the other hand, invalidates, nullifies, renders of no effect, our protest against error; whatever assigns to error equal place and equal right with truth; whatever clearly creates the impression of church-fellowship, of full agreement

and harmony, where these do not exist,—all this is plainly unionism, indifferentism, syncretism.” (Italics ours.) So also in the case of “unionism in the private conduct of Christians”: “There can be no question of unionism where the presumption of unwarranted church-fellowship or religious fellowship, or the presumption of the toleration of error, cannot in reason and in fairness arise.” (Italics original.) “If, thus, I am in some one’s house (some one’s not in communion with me) or he is a guest in my house, I cannot see the least justification to excuse myself at that stage or to show by an attitude of studied indifference or non-attention that I dissociate myself from the proceedings.” “The parties are meeting not as members of differing church-bodies but as relatives or friends, or their relation is for the present merely that of host and guest, and usually the matter of church-fellowship, of confession and doctrine, does not at all arise.” If against this, the charge of “fellowship in prayer” is raised, such fellowship is “merely external,” for here no “establishment of religious fellowship is contemplated or insinuated or indicated or consummated, and no such purpose can even be presumed.”

“Of course, in the circumstances spoken of, situations may arise that would require us to act differently. If I have reason to suspect that my host or my guest considers my conduct as equivocal or that he thinks I am dealing with him on a basis of real fellowship instead of merely accepting a situation from which I cannot in decency escape, then it is my duty to disabuse his mind of this mistake. Or suppose that my host and I had been discussing questions of doctrine and after tea he were to say to me: ‘After all, these doctrines are of little consequence; let us show that we still acknowledge each other as good Christians and brothers in the common faith by uniting in reading the Scriptures and in offering prayer,’ at once the circumstances would be materially altered. I should find myself *in statu confessionis*, and it would be my duty to say, ‘*Quod non!*’”

In the concluding paragraph (the article is by far too long to be quoted extensively) Professor Hamann writes: “I believe that there are, and always will be, situations where the decision as to whether unionistic practice is involved is both difficult and doubtful, with the consequence that there may be a difference of opinion among orthodox Lutheran theologians; for we are now dealing with a *practical question*, involving the application (italics original) of certain Scripture-truths to new surroundings and to a great number of changing and shifting circumstances. It follows that *various incidents which may from time to time have to be examined for unionistic implications belong to the field of casuistry and that something will often have to be left to the individual conscience.*” (Italics ours.) “This is not to say that uniformity of practice is not desirable and should not be aimed at.”

Professor Hamann’s essay on unionism is valuable not only because it clearly defines the *essence* of unionism, but also because it shows that the *fact* or *occurrence* of unionism must not be judged in a mechanical or external manner, as if a mere accidental juxtaposition of orthodoxy and heterodoxy constituted this offense, and again, that on this point we are dealing with a *practical question*, involving the application of

Scripture-truths to new surroundings, so that "something will often have to be left to the individual conscience." Professor Hamann thus combines in splendid harmony the full rigor which God's Word demands on this point with that charity which we owe a brother or sister under given difficult circumstances, always remembering, however, that uniformity of practice is highly desirable and should always be aimed at, for which reason the question should have our constant prayerful study. His detailed description of unionism (given above in italics) is, we believe, classic both as regards substance and form. J. T. M.

Vagueness in Doctrinal Statements.—The following appeared in the *Theological Forum* (Norwegian Lutheran Church) in 1934 (October issue p. 187). Our readers will understand why we call attention to it at the present time.

"One of the grave dangers that are threatening the Christian Church today is that many who profess to be its members no longer accept the Bible as God's inspired Word. Even among Lutherans strange sounds are sometimes heard regarding this subject. "There are some Lutheran theologians who find it rather difficult to declare unequivocally their exact position on the doctrine of the verbal inspiration of the Bible. To some of these it seems an unpleasant task to make their position clear, and often the distinction in sounds is such that it is impossible to say what has been piped or harped (1 Cor. 14:17).'" E.

Is the Pope the Antichrist?—The *Journal of the American Lutheran Conference*, December, 1940, says on page 875: "The early reformers believed the Pope to be the Antichrist. Now, we know that the Pope may have belonged to the antichristian system, but he was not the final Antichrist. Two reasons suffice. First, the evil Popes have come and gone, and the world still goes on. Secondly, the Popes admitted there was a God, and the final Antichrist will not admit any God besides himself. The final Antichrist will be atheistic in spirit. It may be that the final Antichrist will be a Pope who will go farther than any of his predecessors and will claim divinity for himself.

"Communism of today fits this description of the final Antichrist better than does the pre-Reformation Papacy. But we are not safe in saying definitely that this prophecy is fulfilled in its entirety today. We cannot tell. We shall not know until the Son of Man Himself descends from heaven with a shout. The final Antichrist may arise from the line of prelates in Rome, a more iniquitous figure than any Reformation Age Pope. It may be that he will arise out of Communism or out of Fascism. Had the end come in Luther's time, Christ would undoubtedly have considered the Pope as sitting in the temple of God, as the Antichrist. Had Christ come during the eighteenth century, He would have found the spirit of Antichrist in the likes of Voltaire and the Encyclopedists. If Christ comes today, Communism with its opposition to Christianity and to all religion except the worship of Lenin would be the Antichrist. But Christ may postpone His return, and in latter times a more literal fulfilment of the prophecy may be apparent."

One statement in the above is correct, that of the opening sentence. The "early reformers" certainly taught that "the Pope is the very Antichrist." (Smalc. Art., II, Art. IV, § 10.) E.

Orphaned Missions.— This is a term used to designate those missions in foreign countries which are cut off from their home base. It refers particularly to German and Scandinavian Lutheran missions, which on account of the war can no longer receive supplies from the home Church. That the men and women who carry on the work of these missions are facing or even enduring dreadful sufferings is not surprising. In our Synod moneys are being gathered to help these people in their physical distress. In Lutheran circles outside of the Synodical Conference an agency has been organized called Lutheran World Action. It represents the bodies sponsoring the Lutheran World Convention, and its aim is to assist orphaned missions. Mr. Paul E. Empie, assistant director of the Lutheran World Action, in the *News Bulletin of the National Lutheran Council*, has published information on conditions in the orphaned missions which we herewith submit to our readers. Mr. Empie writes:

"Lutherans in America who are joining together in their efforts to rescue orphaned Lutheran missions are mindful of the dire circumstances existing in these missions and ask us continually with deep concern, 'What are the conditions over there at the present time?' We cannot always answer to their satisfaction. Letters are infrequent, and authentic information is rare. This is a case where the old adage 'No news is good news' does not apply. We know that ordinary channels of communication have been cut off, that special channels are expensive and uncertain. We think nothing of writing a letter to a friend but should not forget the instance told us during the Emergency Appeal of the missionary in China who had to use his last few pounds of rice in order to purchase an air-mail stamp. Few of us have ever had to count pennies like that!

"Two letters from the mission-fields arriving in New York about the beginning of December provide illustrations of the present circumstances. One coming from Canton, China, and signed by a missionary says in part: 'I beg to apologize for not having written to you earlier to express my hearty thanks for the kind assistance which you rendered for the work of the Berlin missionaries in China. . . . May I assure you that without your help we would not have been able to continue our work. Your kind attitude brought us new hope and made us sure of the fellowship of the Christian communion, which cannot be destroyed. . . . Some time it seemed to us rather hopeless to carry on, as we even had not the minimum to meet our expenses for living, not to say of what the work required. . . . The Chinese people suffer unutterably; starvation is quite common and help insufficient.'

"The other letter came from the Danish mission at Beirut in Syria, a portion of which was written in late August. The following are extracts from a very lengthy description of the work and conditions: 'You will no doubt be wondering why you do not receive more word from Syria, but perhaps you realized before this that the ordinary mail routes have been interrupted ever since May. Now and then we receive a letter by air mail, but for the most part we are in the dark about what is going on in America. I fear the same may be true of you in reference to us. . . . We were greatly cheered [in receiving a letter] about the aim of the Lutheran Church to secure \$20,000 for the year for Syria.'

You have no idea how happy this word made the Danish missionaries when we had the privilege of passing it on to them.

"We have received no support from Denmark since the early spring of this year. . . . The medical work has been continued all through the summer by keeping the out-patient department open and taking in the most urgent cases. At the end of the summer vacation the hospital will open normally, and we hope to open all our schools as well. This is made possible only by the willingness of the Syrian mission-workers to begin the new year without any promise of salaries. . . . We hope and pray that God will make it possible for us to continue mission-work here. No other Protestant mission is working here in these parts.

"Bird's Nest is the name of a lovely home by the seashore of Djaubeil, Lebanon. There the Danish Women's Missionary Board has been caring for Armenian children from the most miserable and starving families.' (Here a description is given of the school classes, infirmary and internal routine of this fine institution. — Ed.)

"In April this year we suddenly found ourselves cut off from any communication with our native country and our Missionary Board. Later we received word through the International Red Cross that it was impossible for them to send us help of any kind; so we had to face the sad task of cutting down the work and perhaps closing the home altogether. . . . We know that every child we are sending out will go back again to misery and suffering of many kinds. . . . Most of the children are sick and undernourished when they come, unable to play and laugh; but many of them soon grow healthy and beautiful; it is a joy to see them develop. . . . It has been a very hard task to decide which of our 260 children should be sent out. Again and again each child's case was examined, and about 120 of the oldest were sent to relatives. The family conditions of the rest were such that we could not bear to send them out; we decided to keep them as long as we had something for them to eat. Most of those who were sent out are now in great distress; many of them are again sick and hungry and live mostly in the streets because the street is better than the small, airless hole which is supposed to be their home. They beg us to take them back, and we have already taken some because we could not bear to see their dark, begging eyes filled with tears while clinging to us, . . . and constant prayer "Oh, please take me back!" is constantly ringing in our ears.

"It is not uncommon that children drop from the school-bench fainting from hunger. Many of them get only a piece of bread in the morning and stay over in school, having the same and maybe a tiny bit of cheese or a few olives.

"I would like my readers to see for themselves the Armenian refugee camp, with all its huts made up of old rubbish. Each family has only one small room, which serves as bedroom, kitchen, and all. No bedstead is found; all sleep on the floor. Rats and mice are frequent guests. Insects are innumerable and intolerable. The water is scarce in the summer-time, but in the winter-time the camp is a pool of mud and dirt. But in spite of misery and poverty the Armenians are doing their best to survive and progress."

It is impossible to read messages like the above without being deeply touched. Whatever we can do to alleviate such misery we should not hesitate to undertake. It is true, of course, that we must not assist in the spreading of error; but where there is actual physical suffering, we cannot withhold our help.

A.

The Situation in Japan and Korea.—On account of the attitude of the Japanese government Christian missions in Japan and Korea are in great distress. One burden laid upon them is government action which demands that the disunion of Protestant churches cease and that there be one Protestant Church—an action obedience to which, it seems, must involve indifference to confessional teachings.

The *Presbyterian of the South* (quoted in the *Presbyterian*) made this statement: "To anticipate government action, forty Japanese representatives of various Protestant churches met in Tokyo on August 27, to discuss amalgamation of the different denominations, the cessation of financial help from abroad, the elimination of foreign missionaries, and Japanese missionary work in Manchukuo and China. It was agreed that establishment of the Genuine Japanese Christian Church should be announced on October 17, at the 2,600th anniversary of the traditional date of the founding of the Japanese Empire by the sun goddess. When it was proposed that the existing churches disband, the proceedings became deadlocked, and discussion was adjourned until a later meeting. Most speakers favored immediate dissolution to clear the ground for a united Japanese Church."

After reading the above, one will understand the following item which appeared in the *National Lutheran Council Bulletin*: "Under the new law religious groups, to be recognized, must have at least fifty congregations and 5,000 members. In order to comply in every respect, delegates to the recent biennial convention of the United Lutheran Church voted to combine U. L. C. congregations in Japan with those of the Lutheran Gospel Association of Finland. The new organization is called Nippon Sukuin, which means 'the denomination of the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church.' This union creates a body of 13 ordained missionaries, 25 women missionaries, 60 Japanese pastors, 56 congregations, and 7,400 members. To retain proper contact with their home countries, the United States and Finland, the missionary organizations will remain separate, but the Church will function as one united whole."

In addition comes this news contained in correspondence from Japan published in the *Christian Century*: "Every home-bound ship carries missionaries of American, British, Canadian, and Australian citizenship away from their accustomed posts in Japan, Korea, Formosa, and occupied China. By far the largest missionary exodus to date is that occurring from Korea. Mere physical hardship daunts neither native nor foreign workers, but obligatory compromise of the Church's objectives and the feeling that the presence of Western Christians may bring additional suffering upon the Koreans have finally compelled the missionaries of the Methodist Church to withdraw in a body from Korea. The Presbyterians (Northern and Southern) are not acting in such a corporate way, but many are leaving. Doubtless the importunity of

the American consul in Seoul has also had much to do with these evacuations, but the fundamental reason may be seen in the recently issued plan for revision of Christian organizations and creeds in Korea to make them acceptable to the Japanese government. All with whom the writer has talked agree that no Christian missionary could remain and work in Korea under such conditions."

In the mean time efforts are being made to unite all Protestant Christians in Japan in one church-body. The correspondent whom we just quoted writes:

"The All-Japan Church of Christ (Protestant) is now from the government's viewpoint a reality, or practically so. At the Christian mass-meeting held at Aoyama Gakuin on October 17 in celebration of the 2,600th anniversary of the empire's founding, fully 20,000 were in attendance, representing almost all Protestant denominations in Japan, Korea, and other regions of Japanese occupation in the Far East. The following is a portion of the proclamation unanimously adopted on that occasion: 'Faced with a changing world, our nation has established a new structure and is pushing forward in building a new order in Greater Eastern Asia. We Christians in instant response, casting aside church and denominational differences and through church union and united effort, join in the great task of giving spiritual leadership to the people in respectfully and loyally assisting the throne in government and in rendering service to the nation.' This implies, and was followed specifically by, a pledge to 'the achievement of the union of all denominations in one Church.'

"According to the *National Christian Council Bulletin* for October, the following denominations have approved full participation in the union and appointed representatives to the commission entrusted with its organizations, statement of creed, and harmonization of procedure: Nihon Kirisuto (Presbyterian-Reformed), Methodist, Baptist, Evangelical Lutheran, United Brethren, Evangelical, Congregational, Society of Friends, two branches of the Holiness, Free Methodist, Christian Alliance, Disciples of Christ, Church of Jesus Christ, Nazarene, Tokyo Christ Church, Federated Church, Evangelistic Bands of the World, and a few other smaller groups. Contrary to earlier reports, the Greek Orthodox Church has not agreed to affiliate, and the Seikokwai (Anglican-Episcopal) is sending only observers to the commission. The Seventh-day Adventists are of course non-participant. Bishop Y. Abe (Methodist) has been elected chairman and Rev. M. Tomita (Presbyterian) vice-chairman of the actualization commission. It is hoped to have the union in a form acceptable to the civil authorities by the time the constitutions of all religious bodies expecting government recognition must be approved, viz., April 1, 1941."

Does this mean that convictions are violated, consciences are oppressed, and religious tyranny begins to appear? Whether the union of Protestant churches here described consists in more than cooperation in mere externals will have to be seen. The Christians in Japan need our most fervent prayers.

A.

Semper Eadem—Always the Same.—Recommending Dr. C. B. Gohdes's recently published book *Does the Modern Papacy Require a New Valuation?* the *Lutheran Herald* (Dec. 17, 1940) offers as "Exhibit I" in proof that the Roman Church is "still the same" an excerpt from an article published in the *Catholic World*, aggressive organ of the Paulist Fathers. In the September issue of this "Monthly Magazine of General Literature and Science" appears an article entitled "Peace on Earth." Of this article the *Lutheran Herald* quotes the first two paragraphs, which read as follows: "With the exception of the fall of man, the human race has suffered no disaster comparable to that of the Protestant revolt. These two disasters resemble each other more closely than is generally realized. Both were initiated by an act of disobedience having its roots in pride. Both were followed by consequences of an appalling nature, material as well as spiritual. The revolt of Adam was an offense against God; that of Luther, an offense against Christ. The former was a sin against creation; the latter, a sin against the redemption. Adam's disobedience separated men from the friendship of God and cast them out of Paradise; Luther's rebellion separated men from the friendship of Christ and cast them out of the Church." The editorial adds to this: "The substance of the article is a plea for a definite program seeking 'the reunion of Christendom in the Church of Christ,' i. e., in the Roman Catholic Church." And at the close: "In publishing these facts and opinions in the *Lutheran Herald*, there is no intention of stirring up hatred against the Roman Catholic Church. Our interest is simply to call attention to facts which have been recently forgotten or disregarded and which cannot be dismissed with impunity. For Rome is *semper eadem*—always the same."

In view of the "facts which have been recently forgotten or disregarded," it may be well for us once more carefully to study the reasons which led our Lutheran fathers to believe that the Pope is the Antichrist. They are given in detail in our Augsburg Confession, its Apology, and the Smalcald Articles, and they are just as convincing today as they were four hundred years ago, when thinking men did not close their eyes so as not to notice the facts. From the *Reader's Digest* (September, 1940), which quotes *Current History and Forum*, the *Lutheran Herald* offers the opening paragraph, which says: "In 1939 there were more converts to Catholicism than ever before in America. They numbered 73,677—one third of the Church's membership gain for the year." "Yet Rome's arrogant assumption," continues the *Lutheran Herald*, "that she is Christianity and that outside her temporal organization there is no salvation, is not what makes her the serious menace many are again coming to realize her to be. Far more serious it is that we are again being forcibly reminded that the Roman Catholic Church claims temporal sovereignty not only over her own subjects, making them citizens of a temporal state situated in Europe, but over all men." The one error interests us as Christians; the other must claim our attention as citizens of a free democracy. Of the two the former is, of course, the more serious, though commonly this is not realized.

J. T. M.

Aus der Mission. Ende September v. J. wurde folgender Überblick über die Lage auf den Missionsfeldern, sofern besonders deutsche Missionare in Betracht kommen, in der „Allgemeinen Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirchenzeitung“ unterbreitet. Wir drucken den Bericht ohne Kommentar ab.

„Die Mission der Brüdergemeinde hat trotz des Krieges Berichte von ihren Missionsfeldern in Südafrika, Mittelamerika und Alaska erhalten, so daß sie einen bebilderten Jahresbericht herausgeben konnte, der u. a. auch wertvolle Ausführungen zur Rassenfrage in Südafrika enthält. (Verlag der Missionsbuchhandlung, Herrnhut; 52 S.; Preis: 40 Rpf.) — Aus Ostafrika hat keine deutsche evangelische Mission seit der Mitteilung über die Deportierung der Deutschen nach Südafrika mehr eine Nachricht von dort erhalten. Nur der dänische Missionar Hansen von Unyamvesi (Mission der Brüdergemeinde) konnte berichten, daß er die Gemeinden am Massafsee besucht und bei den Gemeinden viel Verständnis für die Notwendigkeit enger Zusammenarbeit der Kirchenältesten und Prediger gefunden hat. — Aus einem Telegramm an die Basler Missionsleitung aus Buea geht hervor, daß die deutschen Missionare in Kamerun (vermutlich Männer, Frauen und Schwestern) interniert worden sind, ausgenommen eine krank gewordene Schwester, ein älterer Missionar und ein junger auf der Goldküste geborner Missionar. — Aus Holländisch-Westindien erhielt die Brüdergemeinde die Nachricht, daß alle deutschen Männer, auch die Missionare, zunächst von den Holländern nahe bei der Stadt Paramaribo, und (wohl nach der Besetzung durch die Engländer) auch die Frauen interniert wurden. Die Männer wurden nach Copiapog bei Paramaribo, die Frauen in ein altes Krankenhaus einer Zuckerpflanzung Marienburg an der Commewijne gebracht. — In Britisch-Indien liegt die Leitung der Arbeit der Gohner'schen Mission in Chota Nagpur weiter in den Händen von Präses Stosch, der noch immer Bewegungsfreiheit hat, ebenso wie Missionar Radjid für Assam. Zwei Schwestern erhielten die Erlaubnis zur Rückkehr von Ranchi auf ihre eigenen Stationen, während die andern in Ranchi verbleiben mußten. — In Neuguinea wurde der Leiter der Neuendettelsauer Missionsarbeit, W. Flierl, mit vier andern Missionaren in das camp in Australien gebracht, wo sich schon 18 andere Mitarbeiter befinden. Von 27 Missionaren stehen noch 10 in der Arbeit, von den 11 Laienmissionaren noch 3. — Alle Missionare in Niederländisch-Indien, auch die Ärzte, sind interniert, vermutlich auf Sumatra; die Frauen, wahrscheinlich auch die Schwestern, sind in Radja an der Ostküste gemeinsam untergebracht. Auch die Missionare von Nias sind wahrscheinlich in Sumatra interniert. — In der evangelischen Kamelemission in Palästina sind noch drei deutsche Schwestern tätig; ein Missionarshepaar, eine Missionarsfrau mit Kindern und zwei Schwestern sind evakuiert und befinden sich in der deutschen Kolonie Waldheim in Galiläa. — In Iran, wo die ausländischen Missionschulen dem Staat übergeben werden mußten, blieb die Blindenanstalt in den Händen der christlichen Blindenmission. — Missionar Martin von der Basler Mission, der in England interniert war, sollte Ende Juni auf der *Arandora Star* nach Canada gebracht werden. Das Schiff ging in der Irischen See unter; der Missionar wurde gerettet. Es wird angenommen, daß die andern Basler Missionare, Hägele, Jenne und Weber, die in England interniert waren, auch nach Canada verbracht worden sind.“

K.