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Theological Observer. – Kirchlich Zeitgeschichtliches

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Theological Observer

News Item from Australia. The *Australian Lutheran* (October 22, 1947) reports in detail on the twenty-eighth regular convention of the Queensland District of the Ev. Luth. Church of Australia, which was held at Toowoomba, September 26 to 30, 1947. The convention was attended by 18 pastors and 68 lay delegates. The Church in Queensland now numbers about 5,000 baptized members, 44 congregations, 20 pastors, and over 1,000 Sunday school pupils. There are 660 Luther League members and 206 members of the Queensland Women's Guild. The District publishes its own periodical, the *Queensland Messenger*. The Ev. Luth. Church of Australia now numbers 102 pastors in active service, who minister to 245 congregations. The total enrollment at Concordia College, at Adelaide, is 140 pupils, 85 boys and 55 girls. In New Guinea, Missionaries Freund and Nagel are now at work and are reorganizing the mission plantation. The Lutheran Hour is broadcast over 39 stations in Australia, 11 of which are in Queensland. The cost of these broadcasts is borne chiefly by the L. L. L. in America, but it is hoped that before long the Church in Australia will be able to finance the venture. Collections toward world relief to September, 1947, amount to about \$26,000. The Peace Thankoffering Fund at that time stood at about \$25,000. The major venture of the Queensland District is Concordia College, at Toowoomba, which now requires an additional building. Forty students are now enrolled. Salaries have been increased in the District to \$1,050 for unmarried and to \$1,200 for married ministers. The Rev. F. W. Noack is President of the District. Appreciative letters of the Lutheran Hour come in in large numbers. Here is one from an isolated believer in Tasmania: "I thank you for your broadcasts each Sunday. You can never know how much it is appreciated, as it is the only contact with anything Christian that I am privileged to have. I am a bush nurse in a little tin-mining community, on Ben Lomond, N. E. Tasmania. Our nearest minister, the Anglican, is thirty miles away, and I am afraid the churches forget that we exist up here. It is extremely isolated here, and things are difficult and very hard at times. But I daily prove the Savior's words: 'My grace is sufficient for thee.'" J. T. M.

A John Horsch Memorial Number. The *Mennonite Quarterly Review* (July, 1947), published at Scottdale, Pa., by the Mennonite Publishing House, is dedicated to the memory of John Horsch, who in our circles is noted chiefly for his controversial book *Modern Religious Liberalism*. Besides an explanatory "editorial," the very interesting memorial number contains the following articles: "John Horsch, 1867-1941: A Biography"; "Notes on John Horsch as a Historian"; "The Theology of John Horsch"; "John Horsch and Ludwig Keller"; "The Letters of Ludwig Keller to John Horsch"; "A Bibliography of the Writings of John Horsch"; and a "Book Review," written by John Horsch on Cornelius Krahn's *Menno*

Simons, in 1937. While John Horsch remained a convinced Mennonite until his death, writing numerous historical books and polemical articles in defense of his faith, he was strangely drawn to the writings of our Church and in numerous letters to the writer declared over and over that he was by choice and joy a devoted reader of our Synod's publications, such as *Lehre und Wehre* and its successors, *Der Lutheraner*, and the *Lutheran Witness*, and that his daily nurture, on which his soul was sustained, was Luther's splendid explanation of the Second Article, which he prayed in German several times each day or as often as trials afflicted his spirit. While his *Modern Religious Liberalism* is now somewhat out of date, it was one of the most popular and stirring attacks on modern unbelief. The last edition he submitted to the undersigned in page proof for correction of any possible doctrinal error, and he humbly and gratefully accepted all corrections that were made. From March till August, 1889, by the way, John Horsch attended Valparaiso University.

J. T. M.

The First Amendment and Separation of Church and State. For reasons that are apparent the question: What does separation of Church and State mean? is at present receiving an unusual amount of consideration. The First Amendment, reading in part, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof" is given renewed and careful scrutiny. In *America*, Roman Catholic weekly, an article was printed which concerned itself with the various proposals and drafts out of which, under the directing counsel of James Madison, the Amendment in the form in which it was finally adopted was evolved. The *Christian Century* of November 26, 1947, contains an editorial headed "The Meaning of 'Separation.'" The First Amendment does not ordain, says the writer, the separation of religion and the State, or of the Church and politics, or of religion and politics. What does it mean? The editorial gives this interpretation. "By the separation of church and state is meant the constitutional provision which forbids the making of any law, and therefore the taking of any executive action, that involves the interlocking of the official functions of the state with the official or institutional functions of any church."

If this sentence is correct (and we believe it is), several things, pointed to in the editorial or suggested by it follow. It would be wrong to say that the First Amendment forbids the Church to enter politics. The Church, indeed, should not enter politics if it wishes really to remain a Church, that is, an association of believers in Jesus Christ who have banded themselves together for spiritual purposes; but the First Amendment does not pronounce on this matter. It lays down no law on the objectives which societies or clubs or organizations should strive to attain. It seems that touching this point often rather loose language is used and that many friends of religious liberty are under the impression that the First Amendment forbids a church body, let us say, to

work for the election of a certain candidate. It is not the First Amendment that forms an obstacle, but something else may interpose a strong veto — the character of a church body as a Church.

Again, the First Amendment does not order legislators, judges, and executive officers to be non-religious people. No one who reads these lines, we are sure, would feel that this Amendment calls for non-religious officials. But in the practical administration of national or state affairs it seems at times as if officials were of the opinion that it would be wrong for them to profess, and to be guided by, religious principles.

Must a Christian legislator lay aside his religious convictions gained from Holy Scripture when he votes in the law-making assembly? To be concrete, when divorce laws are to be framed, would it be right for him to work for legislation which would permit divorce under no conditions except those laid down by Christ and the Apostles, that is, when adultery or malicious desertion has occurred? Would he be compelled to ignore Bible teaching on this point and place himself entirely on the basis of reason, common sense, and expediency? We believe that he could and should work for what he believes to be right in this field. At any rate, there is nothing in the First Amendment that could keep him from assisting in enacting legislation which would square not only with what ordinary civic prudence dictates, but likewise with the teachings of Holy Writ.

The effort is made these days to have God and Christ recognized in the Constitution of the United States; a special organization is devoting its energies to the achievement of this end. To us it seems that these people could use their money to better purpose, because the mere mention of God and Christ in the Constitution will not alter the character of the people living under it. In addition there are serious objections to be raised against this attempt. But as far as the First Amendment is concerned, we believe that the move is not unconstitutional. As little as it is contrary to the Constitution for the President of the United States to proclaim annually a thanksgiving holiday and to urge the people to go to their houses of worship in order to thank God for the crops of the year, so little would it be against the First Amendment if somewhere in the Constitution a statement would be inserted recognizing the God of the Holy Scriptures as the only true God and Jesus Christ as His Son and our Savior. We repeat, there are serious objections to the insertion of such a statement, but it cannot be successfully maintained that the First Amendment forbids the addition.

In the issue of December 10 the editor of the *Christian Century*, using the heading "Getting Down to Cases," discusses the implications of the definition of the First Amendment he has given and seeks to determine with reference to a number of instances whether a violation of the principle of separation of Church and State is involved. There are eight points which he examines. On account

of the interest attaching to the subject and its importance we list these cases. 1. With respect to bus transportation, free textbooks, free lunches for parochial school pupils, paid for out of tax funds, levied specifically for public school purposes, he says that a transgression of the First Amendment is involved if these things are taken care of by the State. To classify bus transportation for parochial school children as a "public welfare" measure, the editor thinks, is not justified. If the argument were valid, he says, then everything else belonging to the parochial school arrangement, for instance, janitor service, heating of the building and the building structure itself could be called or labeled a public welfare measure. 2. It is different, he holds, when vaccination and other public health services for pupils in parochial schools are viewed. Here evidently the health of the children is the thing aimed at, and this service is rendered because a large group of children is gathered in the parochial schools. 3. As to the granting of "released time" for religious instruction in public school buildings by Jewish, Roman Catholic, and Protestant instructors, the editorial holds that the arrangement is contrary to the First Amendment. In this instance, so the writer says, the legal function of the government is merged with the institutional function of the churches. His argument is that the children in such instances are under the jurisdiction of the school board and at the same time they are turned over to the various churches for instruction in the tenets of the respective denomination. Even though there has been a mutual agreement between the school board and the churches, so the writer holds, the procedure is unconstitutional; the thing simply should not be done. In other words, the editor is of the opinion that the famous Champaign, Ill., case, now being reviewed by the Federal Supreme Court, should be decided in favor of the woman who has brought suit against the teaching of religion on released time in the Champaign public schools. 4. On the question whether devotional Bible reading and prayer (usually the Lord's Prayer) should be permitted in public schools, the writer holds that no violation of the First Amendment is involved. The argument is that in such a case "no church is institutionally involved." 5. Another feature which the editorial considers altogether permissible is "the study of religion as an integral part of the public school curriculum, under the instruction of regular public school teachers trained in the pedagogy of this subject." The argument is that religion in such a case would be on a par with physics, biology, economics, literature, history, etc. "The Constitution does not determine or limit the subject-matter of public education." Evidently the view is that religion can be taught altogether in an objective way without reference to the personal church connection of the one that does the teaching. According to this view the Jew could teach all about the Christian religion as well as a loyal Protestant or Roman Catholic. 6. Similarly the editor does not think that any constitutional objection should be

raised against "prayer at the opening of sessions of Congress, legislature, and other national or political bodies or public events." The editor is of the opinion that in such a case it is not a church body that acts officially, but merely an individual clergyman who has been asked to serve. 7. When the question is asked whether it is permissible for the government to establish an ambassadorship to the Pope, the editor very definitely says that in such a step a violation of the First Amendment is involved. He holds that there the functions of Church and State "in the official processes of diplomacy" are interlocked. The President could, of course, send "a personal representative" to anybody that he desires, but to create an ambassadorship to represent us at the papal court is a different thing. He draws attention to the title which is given Mr. Myron C. Taylor, "personal representative with the rank of ambassador." There is no doubt that Mr. Taylor is by the Pope regarded as having the status of an ambassador, and he is treated as such. 8. What of chaplaincies for the armed forces? Here, too, the editor thinks we find a violation of the First Amendment. "Chaplains are appointed and employed as ordained ministers by the government. In the episcopally organized churches, such as the Roman Catholics, the Episcopal, and the Methodist churches, chaplains are also appointed by their bishops to their posts. In congregationally organized churches, an official commission of the Church passes on qualifications of ministers. No minister can become a chaplain unless he is officially certified. If at any time the Church withdraws its recognition of the chaplain as a minister, his status as a chaplain is immediately affected. . . . Official organizations representing Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish churches are asked by the government to nominate the quota of personnel assigned to each of these religious faiths. This request is based on the obvious theory that the Churches know their own clergy and can therefore help the government to provide the armed forces with the best men available. But the chaplain, so nominated and appointed, maintains his status as a minister of the Church. . . . So the functions of the institutions of Church and State are clearly intermingled in the chaplaincy as at present constituted. The constitutional wall of separation between the two is breached from both sides." Discussing this point somewhat more at length, the editor holds that instead of the present arrangement, which provides chaplains paid by the Government, there should be clergymen in the Army serving as chaplains who would be paid by the Church, whose garb would be indicative of their position as clergymen, who would accept no military rank and apart from their civilian patriotism would be bound by no rules excepting those of their position as ministers.

We have given much space to the *Christian Century's* editorial discussion of this subject because important questions which are in the forefront of our thinking are here dealt with, and sooner or later every minister is confronted with problems that belong

to this sphere. We doubt very much that the *Christian Century* has in every case expressed the right view. Some important considerations have been lost sight of, we think, but we shall not argue the matter here, but are content with drawing the attention of the brethren to this important presentation of moot questions.

A

The True Secret. Under this heading, *Time* (December 1, 1947) reports a part of the wedding address delivered by the Archbishop of York, when Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip were united recently in holy wedlock in Westminster Abbey. He said: "Notwithstanding the splendor and national significance of this occasion, the service . . . is in all essentials exactly the same as it would be for any cottager who might be married this afternoon in some small country church. . . . A vow was taken by each of you . . . when before God and man you made a solemn and deliberate promise that, come what may, for better or for worse, in sickness and in health, you will always be true and faithful to one another. . . . You have given yourselves to each other in unselfish love. Love must always be unselfish, and unselfishness is the true secret of a happy married life. . . . It means thoughtfulness and patience, ready sympathy and forbearance, talking over and sharing together the special interests and cares which each of you will have. And thus you will learn to bear one another's burdens as you walk on the road of life, making the journey together with happiness and hope. . . . But this service is far more than the taking of solemn vows. It is one of blessing. For it is only through God's help that you can keep the promise you have made. God's blessing has been given you that you may so live together in this life that in the world to come you may have everlasting life. The ever-living Christ is here to bless you. And He will always be near to help and guide you. His perfect love will deepen your love. The nearer you keep to Him, the nearer you will be to one another. . . ." Christians everywhere will rejoice at the publicity given this serious and helpful marriage admonition which fits the pauper no less than it does the prince. J. T. M.

Distress of German Prisoners of War in Middle East. It may not be generally known that in Egypt and adjacent regions there are still kept in custody many thousand German prisoners of war, waiting to be repatriated. An *RNS* news item states that the number of such prisoners in the Middle East is 60,000 and that they have been in captivity from two-and-one-half to five years. Seeing the plight of these men who are rapidly succumbing to the mental strain they are under, their Protestant chaplains have issued a plea to the British Government and "to the Christian people of all the world" asking that this condition, which has resulted in cases of suicide and insanity, be terminated. The petition points out that the anguish of these unfortunates is caused "by the long captivity, separation from their families, bad news from home, the impossibility of giving their folks in Germany efficient help,

and the indefinite time of their captivity." One more sentence of the address should be quoted, "As ministers and shepherds of our fellow brethren we implore the responsible authorities of the British Government not to allow any longer the injustice which has been done to the POW's in the Middle East and is still being done, but to help us by practical, efficient, and quick measures to stop among the POW's the great mental distress and despair, which is increasing from day to day." A.

The Death of Dr. Speer. According to the daily press December saw the death of a prominent church leader, Robert E. Speer, whose name has been mentioned chiefly in connection with Protestant mission work in foreign lands. The career of Dr. Speer is interesting. He was a theological student at Princeton when he was called to become the secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions. Though his theological studies had not been completed, he accepted the position. If at first he had the intention of finishing his work at the seminary after several years of service, he never carried out that plan. Though he appeared thousands of times in pulpits, he was never ordained as a minister. He served as secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions from 1891 till 1937. Wherever he appeared, people greeted him as a forceful speaker and as a leader in the effort to evangelize heathen lands. A number of years ago he served as president of the Federal Council of Churches. The theology which he preached was of a simple kind; he wrote and spoke chiefly about the fundamentals of the Christian faith and endeavored to warm hearts for the great cause of Christian missions. A.

After Divorce — What? Under this title, the *Kiwanis Magazine* (September, 1947) publishes a most readable article on the problem presented by the man or woman who has been divorced. There is added a subtitle, in which the writer explains what he had in mind when he brought the problem to the attention of his readers. It reads: "The community's responsibility doesn't stop; it really just begins, when the civil courts dissolve a marriage." He or she was divorced — so what? "Keeping in mind that the divorce total is hovering about the quarter million mark each year with one out of five marriages ending in divorce, perhaps it is time that we face the plight of the divorcee, recognizing the cold, hard fact that annually some 500,000 fellow citizens walk from the court rooms every twelve months 'without a home.' *The salvage value of that horde is our concern here*" (italics our own). *The salvage value of that horde!* If that concerns the Kiwanis, how much more should it concern the Christian Church, which, indeed, tries to prevent divorce, upholding the sanctity of marriage, but which, too, is deeply interested in the spiritual salvation of the 500,000 who annually walk from the court rooms without a home. "Cheap talk and idle gossip wielded by malicious tongues hamper readjustment. Every citizen should be vitally concerned with preserving the basic unit of democratic society, the family." "In every

diner, in every neighborhood, in every club there is the divorcee. He or she is so called because a court has so designated him. He is your problem and mine. Let us not forget that a proper solution of that problem will make a better community, a happier society, and a stronger nation." Words certainly deserving careful consideration! We offer no solution of the problem here, for that cannot be done here. But the problem certainly deserves discussion in our own periodicals as it receives discussion in secular magazines.

J. T. M.

Brief Items.—From England comes the news that a translation of the Bible in what is called "everyday English" has been planned. There are two teams, one for the Old Testament, the other for the New Testament; the former is headed by Dr. Theodore Robinson, the latter by Dr. C. H. Dodd.

According to press reports the Bible Presbyterian Church, meeting in Tacoma, Wash., went on record as favoring peacetime military training. It will be recalled that this is the pre-millennial group which left the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. (Northern Presbyterians).

Brief Items from Religious News Service.—The American Bible Society has presented Metropolitan Gregory of Leningrad and Novgorod with 10,000 copies of the first Russian Bible to be published in the United States. The prelate also received 5,000 Russian Testaments and Psalms, 1,000 Greek New Testaments, and 100,000 Russian Gospels.

Every resident of Slavia, Florida, celery-raising town, is a member of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church. The members paid the entire cost of their modest church, which came to \$10,000, before the first brick was laid. They have since set aside a fund of \$50,000 for the erection of a modern Christian day school and have collected \$90,000 for a national Lutheran home for the aged and orphaned.

Thirty-four Protestant chapels were opened in Spain last year, according to a protest signed by a group of Roman Catholics in Madrid which denounced the inauguration of the non-Catholic worship centers as "a violation of the constitution." Prior to the opening of the new centers fifty Protestant "chapels" had already existed in the country.

The Missouri Baptist General Association voted at its 113th annual meeting in Moberly, Mo., to establish a Baptist chair of Bible at the University of Missouri in Columbia and authorized a campaign for \$100,000 to endow the department.

The Radio Corporation of the Board of Missions and Church Extension of the Methodist Church has been granted a license by the Federal Communications Commission in Washington to operate a frequency modulation radio station in New York.

Recommendations to the United Bible Societies for translation of the Holy Book into additional languages were adopted at the close of a five-day conference of Bible translators in Zeist, Holland. It was pointed out that of 2,500 existing tongues the Bible has been entirely translated into 185 and partially into 905.

Shut-ins don't have to worry about missing Sunday morning services in Bethany Lutheran Church, Buffalo, New York. They hear the entire service a day or so later over a wire recorder which the Rev. Bertwin L. Frey, pastor, or one of the members, brings to their bedsides. Everything from the opening hymn to the sermon and benediction is recorded. During the week it goes the rounds of persons who didn't get to church.

A Fundamentalist conference will be held in Amsterdam, Holland, August 12—19, 1948, to organize an "international council of Christian churches" as a rival to the World Council of Churches. Announcement of the conference was made in New York by William H. Bordeaux, general secretary of the American Council of Christian Churches, Fundamentalist group.

A plaque marking location of the first Protestant church service in San Antonio, Texas — in April, 1844 — was unveiled and dedicated as the principal event of the Reformation Day observance Sunday, November 2.

The Board of Foreign Missions of the United Lutheran Church in America, meeting in Harrisburg, Pa., voted a \$1,000,000 allocation for missionary work in Japan during the next three years. The Board also decided to send fifty additional missionaries into Japan.

The number of pupils in Roman Catholic parochial schools — elementary, high schools, and colleges — has reached an all-time high of 3,000,000 throughout the United States, according to an announcement of the National Catholic Education Association in Washington, D. C.

Charles E. Wilson, president of the General Electric Company, was elected Protestant co-chairman of the National Conference of Christians and Jews at a board of directors meeting in New York. He succeeds Dr. Arthur H. Compton, chancellor of Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri, who filled the post for nine years.

An all-time record in baptisms has been made by Southern Baptists in their 1946—47 associational year. Porter Routh, secretary of the Department of Survey, Statistics, and Information of the Baptist Sunday School Board, announced in Nashville, Tennessee. Routh said reports received thus far indicate that the number will exceed 271,000, surpassing the previous high of 1939, when 269,155 baptisms were reported. A. W. C. G.