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## Theological Observer. – Kirchlich Zeitgeschichtliches

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## THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER

### OUR AUSTRALIAN BRETHREN AND THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION

In the *Australian Lutheran* (September 20, 1950) we read the following report: "At the last triennial convention of our Church held at Toowoomba, we adopted the following declaration and passed the following resolutions:

**'WHEREAS**, The Lutheran World Federation acknowledges the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the only source and infallible norm of all church doctrine and practice and sees in the Confessions of the Lutheran Church, especially in the Unaltered Augsburg Confession and Luther's Catechism, a pure exposition of the Word of God; and

**'WHEREAS**, The Lutheran World Federation is a free association of Lutheran churches and has no power to legislate for the churches belonging to it nor to interfere with their complete autonomy, but acts as their agent in such matters as they assign to it; and

**'WHEREAS**, The purposes of the Lutheran World Federation are (a) to bear united witness before the world to the Gospel of Jesus Christ as the power of God for salvation; (b) to cultivate unity of faith and confession among the Lutheran churches of the world; (c) to promote fellowship and co-operation in study among Lutherans; (d) to foster Lutheran participation in ecumenical movements; (e) to develop a united Lutheran approach to responsibilities in missions and education; and (f) to support Lutheran groups in need of spiritual aid; and

**'WHEREAS**, The problems of our Church are in many instances identical with, or similar to, those of Lutheran churches in the Federation; be it

**'Resolved**, That the officials of our Church be instructed to enter into negotiation with the officials of the Lutheran World Federation with a view to a co-operation with that organization in regard to as many matters under (a) to (f) above as possible, provided that the confessional principle is not violated; and particularly in regard to (f), namely, giving spiritual and material aid to needy Lutheran groups; and be it

**'Resolved**, That the General Pastoral Conference be authorized to continue action in this matter."

The report then continues: "Pursuant to the Toowoomba resolutions your officials wrote to Dr. S. C. Michelfelder, the executive secretary

of the World Federation, with regard to the possibility of a certain co-operation. In a very courteous reply Dr. Michelfelder promised to place our communication before the executive committee of the L. W. F. and to discuss matters with us on his visit to Australia. He is in Australia now, attending the triennial convention of the United Lutheran Church in Australia at Indooroopilly, Queensland. South Australian members of our executive council and the members of our theological faculty hope to meet him at Concordia College on Friday, September 22. . . . We are not asking for affiliation. We believe *united witness* is possible only where there is unity of faith in fact as well as in profession. We are considering the possibility of co-operation without violation of any Biblical principle. May God guide us in our deliberations and discussions." We may add that from a report of Dr. Michelfelder on the meeting with our brethren it seems that the deliberations were quite satisfactory to both parties and that efforts at such co-operation will be undertaken as violates neither Scripture nor conscience.

The action of our brethren in Australia should be commended. It should be followed indeed by our Synodical Conference groups in America. On the one hand, our brethren stand strictly on the Lutheran principle of Biblical confession, avoiding and repudiating all indifferentism and unionism, while, on the other, they recognize the value of such participation in church and charitable work as is in accordance with both Scripture and the confessional principle. There is a rightful place for confession by complete isolation. This applies to all cases that are covered by Tit. 3:10; Rom. 16:17; 2 John vv. 11-12 and all other passages of God's Word that condemn those who wickedly proclaim false doctrine and willfully ignore the divine truth. But there is a rightful place also for participation for confession, which means, that wherever the divine truth may be clarified, impressed, and brought to recognition, Christians are in duty bound not to avoid one another, but to meet one another in order that there may be accomplished that "united witness" which is based on unity of faith, not merely in profession, but also in fact.

J. T. MUELLER

#### "SANCTIFYING THE SECULAR"

This is the title of the baccalaureate sermon which Dr. Joseph M. Dawson of Washington, D. C., delivered last spring at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (published in *The Review and Expositor*, July). Taking his cue from Rom. 12:2: "Be not conformed to this world," which he paraphrases: "Be not mastered by the secular," Rev. Dawson first illustrates what is meant by modern secularism and

then shows how a Christian whose mind has been transformed by the Spirit of God is enabled to "sanctify" the secular. His recital of evils resulting from modern secularism borders here and there on the extreme; yet it is so relevant that we are taking the privilege to submit it, without further comment, to our readers. It reads:

Secularism has supplanted the Kingdom of God with the kingdom of man, and made for an exclusive humanism;

It has substituted the discoveries of science alone for divine revelation as rightful authority over the human mind;

It has altered education from making a life into making a living;

It has replaced concern for the salvation of the soul with the concern for technological security;

It has altered politics from governance of moral law to preference for a rule of expediency;

It has converted business from legitimate aims into human exploitation and defenseless money-grubbing;

It has paganized sex relations and destroyed the sanctity of marriage;

It has uncapped the worst conceivable hell and unloosed the most hideous devils that ever crawled out of an abyss, such as modern war;

For its minions at least it has taken away the meaning of life and obliterated the hope of a divine destiny.

P. M. B.

#### A LAYMAN WITNESSING CHRIST

In the *Moody Monthly* (October, 1950) R. C. Le Tourneau, the well-known manufacturer, explains his method of bearing witness to Christ for the purpose of encouraging other laymen to do the same. He writes:

Today we expect the preachers to look after spiritual things and consider that laymen have done enough if they care for material things such as giving to the collection and looking after church business. In the early days of the Church when men were converted, they immediately began to talk about it. Scripture says that they blazed it abroad. And certainly, a layman owes as much to God as does a preacher. I believe that unless we laymen get back of the preachers with our time, our talents, our money, and especially with our personal testimony, our churches will die.

The man on the street expects the preacher to talk about spiritual things and takes what he says with a grain of salt, because he reasons within himself: "That's his job." But when the man who works beside him, with the grace of God in his heart, begins to tell what the Lord has done for him, he stops to look and listen, because if Christianity meets the problems of his fellow workmen, then perhaps it will work for him.

During the war I wanted to visit a steel mill to look at the machinery in connection with some of our forging operations. As a visitor's pass was not easy to get, I went to one of our executives and asked him to arrange for me to get into the mill without a lot of red tape and lost time. Well, he certainly did the job, because when I landed at the airport, a private car and chauffeur were waiting to take me directly to the mill. But that was not all. A designing engineer who was familiar with this particular machinery and knew what made it tick had been asked to go out with the chauffeur and give me any information he could that would be helpful.

It was like finding a gold mine. We sat together in the back seat and discussed the machinery, and he really had the answers to my questions. Figuratively speaking, we were having a feast on machinery. Everything was fine except for one thing. Every few words he took the name of the Lord in vain. I realized that it was just his way of talking, but I was a little concerned. Should I speak to him about it? I wondered. Naturally I wanted to retain his good will. The information I was getting was very valuable. I looked to the Lord in silent prayer. Lord, I prayed, whatever you want me to do, I will try my best. Then I dismissed the thought for a moment, going on with the conversation. I believe in taking my burdens to the Lord and leaving them there.

A little later the conversation drifted to my plane. He said: "I notice that you have a fine two-motor ship. I thought the Government had taken them all away from private owners. How come they let you keep it?" "Well," I answered, "they asked me to show cause why I should keep it, and I simply told them that I was making the rounds of three factories, all on war work, and added that I also did considerable flying around the country to preach old-time religion, loyalty to Christ, and at the same time, loyalty to our country."

As I said this, I could not help but notice that I had shocked him a little, and I thought: This is the Lord's way of opening the door. Now is the time to walk in. So I said to him: "I notice you take the name of the Lord in vain. I know you don't mean anything by it, but I might tell you that He is my Savior and that I love Him."

I tried to be human in my approach and not have a "holier-than-thou attitude." I just reached out and tapped him on his shoulder and said: "Of course, you know I understand it's a habit." I wish you could have seen the change in that man. We went down to the mill, saw the machinery and came back, but not once more did I hear him take the Lord's name in vain. On the way back from the mill he said to the chauffeur: "You might as well stop at the office, as I am going back to the airport with Le Tourneau, and I can just as well pick up my car and take him. There is no need of both of us going."

This was done, and as soon as he and I were alone, he began to

tell me the sad story of how he had once been a churchman and how churchmen had cheated him so that he left and never went back. I could see his heart was hungry, and I had the most glorious chance I have ever had in my life to tell the story of Jesus and His love. My own business of that day will soon be forgotten, but I am confident that the business done for the Lord will not; for although I have not seen my engineer friend since then, I hope to meet him in glory.

This simple story of winning Christian love is worth remembering. It may well be used by pastors to encourage the laymen of their churches more zealously to bear witness to their faith. On the whole, our laymen no doubt have had a better training in religion and greater indoctrination than Mr. Le Tourneau had. But have they learned his art of using every opportunity to do God's business as they are doing their own? Unless we induce our laymen to become living, daring, dynamic witnesses of their faith, our Church will lose all the blessings which God has intended to give to it through their work as kings and priests, showing forth the praises of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

J. T. MUELLER

#### J. D. MICHAELIS, 1717—1791

Two hundred years ago, in 1750, there appeared in Germany a book which shook the theological world of that day. The author of the book was Professor J. D. Michaelis of Goettingen, and the title of the book was *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*. It was a book which was destined to play an important role in the progress of negative higher criticism, that movement which reached its climax in the early part of our century and which did much to undermine faith in Scripture in the hearts of many theological students.

Who was this man Michaelis? In *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* (April, 1950) James C. O'Flaherty of Wake Forest College presents a brief but most fascinating account as well as an objective evaluation of Michaelis. He was born in Halle February 27, 1717. In 1729 he entered the public school of the *Waisenhaus* at Halle. From 1733 to 1739 he studied at the University of Halle. In 1745 he became *Privatdozent* at the newly founded University of Goettingen, where he taught for almost half a century. Here he became known as one of the most famous Orientalists and one of the most popular lecturers in Europe. A biographer, quoted by Mr. O'Flaherty, describes Michaelis as follows:

Der lebhaft und gewandte Dozent, der das gelehrte Material spielend dem Hoerer vurfuehrte, erschien einem begeisterten Ver-

ehrer wie ein vornehmer Cavalier und ein vollendeter Schauspieler in einer Person. Von vortrefflicher Leibesbildung und Anstand, mit bunt besetzten Kleidern, gestiefelt und gespornt, den Degen an der Seite, pathetisch im Gange, mit hoher Miene und feurigen Augen tritt er ins Auditorium, die Bibel unter dem Arm.

But, so Mr. O'Flaherty informs us:

The last twenty years of his life were embittered by the enmity of many of his colleagues at Goettingen, who evidently did not appreciate his "*Herrschaft, sein Eigennutz und seine Vorliebe fuer Hinter-tueren und krumme Wege.*" As a result of his unpopularity with those who knew him best, "*in Goettingen wurde sein Tod mit einer Gleich-gueltigkeit aufgenommen, ueber die die gelehrte Welt erstaunt war.*"

Regarding Michaelis' rationalistic approach to Scripture, the author writes:

Michaelis was, in the last resort, a rationalist. That is to say, his approach to truth in religion was always through the instrumentality of reason. In this respect he was a true legatee of the Greek faith in *nous*, and his life's work was largely determined by that stream of cultural influence we might term secular. But, and this is an important distinction, he was not an abstract rationalist of the *Wolfian* stamp, hence no idealist. For him, the concrete empirical facts of our external experience were more meaningful than the untried schemes of the human mind. Hence, he evinced a spacious interest in the concrete phenomena of life as they appear in language, literature, history, etc. . . . Although Michaelis accepted the rationalist point of view as the basis of his critical method, he never allowed his rationalism to eliminate Biblical authority entirely. . . .

For Michaelis there was no working of the Holy Spirit in the reading of the Scripture, nor was there anything miraculous about the general tenor of the Hebrew and Christian writings. Likewise he was immune to discovering anything awe-inspiring about the life of Christ; for him it was simply the reasonable life, and that was sufficient. In Michaelis' response to Scripture there was no calling of deep unto deep. When he wanted to demonstrate the divinity of the Book, he had to make reference to an external type of evidence, namely, the miracles.

The author concludes his biography of Michaelis with the words:

Michaelis belongs to the host of the near great. . . . Never does he attempt to answer the great questions of human destiny. And for this reason he will never be read except as a literary antiquity. . . . Michaelis, nevertheless, when placed beside many of his own colleagues, grows in stature, and it cannot be denied that he was a great teacher. "*Er war einer der vollkommensten Dozenten, die je, solange Universitaeten sind und sein werden, gelebt haben.*" P. M. B.

**ITEMS FROM "CHRIST UND WELT"**

From recent issues of this outstanding German weekly we cull the following:

At a recent conference held in Nierstein, German evangelical pastors aired the problem of emigration. Said one of the leading spokesmen: "We must warn against illusions. The readiness of oversea-nations to receive European emigrants is not always an evidence of brotherly love, but is often dictated by a desire to get cheap labor. Whoever has observed the various commissions in charge of emigration, will have been reminded of the slave market in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Here is the crucial test whether the Human Rights Charter adopted by United Nations will be more than an empty phrase."—Of some 800,000 pilgrims who in this "Jubilee Year" visited Rome, about 48,000 were Germans.—A careful check-up revealed that a single movie theater in Berlin pictured in the course of one year 360 murders, 84 suicides, 265 burglaries and thefts, 85 cases of arson, 48 cases of espionage, 37 escapes from prisons and reform schools, and 236 cases of adultery.—Miss Mary Attlee, the 75-year-old sister of the British Prime Minister, has returned to England after 40 years of missionary activity in Africa.—The preacher of St. John's Church in Margate, England, gave his choir boys permission to read "suitable books" while he preached. He explained that he could not expect the boys to listen to him, since what he said was intended for adults. (Comment not necessary.)

P. M. B.

**ITEMS FROM "RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE"**

The Gideon Bible Society is preparing 400,000 New Testaments in Chinese to be distributed among natives of Formosa and believes it will be able to distribute some 3,000,000 New Testaments in colloquial Japanese before next July.

The Association of Evangelical Bible Societies, which met at Hannover, Germany, reported that about 317,000 Bibles, 260,000 New Testaments, and 130,000 Bible portions were distributed in Germany during the past year.

The New Jersey Presbyterian Synod devoted much time to the consideration of congregations who were not able to pay pastors an adequate salary. To solve their problem the delegates adopted these resolutions: 1) that Presbyterian churches whose membership is too small to meet costs of operation should merge with another Presbyterian congregation or with a church of another Protestant denomination; 2) that Presbyterians who have not attended church or contributed to their



congregation's support in two years should be placed on a suspended list; 3) that the annual minimum salary for pastors be increased from \$2,400 to \$3,000, plus a manse, participation in the Church's pension fund, and expenses for supplies, equipment, and operation of an automobile.—In the past two years the salaries of pastors in the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., have increased 27 per cent. As of July 1, 1950, the average cash salary of pastors was reported to be \$3,470 per year.

The Southern Baptist Home Mission Board has planned a five-year program during which they hope to gain 2,000,000 new members for their Church. The plan calls for 1,027 more missionaries and puts emphasis upon more converts, churches, mission stations, and more effective witnessing.

The Conference on Church Union which was created at a meeting in Greenwich, Conn., last December has drafted a plan by which reconciliation of the Congregational, Episcopal, and Presbyterian forms of church government within a single Protestant church is proposed. Methodist Bishop Ivan Lee Holt of St. Louis, Mo., chairman of the conference, said the plan envisages a united Church of Christ in which bishops will have a place and presbyters will have constitutional responsibilities but without denying self-government to local congregations. The tentative plan calls for the grouping of congregations into presbyteries and of presbyteries into conferences headed by elected bishops. A national general council would take over the functions of the general convention, assembly, synod, conference, or council of the uniting denominations. However, local churches would probably retain a large degree of autonomy in most matters. Bishop Holt stressed that the conference's objective is organic union and not the co-operative movement which finds expressions in the National Council of Churches constituted in Cleveland November 28—December 1.

The State Supreme Court of New Jersey has upheld a 47-year-old law which permitted the reading of at least five verses from the Old Testament in each classroom of public schools without comment and an 80-year-old law which allowed the repeating of the Lord's Prayer by teachers and pupils. Justice Clarence E. Case, who prepared the high court's opinion, declared that the laws did not show preference for any religion. "We consider," he said, "that the Old Testament because of its antiquity, its content, and its wide acceptance is not a sectarian book when read without comment. It is accepted by three great religions, the Jewish, the Roman Catholic, and Protestant, and at least in part by

others." In commenting on the recitation of the Lord's Prayer, Justice Case said, "We find nothing in the Lord's Prayer that is controversial, ritualistic, or dogmatic. It is a prayer to 'God our Father.' It does not contain Christ's name and makes no reference to Him. It is in our opinion in the same position as the Bible reading and needs no special comment beyond what has just been said." Mr. Heyman Ziemel, the counsel for Mrs. Anna E. Kline of Hawthorne, N. J., and Donald Doremus of East Rutherford, who had attacked these laws, are planning to carry the case to the Supreme Court of the United States.

In addressing the annual meeting of the Presbyterian Synod of New York, Dr. Elmer G. Homrighausen of Princeton Theological Seminary proposed a major research project to determine the relationship of religion to public school subjects. Dr. Homrighausen does not believe that the public schools should teach religion, but is convinced that the study of religion cannot be eliminated from the study of literature, art, music, history, and social sciences. He declared that the First Amendment to the United States Constitution does not bar religious faith from public institutions but rather forbids government control of religion.

For the first time in the history of Catholicism in Portugal, Catholic laymen were invited to take part in Catholic Action. Emanuel Goncalves Cardinal Cerejeira, patriarch of Lisbon, presided at the first Congress of Portuguese Catholic Men, which met from December 7 to 10. Papers centering on the theme "Responsibilities of Catholic Men at the Present Time" told the Catholic laymen what their duties are in family, civic, professional, social, and religious life.

The National Lutheran Council has announced that Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Warsaw, Poland, has been confiscated by the Communist government. According to the report, property of the church, consisting of schools, parish houses, and parsonages, will be demolished to make way for government offices. This seizure and plan for demolition indicates that the Polish government has instituted a repression policy against the Evangelical (Lutheran) Augsburg Church, the largest Protestant denomination in the country.

The Rev. I. D. Morkel has broken away from the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa. Together with 80 per cent of his congregation he organized the new Calvinist Protestant Church of South Africa in the Cape Flats because the Dutch Reformed Church had insisted on observing "apartheid," that is, racial segregation. A constitution for the new church has already been drawn up, and beginning in January the newly organized church hopes to train its own ministers.

The general assembly of French Protestantism has declared itself ready to take part in fraternal conversations with Roman Catholics. It insisted, however, that such conversations can be based only on the understanding that Protestant churches will never acknowledge any other authority than the Word of God and that ecumenism can never be the victory of one church over another.

By a special decree of the Holy See in Rome, Dr. Joseph Straka has been excommunicated because of his pro-Communist sympathies. Recently he was appointed a professor in the state-controlled Roman Catholic seminary which has been set up at Bratislava after all the regular diocesan seminaries had been forced to close by government order.

The People's Education Ministry of the German Democratic Republic has worked out a new regulation which requires that pastors who wish to take over parishes in the Soviet Zone will have to take part of their theological studies at East Zone universities. The ministry drew up these new provisions because young clergymen who have studied at Western German theological faculties are coming to the Soviet Zone as "Western advance brigades" and do not have the political and social requirements to be true "people's pastors."

Czech refugees in Vienna claim that a group of officials attached to the State Office for Church Affairs in Prague is busy in selecting portions of the Bible that could be applied to Communism. The Prague Communist regime hopes to come up with new explanations of Christ's teachings which could justify its stringent measures against the Roman Catholic Church. It has ordered the People's Party to send emissaries into all districts to lecture on "new scientific interpretation of the Bible" especially among the peasants, in the belief that they can be convinced they are acting against Christian commandments when they resist collectivist and co-operative farm programs.

The Mormons have set up a unique missionary system in which they expect one of every 100 Mormons to be a missionary. The uniqueness of their plan lies in the method of financing the missionary program. The missionaries use their own personal savings plus donations from their families, friends, and fellow church workers to support themselves in the field for as long as three years. Another distinguishing feature of their system is that most missionaries are young men and women in their 20's. Since 1830 more than 62,000 members of the Church have served voluntarily in mission fields at their own expense. During the last year foreign missionaries added 16,261 converts to Mormonism.

ALEX WM. C. GUEBERT