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## Theological Observer. - Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

John Theodore Mueller  
*Concordia Seminary, St. Louis*

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## THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER

### TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF WITNESSING IN AUSTRALIA

With its issue of March 1955, the *Australasian Theological Review* published No. 1 of Vol. XXVI, which means that this apparently insignificant, but actually very dynamic quarterly of thirty-two pages each could celebrate its twenty-fifth anniversary. Its editor is still Dr. H. P. Hamann, who is responsible for the periodical, while the theological faculty of Concordia College assists him as an editorial committee. The first number of the 26th volume of the *Review* contains a special preface by President Cl. E. Hoopmann, in which he points out the purpose of the quarterly, its seeming lack of success, since its number of readers remained extremely limited, confined chiefly to pastors of the Ev. Luth. Church of Australia, with only a few copies going overseas, but nevertheless its valuable witness concerning burning questions facing not only the Lutheran Church in Australia, but also Lutheranism throughout the world. The most important articles have been supplied to the *Review* by the editor, who frankly and critically, but also fairly and lovingly discussed the major problems of sound Lutheranism with a view to guide his fellow Lutherans by what he is convinced is God's will as set forth in His divine Word. Those who have read the *Review* from the beginning, appreciate the wealth of instruction and brotherly admonition which it has given to its readers and join Dr. Hoopmann in the closing prayer of his preface: "May the *Review* continue to pursue its God-directed course to the glory of His name and the joy of many readers." The current issue contains a soul-searching article under the heading "Voices on Evanston."

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

### DEWEY'S INFLUENCE FADING FROM U. S. SCHOOLS

Under this heading the *Christian Century* (July 20, 1955) almost triumphantly reports that the influence of John Dewey on the educational program of our public school system is on the wane. We read:

Urbana, Illinois, witnessed a funeral the other day which told more than could volumes of exposition about changes that are taking place in American education. Almost without notice in the press, the Progressive Education Association met and disbanded. Only a handful of directors showed up for the last rites. The P. E. A. was founded in 1919 to spread the educational philosophy of John Dewey through the American school system. For a time it exerted a great influence,

and some of its methods will continue as standard educational practice. But, as the *New York Times* said in advance of the Urbana meeting, "In many school systems it has been the educational kiss of death to be labeled a disciple of Dewey or a member of the association." *Sic transit.*

It was in the fall of 1906 that the undersigned first became more thoroughly acquainted with Dewey's educational principles in connection with his attending education courses at the Tulane University Extension Center in New Orleans. The instructor of the course, who later served as superintendent of the public schools in New Orleans, was a very enthusiastic follower of Dewey and prophesied that through Dewey's influence American educational standards would reach the highest level. With the same breath he declared that there are no moral absolutes, but that the accepted morals are mere conventions. Is the erring youth of today the fruit of these "fundamentals in education"?

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

#### THE BAPTIST WORLD ALLIANCE IN LONDON

Fifty years ago, as *Time* (August 1, 1955) reports, the first congress of the Baptist World Alliance, meeting in London, predicted that the next meeting of the Alliance in London would find the world's 6,000,000 Baptists doubled in number, London's streets less congested, the pubs banished, and the Church of England separated from the state. Toward the end of July, 9,000 Baptists from 60 countries once more met in London to find that the streets were still congested, the pubs still open, and the Church of England still joined to the state. But one prophecy had become more than true: since 1905 the number of Baptists in the world has soared to more than 20 million. The Archbishop of Canterbury, as the head of the British Council of Churches, welcomed the Baptists, but at once touched a sore spot by making a plea for "the drawing together of the Church of Christ in the ecumenical movement." Fred Townley Lord of London, the president of the Alliance, replied: "We decline to equate brotherly co-operation with sacrifice of essential principles. We do not share the views of those who talk about organizational division of Christendom as sin." Herbert Gezork, president of the Andover Newton Theological School, spelled out Baptist beliefs—the authority of the Bible, the fellowship of believers, and the necessity of evangelism—and hailed the Baptists as "the most consistent and radical Protestants." Among the resolutions which the Alliance passed was one that urged each Baptist "to make an honest effort to win at least one soul during the coming year for

Jesus Christ." But not all was quiet on the Baptist front. Said one Baptist: "Baptists get along well with Baptists on the other side of the world, but not so well with Baptists next door."

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

#### TO ROME AND RETURN

Under this heading *Time* (July 4, 1955) quotes a number of statements from a book entitled *Return to Reality* (Macmillan; \$1.65), by William Purcell Witcutt, an Anglican parson, who, while a student of law at Birmingham University, was led by G. K. Chesterton's anti-industrial theory of "Distribution," favoring a social-industrial industry rather than the present large-scale type, to study Roman Catholic theology. But Father Witcutt was not happy as priest of a Birmingham slum parish, and when in a lecture on the Reformation he bore down too heavily on the corruption of the medieval Catholic clergy, he was transferred by the Vicar-General to "the farthest outpost of the diocese," which ultimately led him to return to the Anglican fold. Witcutt's analysis of Roman Catholic theology differs greatly from the usual attacks made upon it by men who have had a personal acquaintance with it. He writes, as quoted by *Time*, that scholastic theology's two fundamentals are the Abstract Idea (the essence of every object is comprehensible only to the mind, which is immaterial, spiritual, and immortal) and the Beatific Vision (the plunge of the soul into the Divine). Thus the God of scholasticism becomes unworshipable. Nor do the Roman Catholics worship Him. They cannot. They worship the Sacred Heart, the Virgin, and the Saints. He writes: "To me Roman Catholicism seemed one of two things: either a set of dry philosophical formulae or else a range of plaster-cast statues. . . . What I wanted was no vision of the intellect, but resurrection. It was the doctrine of bodily resurrection which held me by an unbreakable bond to the Christian religion."

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

#### THE MARIAN CULT

*The Christian Century* (June 29, 1955) publishes under this heading an analysis of a statement by the Permanent Commission on Inter-church Relations of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., approved by the recent Los Angeles General Assembly of that church, which condemns the Marian cult as basically unchristian and ever widening the breach between the Roman Catholic Church and all other Christian communions. We quote some of the statements as given in the article: "Honors bestowed upon the Virgin Mary in the course of Christian history have closely paralleled, and in some instances duplicated, honors

paid to Christ." "The Feast of Christ the King has been paralleled by the Feast of the Queenship of Mary." "Mariology, that is, the theology of Mary, is of a very organic kind and is still in the making. It is not determined by any reference to the Bible or to Christ. The doctrine of Mary is founded upon the sole authority of the Roman Catholic Church. When the question has been raised regarding the factual basis in Scripture or in history for the dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and the Bodily Assumption of Mary, the answer given is this: God could have done what these dogmas affirm; it was fitting that he should do it; therefore he did it. *Potuit, deuit, fecit* are the famous trinity of Latin terms which were made popular by the medieval theologian Duns Scotus, and which constitute the authority for promulgating doctrines in which the Roman church is interested but for which Biblical authority is lacking. . . . Thus in a subtle but decisive way, the church ceases to be God's servant and becomes his patron." "The devotion to Mary now equals, and even exceeds, the devotion to Christ himself."

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

#### THE RESURGENCE OF MODERNISM

Dr. Nels Ferré has recently published a book, *The Christian Understanding of God* (Harper & Brothers, New York), which shows a resurgence of Modernism in its extreme form, as a few quotations will prove. On Scripture he writes: "When Protestants set up the Bible as an external authority, they showed their need of a 'paper pope'" (p. 178). On the Sinlessness of Christ: "We have no way of knowing even that Jesus was sinless, but such a claim is irrelevant to the reality of the incarnation. Such a proposition would, for that matter, depend mostly on some literal claim in the Bible. Such claims there are, but the Bible used in this external manner becomes a distinct danger to living faith" (p. 186). Regarding the Virgin Birth: "The reference in John to the claim by the Jews to the effect that they were not born in adultery could give external credence to a Nazi claim that Jesus was a German. Mary, we remember, was found pregnant before her engagement to mild Joseph. Nazareth was hard by a Roman garrison where the soldiers were German mercenaries . . . and who can deny that such a conjecture could be true?" (P. 191.) On the Deity of Christ: "If Jesus takes the place of God, we still have idolatry. He is the mediator, not the eternal God" (p. 224). On Universal Salvation: "The total logic of the Bible . . . is forthright and fine. God would have all to be saved and with God all things are possible. Either God would not or could not effect such a sovereign victory of His love,

but He can and will" (p.246). On Eternal Punishment: "What inhuman hardness of heart could ever fashion so horrible a view as eternal hell and then connect it in any way with the boundless love" (p.238).

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

BRIEF ITEMS FROM "RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE"

*Chicago.*—Dean Jerald C. Brauer of the University of Chicago Federated Theological Faculty announced the appointment of two scholars to the faculty.

They are Dr. Markus Barth, a Swiss Reformed minister and son of Dr. Karl Barth, famed theologian of Basel University, Switzerland; and Dr. Nathan A. Scott, a Congregationalist who will become the first Negro on the faculty.

Dr. Barth, former professor of New Testament at Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa, will become an associate professor of New Testament here. He came to the United States in 1953.

Dr. Scott, an associate professor of humanities at Howard University, Washington, D. C., since 1949, will serve as an assistant professor in religion and art. He is a former chaplain of Hampton (Va.) Institute.

Dr. Barth received his theological training at the Universities of Basel, Berlin, Edinburgh, and Göttingen. Dr. Scott attended the University of Michigan and Union Theological Seminary, New York.

*Madras, India.*—Four American Lutheran leaders are scheduled to attend celebrations next January marking the 250th anniversary of Protestant missions in India, it was announced here.

They are Dr. Franklin Clark Fry of New York, president of the United Lutheran Church in America and chairman of the central committee of the World Council of Churches; Dr. Fredrik A. Schiøtz of Minneapolis, president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church; Dr. Henry F. Schuh of Columbus, Ohio, president of the American Lutheran Church; and Dr. George Schulz of Columbus, A. L. C. stewardship director.

Another American who plans to come, according to the jubilee committee of the Tamiland Christian Council, is Dr. Carl E. Lund-Quist, executive secretary of the Lutheran World Federation, whose headquarters are in Geneva.

The Lutheran officials will attend a L. W. F. executive committee meeting here in connection with the observances. The jubilee program will center in the town of Tranquebar, where two German Lutherans, Bartholomew Ziegenbalg and Henry Pluetschau, first began missionary work two and a half centuries ago.

European Christian leaders at the celebrations will include Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft, general secretary of the World Council of Churches, and Bishop Hanns Lilje of Hannover, chairman of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany and president of the L. W. F.

Climax of the three-day Tranquebar jubilee program will be the consecration on January 14 of Dr. Rajah B. Manikam, southeast Asia joint secretary of the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council, as first Indian Bishop of Tranquebar.

Local arrangements are being made by the Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church, which is an outgrowth of the Tranquebar mission. Although the first missionaries were sent out by a Danish king, the T. E. L. C. is now related to the Church of Sweden and Leipzig Evangelical Lutheran mission boards. The Bishop of Tranquebar is ex officio head of the T. E. L. C.

*River Forest.*—Americans have everything they want and need today except the time and inclination to think, Dr. Adalbert R. Kretzmann told a meeting of Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod educators, parents, and pastors here.

Dr. Kretzmann, pastor of St. Luke Lutheran Church, Chicago, gave the keynote address, "Present Tensions in Our Culture," at the 13th annual convention of the Lutheran Education Association.

The National Lutheran Parent-Teacher League, comprising 357 local congregational organizations, held its third annual convention in conjunction with the association's meeting.

Dr. Kretzmann warned that Americans are creating an anti-intellectual age by immunizing themselves against ideas at a time when ideas alone will determine the future.

"We have more food than we can eat, more money than we can use, bigger homes, television, cars, theaters, schools, and colleges than any nation in the world," he said. "We have everything except the most important, namely, time to think and the habit of thought.

"We have come to an age which can ridicule the professor, with impunity lampoon the artist, and gleefully despise the poet. But at what a price!"

The clergyman pointed to "the mounting toll of the useless, the idle, the evil, and the delinquent that has been made by that anti-intellectualism."

"We have spent more millions than any country ever has on education," he said, "and yet no persons are more subject to ridicule and suspicion than truly educated men and women.

"Literacy has virtually gone underground and brains as in 'brain-trust' has become a term of amusement."

Dr. Kretzmann said that "civilization is put together not by machines but by thought."

#### ITEMS FROM NATIONAL LUTHERAN COUNCIL NEWS BUREAU

*Minneapolis, Minn.*—The Evangelical Lutheran Church has taken steps to encourage the assimilation of members of three tribes of American Indians in North Central Wisconsin into membership in local Lutheran congregations.

Recognizing that its "congregations should minister to all people of the community, without regard to race or color, economic circumstance or any other outward condition," the E. L. C.'s Home Missions Department announced the closing of its Bethany Indian Mission at Wittenberg, Wis., operated by the church for the past 70 years.

Dr. Philip S. Dybvig, home missions executive, explained that in the past the Wittenberg Mission provided special educational facilities and religious instruction to people of the Oneida, Chippewa, and Winnebago tribes.

*Budapest.*—Eighteen months of study on the theme "The Work of the Holy Spirit in the Church" have been completed by a group of thirty pastors of the Lutheran Church of Hungary.

The study, recommended to its member churches by the Lutheran World Federation, was based on a preparatory draft written by Dr. Julius Bodensieck, professor of theology at Wartburg Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa.

The Hungarian study of the subject, including eight subsidiary topics, was undertaken from the beginning of 1954 until May of this year by pastors of Budapest and vicinity under the leadership of Dr. Gyula Nagy, professor of systematic theology in the Lutheran Theological Academy of Budapest.

According to the Hungarian Church Press, ten study conferences were held, at each of which an appointed lecturer presented a paper for later discussion.

It said that members of the group studied the message of the Bible, the teachings of the church confessions and statements of modern theology, and that also raised and discussed was the question of the relevance of theological insights to the teaching, preaching, and entire service of the church today.

In a summary of the findings, Dr. Nagy declared that "a theology which takes the word of God seriously must necessarily realize the



**decisive relationship that exists between the church and the work of the Holy Spirit.**

**"The Holy Spirit creates, preserves and renews continually the church," he said, "by making efficacious and vital the Word of God, the Gospel; by creating and renewing in man the paradox trust of faith in the holy and merciful God; by sending us, in this faith, into the newness of life, new responsibility and into the struggle against sin in all aspects of human life; by creating fellowship with one another in the congregation and in the church; and by heading the work begun, in hope, toward fullness."**

**In addition to this study group, pastors' groups in eighteen Lutheran presbyteries also dealt with the L. W. F. theme by devoting special lectures to it during this year.**