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THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER

SEVERANCE OF FRATERNAL RELATIONSHIP

Under this heading, the Rev. Dr. Clarence E. Hoopmann, president of our sister church in Australia, writes in the *Australian Lutheran* (July 13, 1955) on the severance of fraternal relations with our church by the Norwegian Synod, *inter alia*, as follows: "We fear a false or too speedy application has been made of Rom. 16:17. When applying this text, the context dare not be ignored. Verse 18 reads: 'For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good works and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.' In any large church body there will always be the danger of the intrusion of false ideas and practices, but a church does not forfeit its orthodox character by the intrusion of errors, provided they are combated and eventually removed by means of evangelical discipline. This requires time and patience. If we wish to avoid divisions, we must heed the words of the great Apostle Paul: 'I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.' May the developments in America be a warning to us not to depart from the Word of God nor to go beyond the Scriptures. Satan, who loves strife and dissension, will endeavor to induce us to do both. He has various ways and means of gaining his ends, but God can protect us against his wiles. May He preserve us in the true understanding of His Word and keep us steadfast in His Word and truth. He is the God of peace and love and unity."

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

BRIEF ITEMS FROM "RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE"

Washington, D.C.—The United States Supreme Court held that Congress is within its constitutional powers in requiring a conscientious objector to believe in a Supreme Being in order to qualify for exemption from combat duty.

The court refused to consider an appeal by Vern George Davidson of Berkeley, Calif., former national secretary of the Young People's Socialist League and a self-described agnostic, against the refusal of a draft board to classify him as a C. O. He argued that Congress violated the First Amendment by prescribing the kind of religious belief that will be recognized in establishing the validity of claims to conscientious

tious objection. Mr. Davidson said he was opposed to war by virtue of religious training and belief but did not believe in a Supreme Being as defined in the Selective Service Act.

The pertinent section of the Act follows:

"... religious training and belief in this connection means an individual's belief in a relationship to a Supreme Being involving duties superior to those arising from any human relationship, but does not include essentially political, sociological, or philosophical views or a purely personal moral code."

The Supreme Court also declined to hear an appeal by Russel Louis La Rose, a Lutheran student at Deep Springs (Calif.) College, against a lower court ruling that he is now under military jurisdiction. Mr. La Rose contended that he was not allowed by a local draft board to appeal his I-A-O classification. He said the Army courtmartialed him when he refused to take his non-combatant training. He appealed to the Supreme Court for release from the Presidio, an Army prison at San Francisco.

Mr. La Rose conceded in his appeal that the Lutheran Church does not teach a pacifist doctrine but said that "any Christian who takes the Fifth Commandment literally will refuse to kill."

Nashville, Tenn.—Chancellor William J. Wade ruled here that Bible reading and prayer in public schools do not violate the constitutional rights of children or their parents. He dismissed a suit filed in Chancery Court by Philip Carden, night editor for the Associated Press in Nashville, and father of four city school children.

Berlin.—Increased "antireligious pressure" in East Germany was denounced by the synod of the Evangelical Church of Berlin-Brandenburg in a resolution adopted at its annual meeting here. The action followed a report to the synod by a special committee on church-state relations that detailed various ways in which religious life is being hampered in the Soviet Zone. Dr. Otto Dibelius of Berlin, head of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKID), also censured the East German regime's actions in strong terms, describing its antichurch measures in detail.

His comment drew immediate rebuke from the Soviet Zone press. *Neues Deutschland*, official organ of the Socialist Unity (Communist) Party, charged that it was "a contribution to the cold war." Principal target of the synod's and Bishop Dibelius' criticism was the extensive promotion in the Soviet Zone of "youth dedication" ceremonies, which they described as "a kind of atheistic counterpart of Christian confirmation and first Communion rites."

"It was clear from the very beginning that these dedications were aimed at the Christian faith and that the state stood behind them," the bishop said. "Throughout the Soviet Zone the Communists are employing coercive measures to boost participation in the ceremonies.

"School officials make overtures to every pupil in an effort to get them to enroll in the dedications. Fathers are pressured by Communist leaders of their trade unions, mothers by the Communist women's leagues, and the children themselves by the (Communist) Free German Youth organization."

Bishop Dibelius said he will issue letters to parishes and parents in East Germany stressing that there can be no compromise between Christian faith and these youth dedications. The synod resolution urged all parishioners to remain loyal to their faith and to help those who are suffering conflicts of conscience under the pressures put upon them.

Washington, D. C.—Private and church-related schools in America exist by right and not by sufferance, the Roman Catholic bishops of the United States declared in a statement issued at the close of their annual meeting here.

"The private and church-related schools are part of the American system," the statement said: "Manifestly, they exist; they exist by right; and they are unquestionably carrying a large share of the educational burden. Their teachers, religious and lay, have dedicated themselves to a high purpose, have labored hard to acquit themselves worthily, and the entire nation is their debtor. These schools have every claim in fact and in justice to be recognized as powerful contributing factors in the building of a better and freer country."

The bishops' declaration was, in effect, a plea for the preservation of "educational freedom." Such freedom, they pointed out, has been an underlying principle of the nation since its founding. The American school system, the hierarchy emphasized, "is not a closed, unitary creation of the State, a servile instrument of government monopoly."

It embraces, they said, "together with the state-supported schools, a whole enormous cluster of private and church-related schools, including many of the most honored names in the entire educational world, and devoted to the education of many millions of the nation's youth." Private and church-related schools, the bishops asserted, are such an integral part of the nation's educational program that their students "have the right to benefit from those measures, grants or aids, which are manifestly designed for the health, safety, and welfare of American youth, irrespective of the school attended."

The hierarchy declared that these schools "protest the kind of thinking which would reduce them to a secondary level, and against unfair and discriminatory treatment which would, in effect, write them off as less wholly dedicated to the public welfare than the state-supported schools." The statement said it was "dangerous thinking" to suppose that "the existence of the private school is an infringement upon the domain of the school supported by public funds."

"The private school is a concrete demonstration of the fact that education is not a monopoly of public authority," the bishops stated. "It should be added, moreover, that the private school provides a saving and challenging variety in the total system, beneficial to the whole and manifestly fruitful in its effects. Those who would seek to abolish the private school would not only sin against justice, they would destroy something very precious in American life."

"Neither is the church-related school a limitation on the right of the state to insure an educated citizenry. It exists not only to fulfill the function of education in our democratic society, but specifically to educate the Christian for his dual citizenship in time and eternity. It exists to teach not only the content of the accepted curriculum, but that which the tax-supported school under present conditions may not teach, namely, positive religion."

In stressing freedom of education, the bishops said the right of the parents to attend to the child's education is "antecedent to any human law or institution."

"It is vested in his very nature and is demanded as a fulfillment of his actual parenthood," the statement said. "In this it reflects the inviolability of the human person and his freedom under God. . . . It is a manifestation of the law of nature in concrete action. So it is that private and religious education in America rests upon the law of nature as well as upon the law of the land." For Roman Catholic parents, the bishops added, there is an "additional imperative." These parents know, they said, "that the circumstances of modern life demand the positive training of their children in the fundamentals of religion, a training that cannot be imparted elsewhere than in schools dedicated to the purpose."

The bishops devoted a section of their statement to the history of American education and the place of the state in the educational field. They said it "was not without significance that the private and church-related schools were the first in the field of American education." They referred to the historic U. S. Supreme Court decision in the Oregon School Case, which upheld the existence of private and church-related

schools by right and added that "thus far, happily, the right of the parent to educate the child has not been successfully challenged in any American court."

"While the state may usefully engage in the business of education, as demonstrated in our national experience," the hierarchy said, "it has no authority either to monopolize the field or to arrogate to itself exclusive privileges and powers. The state, by definition, is not itself primarily an educative agency."

The prelates said in conclusion:

"This statement is submitted in quiet confidence that the national sense of justice will stand firm, and that a cordial appreciation of private and church-related schools, both for what they are and for what they have done for America, will see to it that they are preserved and upheld so long as this is a nation of free men."

The statement was signed on behalf of the hierarchy by the Administrative Board of the National Catholic Welfare Conference.

Vatican City.—The Vatican press office confirmed a report that Pope Pius XII saw a vision of Christ during his near fatal illness last December. The report was first published on November 24 in the Italian weekly *Oggi* (Today). It said that when the Pope was going through the crisis of his illness, he recited the prayer "Anima Christi" (Soul of Christ). When he came to the words "In hora mortis meae, voca me (In the hour of my death, call me)," the *Oggi* article said, the Pontiff saw at his bedside Christ, who had come not to take him away, but rather to comfort him.

The article said Pope Pius is positive he saw Jesus and that he was not dreaming, but was fully awake and lucid at the time. It said that after the vision the Pope recovered with "miraculous" speed.

In an official Vatican statement, Luciano Casimirri, head of the press office, said:

"This press office has been authorized to confirm the announcement carried by the illustrated weekly magazine *Oggi* in its issue of November 24 on a vision which the Holy Father had during his illness of December, 1954."

In its account of the papal vision the *Oggi* article said:

"We are in a position to reveal to the world a miraculous fact about the illness which the Holy Father overcame last December. This fact so far has remained unknown.

"When his suffering grew most atrocious, the Pope repeated to himself the prayer 'Anima Christi.' On the night that the crisis reached its

peak, the Pontiff, at a time when he alone was in his room, recited that prayer again.

"When he reached the invocation, 'In hōra mortis meae, voca me,' (In the hour of my death, call me), he saw the sweet figure of Christ at his bedside.

"At that moment, the Holy Father thought that the Lord had come to call him unto Himself and serenely answered the call by continuing the prayer: 'Iube me venire ad te.'

"But Jesus had not come to take him away, but rather to comfort him, and, he thinks, to give him the certainty that his hour had not come.

"The Holy Father is absolutely positive that he saw Jesus. It was not a dream. He was fully awake and lucid at the time.

"The following day, when no hope seemed to be left, when the newspapers of the entire world had come out with predictions of an early catastrophe, the Pontiff started improving so quickly that to many his improvement appeared miraculous.

"The Pope told this episode only to very few persons and asked them not to divulge it."

This was the second vision of the 79-year-old Pontiff. The first was five years ago during the 1950 Holy Year, when the Pope saw the sun rotate on three days of October and November. This vision was described by Federico Cardinal Tedeschini, archpriest of St. Peter's Basilica, to pilgrims gathered at the shrine of Our Lady of Fatima, Portugal, for the closing of the extended Holy Year of 1951. Cardinal Tedeschini said at the time that the 1950 vision, which came to the Pope while he was walking in the Vatican gardens, was identical with that which accompanied the appearance of the Virgin Mary to three shepherd children at Fatima in 1917.

According to Cardinal Tedeschini, Pope Pius witnessed the miracle at four o'clock on the afternoons of October 30, 31, and November 1, in 1950. November 1 was the day on which the Pontiff proclaimed the dogma of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin into heaven.

BRIEF ITEMS FROM THE NEWS BUREAU OF THE NATIONAL LUTHERAN COUNCIL

Marangu, Tanganyika, East Africa.—More than 5,000 people attended the opening-day festival of the all-Africa Lutheran conference here on November 13. The conference, which lasted through November 22, is the first Africa-wide gathering of any kind in history. Officially representing the nearly one million Lutherans of the continent

and the Danish, Finnish, Icelandic, German, Norwegian, Swedish, and American missionaries serving the Africans were 150 delegates from nine African countries as well as Europe and America.

On the opening day prominent leaders of world Lutheranism as well as indigenous African leaders of the young churches were heard at three great rallies. Bishop Hanns Lilje of Hannover, Germany, president of the Lutheran World Federation, preached at the Sunday morning worship, led by the Rev. Stefano Moshi of the Tanganyika Lutheran Church. The Rev. Matthias E. Makgato of the South African Lutheran Church conducted the dismissal. The liturgy at this first all-Africa worship service was conducted in the native Chagga tongue of Mr. Moshi and the participating Marangu church and school choirs.

Throughout the conference, four languages were used officially, namely, English, Swahili, French, and German, into all of which every speech was translated simultaneously. Equipment for this purpose was loaned by the International Business Machines, Inc. The staff of interpreters was headed by the Rev. P. D. Fueter, a Swiss from the Moravian Mission in Tanganyika. The actual mother tongues of the delegates at this conference include Bacama, Afrikaans, Nama, Schambala, Sepedi, Chagga, Oshiuambo, Zulu, Swazi, Gala, Sesuto, Sesotho, Cishona, Tika, Gbade, Malagasy, Baya, Loma, Pare, Amharic, Wallamo, Kibena, as well as English, German, Danish, Norwegian, Finnish, Swedish, French, and others.

Springfield, Ohio.—A \$500,000 gift on November 12 has raised to \$2,000,000 the total donations made to Wittenberg College here by members of a Canton, Ohio, family within three weeks. The latest donor is Mrs. Sara D. Krieg, whose son-in-law and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Harold O. Thomas, on October 23 gave Wittenberg \$1,500,000, the largest single gift in its 111-year history and the largest gift ever received by a Lutheran college in the United States.

Helsinki, Finland.—Press and public in Lutheran Finland were stirred by the unsuccessful attempt of a woman teacher to force her application for ordination to the ministry of the Church of Finland.

According to "Kirkon Tiedotuspalvelu," the church's news bulletin, the daily newspapers of Finland gave "sensational attention" to the request for ordination by Miss Liisa Paivikki Riipa, a theological graduate of the University of Helsinki, who teaches gymnastics and art as well as religion at Paltamo High School in Eastern Finland. Miss Riipa asked the Church's Chapter of Kuopio to authorize her ordination to the ministry, but was told that "there is no ministry by women in the Church of Finland."

Helsinki, Finland.—Bibles translated into the South African Ambo language by Finnish Lutheran missionaries will be published by the British and Foreign Bible Society, it was announced here. The event will be celebrated by thanksgiving services throughout the Ambo district, an important mission field of Lutheran missionaries from Finland.

Dr. Martti Rauhanen, a veteran missionary who made the first translation of the New Testament into the Ambo language back in 1903, had done most of the work on the complete translation of the Bible now scheduled for publication.

Milwaukee, Wis.—The third pastor of the Northwest Synod of the United Lutheran Church in America to stand trial on charges of doctrinal deviation has been found guilty of heresy on five of six counts. He is the Rev. Victor K. Wrigley, 33, pastor of Gethsemane Lutheran Church in suburban Brookfield in Waukesha County. His case was heard on November 10 by a synod trial board, which recommended that he be suspended from his pulpit.

Mr. Wrigley, on the advice of his church council, did not attend the trial. He has indicated that even if he was read out of the synod, he could not be forced out as pastor of Gethsemane. He could not be reached for comment after the finding in his case was announced.

The Rev. George P. Crist, 31, pastor of Bethlehem Lutheran Church at Durham, who was found guilty of heresy last July, has since turned in his ordination papers to the synod and is studying at the University of Iowa. The Rev. John Gerberding, 33, who was acquitted on similar charges last August, has announced that he intends to resign his pastorate at Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Menomonee Falls even though his congregation has rejected his resignation. Pastors in the area demanded that he be retried after Mr. Gerberding had said he had not changed his opinions.