

10-1-1956

## Theological Observer

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### Recommended Citation

Mueller, John Theodore (1956) "Theological Observer," *Concordia Theological Monthly*. Vol. 27, Article 60.  
Available at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm/vol27/iss1/60>

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# THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER

## THE ROLE OF SCRIPTURE IN CATHOLIC THEOLOGY

*New Testament Abstracts* is a new Catholic publication which "is intended to be a current yet permanent record of periodical literature about the New Testament." The abstracts represent Roman Catholic and Protestant, American and European, writers on New Testament subjects. In the "Experimental Issue" of May 1956 there appears, among many other interesting abstracts, one of an article by A. Jones, *Reflections on a Recent Dispute* (Scripture 1956), in which the author writes, in part: "The recent quarrel concerning the perpetual virginity of Mary is a symptom of a deeper antagonism. V. Taylor suggests that the simplest and most natural explanation of the references to the brothers of Jesus in the Gospels is that Mary had other children. It is vital to the Catholic position that Scripture should not contradict dogma and that the private exegete, left to his own interpretative resources, cannot deduce from Scripture alone the positive demonstration of all dogma. The Catholic theologian recognizes that the perpetual virginity of Mary is based on Tradition rather than Scripture. The Catholic differs from the Protestant on the very approach to the Word of God; this profound difference lies beneath the surface quarrel about our Lady's perpetual virginity. . . . The Church received with equal veneration the sacred books and the apostolic traditions as two forms in which the Word of God makes itself heard. They are not two sources of revelation, but interpenetrate and explain one another. The Sacred Scripture, inspired as it is, is a fixed form with shortcomings; it demands further articulations and actualizations appropriate to this or that human time. Although revelation was given in its entirety in the apostolic age, it was given to be made more explicit and to achieve formulation and synthesis in the Church and by the Church. The Church's consciousness of the Word within her becomes progressively sharper; it increasingly penetrates the committed Word. This consciousness is not merely the sum of Biblical scholarship for twenty centuries, but it transcends it—*spiritus suggeret omnia* (Jn 14:26). . . . The term Inspiration has become almost a monopoly of the sacred books. Besides it and superior to it is Apostolic Inspiration or Tradition. . . . So the Mary-doctrine, the glory of our age, is the extension of the *mysterium Christi*. The Catholic theologian welcomes this Mary-ward movement because it illustrates that Scripture is formally insufficient. The responsibility of supplying for this insufficiency is assumed by the Church. The Church in our age boldly displays the privileges of Mary."

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER



## LUTHERAN MINORITY CHURCHES IN EUROPE

Under this heading, the *Ev.-Luth. Kirchenzeitung* (June 1, 1956) publishes the report of the Lutheran World Federation on "Lutheran Minority Churches in Europe." Of the Lutheran Free Churches connected with the Synodical Conference, only the "Ev.-Luth. Church of England," with 550 baptized members, is mentioned. Added to the given statistics these would be increased by more than 100,000 adherents. The 2,225,837 members of the European Minority Churches, of whom a few are really "evangelical," or *uniert*, form but one per cent of the more than 227 million population in Europe. France, with 40.5 million inhabitants, has 283,000 Lutherans; Great Britain, with 44 million, 30,550; Holland, with over 9.5 million, 60,000; Italy, with 47 million, 4,251; Luxemburg, with 290,000, 4,400; Switzerland with 4.5 million, 2,500; Yugoslavia, with 15.5 million, 99,547; Austria, with 7 million, 390,043; Poland, with 25 million, 220,000; Romania, with 15.5 million, 215,000; Czechoslovakia, with 12 million, 483,585; Hungary, with 9 million, 432,961. This report, of course, does not include the Lutheran State Churches in Germany and Scandinavia, the latter including Finland, whose total membership is estimated about 60 million. While among these millions there prevails a good deal of indifference to the Lutheran faith, nevertheless, they witness to the influence of Luther's Reformation in Europe.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

## THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS AND NEW TESTAMENT COMPARISONS

The *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* (July 1956) publishes under this title a large number of Qumran-NT parallels. These studies, the writer says, are less sensational than are the airy parallels between the "teacher of righteousness" and Jesus, yet they deserve recognition, since "they are, in varying degrees, making solid contributions to our understanding of the religious background of the NT, which no Scripture teacher can afford to neglect." The list, he admits, is incomplete since the Qumran material has by no means been published in full. He believes that "many of the similarities between the NT and Qumran are due to a common source: the OT and the Apocryphal literature." He adds, too, that "several references . . . involve significant contrasts as well as similarities." Among the similarities which he quotes are the following: "Holy Spirit," "confession and baptism," "raca," "eternal fire," "filled with Holy Spirit," "fruit of the womb," "men of good will," "time of visitation," "power of darkness," "children of the light," "sanctify by truth," "stiff-necked, uncircumcised," "day of wrath," "chosen



by grace," "Satan as angel of light," "works of flesh and fruit of spirit," "mystery of iniquity," "new covenant," "testing the spirits," and so forth. In former articles on the Qumran scrolls it was stated positively that the sect's "teacher of righteousness" cannot be identified with Christ, the divine Teacher of righteousness. Nor do the studies suggest that the NT writers have borrowed from the Qumran writings, either in word or content. The similarities, nevertheless, are interesting and are being widely studied. Under "Biblical and Archeological News" the periodical reports that the Aramaic "Fourth Scroll" of Qumran Cave I, which has been called "Apocryphal Lamech," has now turned out to be a Midrash, or commentary, on Genesis.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

#### BRIEF ITEMS FROM "RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE"

*St. Paul, Minn.*—Eleven teams of young people between the ages of 16 and 21 visited 161 congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod this summer in an effort to strengthen youth work of the congregations. Visits of the teams were announced at the Synod's national convention here. The caravaners, members of the Synod's Walther League, received no salary. Cost of travel and lodging was provided by the host congregation.

*St. Paul, Minn.*—The president of the 5,000-member National Evangelical Lutheran Church, a group of Finnish background, told the convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod here: "I feel that the time is not too far off when we shall be an organic part of the Missouri Synod."

Dr. John E. Nopola, Esko, Minn., president of the Finnish group, appeared at the convention to extend appreciation of his 58-year-old church body to the Missouri Synod "for strengthening our confessional stand in the only manner in which it can be done—training a clergy which is true and faithful to Scripture and the Confessions of the Lutheran Church." Twenty-eight of the NELC's 33 pastors have received their training at Concordia Theological Seminary, Springfield, Ill., a Missouri Synod institution.

*St. Paul, Minn.*—Hope that a new Lutheran denomination to be formed by union of three bodies will hold doctrinal discussions with The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod was voiced by Dr. Fredrik A. Schiotz, president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, when he greeted delegates to the Synod's national convention here. Involved in the proposed union are the ELC, the American Lutheran Church, and the United Evangelical Lutheran Church.



*Kansas City, Mo.*—Clergymen were warned here against attempting to cure mental illness. The warning was sounded by Dr. R. Lofton Hudson, Kansas City pastor, author and columnist in an address to the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference. He said clergymen could help victims of mental distress most by steering them in the direction of aid from other sources.

Dr. Hudson said the question of how clergymen should deal with mental illness was significant because "40 per cent of the mentally ill turn to a minister first for help."

"Ministers are not doctors, especially they are not psychiatrists," he said. "And for the pastor to try to take over the work of a psychiatrist is sometimes futile and may be dangerous."

"The pastor's greatest opportunity is in evaluating the nature of the troubles that people have and steering them in the direction of help from other sources."

*Albany, N. Y.*—The United Lutheran Synod of New York and New England assigned a white pastor to a Negro church and received a Negro congregation into membership in what was described as "an accelerated program of integration." The actions were taken at the synod's 28th annual convention here.

The Rev. Robert Tage Neilssen of Brooklyn, N. Y., was ordained and assigned to the Church of the Transfiguration in New York City's Harlem section. He is the first white clergyman called as pastor of a Negro congregation in the synod's history.

An all-Negro independent Methodist congregation at Roxbury, Mass., became a synod member. It will be known as All Saints Evangelical Lutheran Church. Its pastor, the Rev. Vernon E. Carter, has been studying at Philadelphia Theological Seminary since last July and members of the congregation have received instruction in Lutheran doctrine.

*Port Colborne, Ont.*—Prospects for union of major Lutheran bodies is brighter in Canada than in the United States, officials of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Canada told its 94th annual convention here. The Rev. Karl J. Knauff, chairman of the synod's executive committee, said "a feeling of optimism pervaded" a recent conference between delegates representing Canadian branches of the American Lutheran Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Lutheran Free Church in America, the United Evangelical Lutheran Church, and the United Lutheran Church in America.

If a union of these groups were to be effected and it was joined by the Augustana Lutherans of Western Canada, he pointed out, some 125,000 Canadian Lutherans would be united under one denominational



banner. The Rev. Norman Berner of Waterloo, Ont., said the only major Lutheran group in Canada that has not taken part in the talks is the Missouri Synod, which has some 75,000 members in this country.

*Madrid.* — Bishop Zacarias de Vizcarra, spiritual adviser to Spanish Catholic Action, charged here that Protestant activities are an increasing threat to Roman Catholic unity in Spain. He accused government authorities of being overly tolerant towards these activities. The bishop's views were expressed in an article published in *Ecclesia*, official Catholic Action weekly, under the title "Broadside Against Spain's Catholic Unity."

Bishop de Vizcarra criticized especially what he called the excessively large distribution of Bibles by Protestants in view of their comparatively small numbers. In writing of the distribution of Protestant Bibles, Bishop de Vizcarra alluded to the recent confiscation of over 36,000 Bibles and other religious volumes at the Madrid headquarters of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

#### BRIEF ITEMS FROM NEWS BUREAU NATIONAL LUTHERAN COUNCIL

*Moorhead, Minn.* — A trend toward greater liturgical uniformity was hailed here as the "most important single" development in the worship life of American Lutheranism today. At a meeting of the ministerium of the Augustana Lutheran Church, some 150 pastors were told that in this area "nothing is more significant than current efforts to create a uniform pattern of worship for all Lutherans in America."

"... it may be reasonably hoped that the current effort toward the creation of a truly common order of Lutheran worship will bring about a new spirit of unity and mutuality," asserted Dr. G. Everett Arden, professor of liturgics at Augustana Theological Seminary in Rock Island, Ill. He spoke at a session of the clergy preceding the opening of the 500,000-member denomination's 97th annual synod.

Dr. Arden said the new *Service Book and Hymnal*, which will be published next year by the eight church bodies participating in the National Lutheran Council, "will very definitely inspire the hope that eventually the Lutheran Churches in America will indeed become the Lutheran Church of America."

"In corporate worship, in education, and in many other fields, the *Service Book* will be, next to the Bible and Catechism, the Church's most important single book of devotion and instruction," Dr. Arden said.

The groups co-operating in the project, the result of more than a decade of labor by thirty-four scholars and church musicians, represent



two thirds of the more than seven million Lutherans in the United States and Canada. The other one third of Lutherans are represented by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and several small bodies affiliated with it in the Lutheran Synodical Conference.

*Moorhead, Minn.*—The Augustana Lutheran Church did some plain speaking here on the dangers of mixed marriages between Protestants and Roman Catholics. Such marriages, the church declared in a strongly-worded resolution adopted by delegates to its 97th annual synod, "often result in marital unhappiness and disruption of normal home life for the children affected." These mixed unions, it further warned, create situations "having far-reaching psychological, social, economic, and spiritual consequences."

Another section of the resolution deplored all interfaith marriages on the grounds that they "very often involve the danger of the denial of faith."

Discussion from the floor indicated that delegates felt this possibility could arise in marriages between Protestants of different denominational backgrounds. Included in the resolution were a series of positive recommendations that called upon parents and pastors to impress upon young people "the potential hazards of these interfaith marriages." This should be done, it was said, by parents in their homes and by pastors through confirmation classes and youth groups and with the aid of Sunday school teachers.

Pastors were also urged to "use their utmost endeavors by private pastoral counseling to aid their young people in this matter." It was pointed out that "excellent explanatory materials" are available as the basis of such counseling. The Augustana Book Concern, publishing house of the church, was asked to assemble a kit of tracts or pamphlets on mixed marriages for mailing to each of the more than 1,200 pastors of the church.

*Geneva, Switzerland.*—Lutheran Christians throughout the world number a minimum total of 69,397,211, according to statistics compiled by the Lutheran World Federation at its headquarters here.

The figure covers about 150 church and mission groups in more than 60 countries, it was reported by Dr. Carl E. Lund-Quist, executive secretary of the federation, who said the estimates were based on the most recent data available in January of this year.

The LWF estimates that Lutherans constitute three per cent of the world's population, 2,400,000,000; 32 per cent of world Protestantism's 218,000,000; 20 per cent of non-Roman Christianity's 346,000,000; and nine per cent of Christendom's 771,000,000.



Of the total Lutherans, 47,880,759 are members of the 57 church bodies in 29 countries that are affiliated with the LWF, or 69 per cent of all Lutherans; 15,867,000 are members of Union Churches in Germany, and 5,649,452 belong to other Lutheran churches and groups.

Dr. Lund-Quist said that the statistics do not take into account those countries where there is admittedly a Lutheran population but no organized church or mission. No attempt was made, he added, to include many small Lutheran congregations, such as in Belgium or German and Scandinavian emigrant congregations, as no reliable figures are available on these.

More than half the total number of Lutherans are concentrated in Germany. Twelve member church bodies of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany (VELKD) have a combined membership of 20,749,354, eight German Union Churches have 15,867,000 Lutherans, and six other groups have 694,000 making a total of 37,310,354.

The United States and Canada are credited with 7,243,184 Lutherans, Sweden with 6,580,000, Finland with 4,225,749, Denmark with 4,156,500 and Norway with 3,155,323, while Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania account for 1,165,000 in the USSR.

*Amsterdam, Holland.*—Pulpit and altar fellowship has been established between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Netherlands and the Netherlands Reformed Church (Hervormde Kerk). When the synods of the respective churches met this spring, both considered and approved a document entitled "Consensus on the Holy Communion," consisting of a series of statements on the Sacrament which had been agreed upon by a joint committee of the two groups.

The committee based its discussion on the conviction that "discussions between the Lutheran and Reformed Churches can have any meaning only if the churches are prepared to go beyond the particularities of their respective confessions to a new dogmatic consideration of salvation in a new confrontation with the Holy Scriptures, which the Lord of the Church also gives in the Sacrament of Holy Communion."

The Lutheran Church of the Netherlands has 60,000 members and is headed by Dr. Johannes P. van Heest as president. It is a member of the Lutheran World Federation and, like the Netherlands Reformed Church, of the World Council of Churches.