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Theological Observer

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THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER

APATHY ON LODGE NIGHT

Under this heading, *Time* (August 26, 1957) reports a large growth of the major fraternal orders in our country. There are now 248 major fraternal orders with 125,861 local chapters. Since 1947 the Masonic order climbed 10% to 4,000,000 and the Order of Elks, second largest, 25% to 1,200,000. From Maine to California more than 20 million males are connected with one or more lodges. The total assets of all the orders are estimated at \$10 billion, more than the combined assets of General Motors and General Electric. However, the fraternal orders are facing a discouraging fact: "The old prestige and royal good fellowship just aren't there any more." Fewer than 15% of the nation's joiners bother to show up for lodge meetings except on rare special occasions. However, while the night-meeting fraternal orders languish, the civic-minded lunching clubs, e. g., Kiwanis (membership: 250,000), Rotary (450,000), and Lions (564,000) are booming. This fact has been explained by a Kiwanian as follows: "It's the new release valve. At a Kiwanis lunch a man can find relief from business thinking for an hour or two during the hectic day." The failure to attend the lodge-night meetings is explained by a businessman belonging to the Masons, Maccabees, and the Woodmen of the World. He says: "I know I should attend. But all of a sudden, on a lodge night, I realize I haven't been home with the family for three nights running. Then there'll be a . . . good prize fight on TV. You know what loses out." *Time* comments: "From the Elks to the Moose, fraternal leaders blame home TV, the automobile, the country club for the new apathy among the brethren." "The lodge has lost its old appeal of exclusiveness and its local VIP leaders, e. g., the town bankers." "Even members' funerals, once a must for most orders, get scant attendance." Commented a lodge member: "The brothers just don't have the whole spirit."

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

GHANA: ACHIEVEMENT AND PROMISE

Theology Today (July 1957), under this heading, contains an interesting article on the new West African nation of Ghana, a former British colony on the Gold Coast, which on March 6, 1957, achieved its national independence and is now a part of the British Commonwealth. In 1871 it came under British control by treaty. Its leader is Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, who studied in Lincoln University (Pa.) and the University of Pennsylvania. Ghana supplies one third of the world's cocoa and has resources of timber, gold, and diamonds. From 75 to 85 per cent of its people are illiterate. Tribal customs of a semi-

primitive people still resist cultural changes. Ghana guarantees religious freedom under its Constitution, and Dr. Nkrumah welcomes Christian missionaries. Most of Ghana's cabinet members attended mission schools, and 80 per cent of the children in these schools today are registered as Christians. The Rev. C. G. Baete, chairman of the Christian Council of Ghana, while paying tribute to the missionaries, stressed the need of improvement in Christian education. He said: "The ordinary religious instruction given is very primitive. We teach basic Bible stories, but little instruction is given on how to carry Christianity into practical life." A real problem for Christians in Ghana is syncretism. There is some hostility to Christianity and a tendency to merge pagan customs with Christianity to form a nationalistic religion. The Rev. Kwei Dagadu, secretary of the Christian Council, maintains that what his people need are the basic truths of Christianity. On July 4, 1957, the Rev. Samuel K. Asante, who had studied in Hood Theological Seminary in Salisbury, N. C., and had then returned to Accra, the capital of Ghana, addressed to the Synodical Conference an appeal to support Lutheran mission work in his country. Through seeing the film *Martin Luther* he became favorably inclined toward Lutheranism and started a Lutheran mission in Accra.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

BRIEF ITEMS FROM RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE

Minneapolis, Minn.—Two prominent Lutherans from Sweden and Japan took a look at the current upswing in popular religion and found cause for concern. Both spoke at meetings in connection with the third assembly of the Lutheran World Federation here.

Said Bishop Bo Harald Giertz of Gothenburg, Sweden, who is chaplain to the King of Sweden:

"Where church attendance is very good, as it is in America, there always is the danger that the pastor tries to give his audience the message they are likely to understand" instead of the one they need.

Dr. Chitose Kishi, president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Japan, said of modern religiosity:

"In much of it man is still the center, and God is merely a profit-producing agency used to fulfill man's insatiable desire."

Bishop Giertz addressed the assembly banquet attended by 1,700.

He warned Americans that the unprecedented wave of religious interest in this country may prove more of a danger than a blessing.

"Perhaps I am mistaken," the bishop said, "but I got the impression that the American churches today are in danger of making good behavior and Christian morals the essence of Christianity."

But there should be much more to it than that, he added. Churches also should stress and preach, he said, "the Gospel of the atonement, the justification by faith, and salvation through belief in Jesus Christ."

Minneapolis, Minn.—A blueprint of close international teamwork in areas "still unreached by the Gospel" was approved by the third assembly of the Lutheran World Federation here.

The delegates voted to proceed with a five-year global program to proclaim "the message that sets men free and establishes them in the fellowship of God."

Recommendations of the LWF's commission on world mission, presented to the assembly by Bishop Rajah B. Manikam of India, listed these objectives:

1. To encourage greater unity among churches around the world.
2. To aid the establishment of indigenous churches.
3. To continue to support churches in need, especially those in Africa and Asia.
4. To sponsor and prepare conferences on a continental basis.
5. To continue to assist in the education of workers for the churches of Africa and Asia.
6. To stimulate and assist churches in the use of new evangelistic possibilities "provided by our technological age."
7. To foster studies on the mission of the church.

One of the most significant provisions of the document concerns a change in the make-up of the six-member commission to give equal status to churches in Asia and Africa. In the future the commission will consist "preferably" of three members from the churches of Africa and Asia and three from the churches of America and Europe.

In the past only one or two nationals have served on the commission. The change recognizes the increasingly important part being played in world church affairs by Lutheran churchmen from these continents.

The commission reported that it plans to convene annual meetings in Africa or Asia "at least once every five years."

Vatican City.—Microfilming of over 600,000 ancient manuscripts in the Vatican Library has been completed.

The project, which took about four years, was financed by the Knights of Columbus Foundation for the Preservation of Historical Documents of the Vatican Library. The microfilming was done with special equipment brought from the United States. It involved making about 7,000,000 photographs and some 3,000,000 feet of microfilm.

The microfilmed reproductions of the Vatican collection will be housed in the \$4,000,000 Pope Pius XII Memorial Library at the Jesuit-conducted St. Louis University in Missouri. Ground-breaking ceremonies for the Library were held last January, and the building is expected to be completed in about a year.

St. Louis will be the only place outside Rome in which the copies of the Vatican manuscripts will be available. The manuscripts cover such subjects as philosophy, theology, Latin and Greek classics, and historical research in Asiatic countries. The languages of the manuscripts include Latin, Greek, Syriac, Coptic, Hebrew, Arabic, Persian, Armenian, Slavic, and Gaelic.

Scholars consider the Vatican Library to be one of the richest storehouses of knowledge and culture in the world.

Permission to microfilm the Vatican manuscripts was given by Pope Pius XII in the belief that much of the intellectual, cultural, and scientific leadership of the West is now passing into the hands of the United States.

The Pius XII library at St. Louis University will be 243 feet long and 143 feet wide. It will be of brick and glass construction in a panel treatment, supported by slender columns which suggest the Gothic vertical of adjoining buildings. In addition to the microfilms the library will house more than 600,000 volumes.

The modular construction of the building will permit the use of open rather than closed stacks of books. This is in keeping with modern library planning, which attempts to bring the students to the books.

Minneapolis, Minn.—An urgent plea for a worldwide Lutheran missionary broadcasting program to "assist every mission and every young church in Africa and Asia with an extensive radio service" was voiced here at the third assembly of the Lutheran World Federation.

Dr. Fridtjov Birkeli of Norway, director of the LWF department of world mission, said: "We simply cannot afford to go on using old methods; the Lutheran Church must conquer the air!"

He pointed out that in Japan broadcasts of the Lutheran Hour, sponsored by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, have led to the formation of local congregations.

"This could be repeated a thousandfold in many, many other countries if we really united our efforts, yes, sacrificed, in order to cover the whole of Asia and Africa with radio programs," he said.

"Many countries, especially in Asia, are ready for such mission means.

Even Africa has countries today that clamor for radio. Music is poured out into villages, cities, and valleys. And so is political propaganda. But where is the voice of the church?"

In a later address at an assembly public meeting Dr. Birkeli called for sacrificial giving by Lutherans to "double and triple" contributions to the church's relief and evangelism work around the globe.

"We must face squarely the bitter fact," he said, "that there is an ocean of suffering and evil, of sin and sorrow, which one can't just wish out of existence. We must realize that there are millions, ever-growing millions, who have still not heard the Gospel."

Oberlin, Ohio. — A New York theologian, in an address here, decried the "distracted life," which, he said, is forced upon ministerial students in this country.

The Rev. Daniel Day Williams of Union Theological Seminary said today's seminarian is faced with "too many courses, too many subjects, too many papers, too many selections to read from too many books, too many hours on the field and too many hours going there and returning."

"On top of all this," he said, "seminary students are earning a living and raising a family and trying to be good citizens by belonging to too many organizations."

He told the triennial conference of the Interseminary Movement: "The result is that the student never develops the habit of sustained critical reflection and finds it hard to see how all this can have an impact on the church and the world.

"The greatest cause of this distraction," Mr. Williams said, "is the illusion that we can pack into three years 'everything that a minister ought to know.'"

He said that seminaries ought to "concentrate the years of theological study on the issues and problems which matter most, so as to lay a foundation for the minister's growth during his entire life of service."

Vienna. — Father Laszlo Mindszenti, Roman Catholic priest of Per, West Hungary, was executed on charges of counterrevolutionary activities against the communist government, Hungarian newspapers reported.

He is the first clergyman to be sentenced to death in the campaign launched against opposition elements following the anticommunist uprising last fall.

The priest's execution came within a matter of days after he had been found guilty by a court in Gyor of hiding arms and serving on a revolutionary committee during the revolt. His housekeeper, Anna Sparmitz, was sent to prison for five years on charges of helping him to conceal a weapon.

Father Mindszenti is not related to Josef Cardinal Mindszenty, primate of Hungary, who was liberated by the insurgent forces and since November 4 has been in asylum at the American legation in Budapest.

According to earlier official reports, Premier Janos Kadar's regime is preparing to hold trials of other recently arrested Roman Catholic clergymen accused of counterrevolutionary activities.

They include Father Egon Turosanyi, Cardinal Mindszenty's private secretary, who was arrested last November allegedly while preparing to flee to Vienna en route to the United States.

The reports said the priests would be brought to court soon and charged with "stealing secret documents from the State Office for Church Affairs, writing and distributing anticommunist leaflets, and hiding counterrevolutionary elements."

Minneapolis, Minn.—An honorary doctor of theology degree was conferred by the University of Erlangen, Germany, upon Dr. Carl E. Lund-Quist, executive secretary of the Lutheran World Federation, at a session of the federation's third assembly here.

The degree was given in recognition of his "extraordinary service" to the Lutheran churches of the world.

Dr. Walter Kuenneth, acting dean of the university's theological faculty, addressed Dr. Lund-Quist briefly in German, expressing the university's appreciation for his work as LWF executive during the past five years. He then read from a scroll in Latin conferring the degree upon him, an old tradition of the university.

In presenting the LWF's executive committee report, Dr. Lund-Quist noted that now "there is a closer bond of fellowship and understanding among our (LWF member) churches than at any previous time in history."

He credited this to the "exchange of church leaders, scholarships, conferences, visitations by officers and staff, and better transmission of news and information."

Northfield, Minn.—Marriage failures will continue to increase unless the church adopts a constructive program for helping marriages succeed and preventing divorce, a family-life expert warned here.

Dr. Oscar Feucht, St. Louis, Mo., secretary of adult education for The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, said such a program must go farther than premarital counseling or education for those already married.

He spoke at a seminar on the family and Christian education sponsored by a commission of the Lutheran World Federation.

Dr. Feucht suggested that the church work more closely with the courts and that it set up marriage clinics which would make available professional services in difficult cases.

"Through a program of constructive therapy," he said, "most marriages can be saved. This is the new approach, and it is here the church is needed."

Dr. Feucht said some divorce laws and procedures "are far from perfect and, in many cases, a travesty of justice."

"There is much confusion with regard to true and false causes of divorce," he commented.

Young people, he said, "particularly need to realize that divorce is the unhappy opposite of a wedding and that new problems are caused for the divorcee as well as for the children."

One of the needs, he observed, is for the church to give guidance with regard to the various types of mixed marriages—"interracial, between Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Roman Catholics, and Christians and non-Christians."

Sociologists have confirmed the hazards of mixed marriages with special studies, the Lutheran educator said.

He said people in general today need a new understanding of the importance of the family.

"We have to help the present generation to look upon parenthood as the highest vocation—a career to be pursued with honor and fulfilled with success," Dr. Feucht said.

"All the shiny products of modern industry have little value compared with a man and woman who have the fear of God in their hearts and give to the world children reared in Christian faith."

Cyrus Rachie, assistant vice-president and home office attorney for Lutheran Brotherhood, Minneapolis, said "a lawyer dedicated to Christian principles can be of great and valuable service in numerous family situations and in situations and problems not accessible to the pastor."

New Ulm, Minn.—The Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States has been asked to study a new youth movement (Lutheran Pioneers) as a possible alternative to scouting.

The Rev. Oscar J. Naumann of St. Paul, Minn., president of the denomination known as the Wisconsin Synod, made the request in his report to its national convention here.

The synod has long objected to participation of its youth in the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts because it feels such activities are "unionistic" (involving the practice of religion with others not of the same faith).

Scouting is one of the issues which have produced sharp controversy between the Wisconsin Synod and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, both members of the Synodical Conference of North America. Many Missouri Synod congregations have Scout troops.

Pastor Naumann, in his report, noted that Lutheran Pioneers had their origin in St. John's Lutheran Church of Burlington, Wis., and since then the movement has spread to other Wisconsin Synod congregations.

Besides Lutheran theology, the Pioneers program stresses an appreciation of the out-of-doors, the development of leadership, citizenship, safety, and recreation, it was explained.

Referring to the Wisconsin Synod's relations with the Missouri Synod, Pastor Naumann reported that the entire question is now being studied by a special committee.

He said many individuals, pastoral conferences, and one district of the Wisconsin Synod have called for a complete severance of relations with the Missouri Synod. Others, he noted, favor keeping relations and believe that "doctrinal discussions as now carried on are the one means by which we can testify of our convictions."

Last August the Wisconsin Synod voted to remain affiliated with the Missouri Synod in a "vigorously protesting fellowship."

The report of the synod treasurer, C. J. Niedtfeld of Milwaukee, Wis., disclosed that the 300,000-member synod collected \$2,315,954 for all purposes during the last fiscal year.

Although this was an increase of \$59,116 over the previous year, the synod had a deficit of \$50,000, which, Pastor Naumann explained, was due to an expanded program.

Minneapolis.—Two new areas of international church service—the spiritual care of Lutheran migrants and a global mission to Lutheran seamen—will be undertaken by the Lutheran World Federation, according to action taken here at the fourth plenary session of the LWF's third assembly.

Plans to inaugurate the new services were presented by Dr. Paul C. Empie, chairman of the LWF's Commission on World Service, in his report to the assembly. Delegates adopted the report and referred it for implementation to the new commission that will be elected to supervise the activities of the Department of World Service in the coming five years.

The object of the new service to migrants is to keep the church in contact with the thousands of Lutherans migrating all over the world each year. In the past, little notice was taken by the churches if their

members moved to another country, and generally they were then lost to the Lutheran faith.

Countries mainly involved in such a service, it was indicated, would be the United States, Canada, Australia, countries of South America, Germany, Austria, and all of Scandinavia.

Mission work among Lutheran seamen has been carried on by individual churches in the past with no international co-ordination. Such missions for Scandinavian, American, and German Lutherans have been in existence in major parts of the world for decades, but little concern has been given to serving those outside their own national groups. Now they will attempt to be of aid to Lutherans of all nationalities.

Minneapolis.—The Lutheran World Federation has approved a study "of the Lutheran Confessions in Their Significance for the Life Today" as a major program for its Department of Theology.

The delegates meeting in the second plenary session of the third assembly of the LWF voted to merge the LWF commissions on theology and liturgy into a joint eight-member Commission on Theology, with a subcommission on liturgy.

In an effort to clarify the aims of the Department of Theology, the delegates approved a definition stating that its main aim is "to seek ways of using the results of theological research to strengthen the life and work of the churches."

"A thorough study of the Lutheran Confessions is an urgent task of the commission," the executive committee's recommendation to the assembly stated.

"The purpose of this study is to make fruitful the Lutheran Confessions for the spiritual and practical decisions which confront the church today," it added.

"The commission considers it to be extraordinarily important that an investigation be made on the significance of the teaching of the Lutheran Confessions on Justification for the proclamation of the church and the spiritual life of her members today," the commission suggested.

"Other matters could be used in a similar, actualizing way, including the doctrine on Baptism, on the Lord's Supper, on the ministry, and on church policy.

"The Commission on Theology," the statement concluded, "considers it to be a matter of urgent necessity that the nature of the Lutheran World Federation and its purposes and methods should in principle be investigated and clarified from the theological and ecclesiological angle."