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Theological Observer

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THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER

THE APOSTLE PAUL AND THE STOIC PHILOSOPHERS

This is the title of a book published by Vassilios X. Ioannides, professor of New Testament at the School of Theology, University of Athens, Greece. In the *Anglican Theological Review* (January 1960) the Rev. D. J. Constantelos, a pastor of the Greek Orthodox Church, presents the gist of the book, in particular, "the ideas of St. Paul about divine predestination and human freedom in contrast with the ideas of the Stoic philosophers about *heimarmene*—Fate and freedom." Ioannides maintains "that Paul used some of the terminology and the outer garment of the Greek philosophy in order to clothe and present Christianity in expressions and terms familiar to the intelligence of his era." Thus, like the Stoics, Paul teaches man's full dependence upon God and at the same time his moral freedom. Nevertheless, there is a chasm which separates the two. When Paul speaks of divine predestination he always speaks with reference to man's salvation, for it is the main characteristic of Paul's religion that it is a religion of salvation. The Stoics, however, refused to admit any need for salvation. Again, in Paul's teaching there is a definite separation between God and man. Though God seeks the salvation of man, God and man are never identified, while with Stoicism everything, including man, is an expression of God without any distinction between them. Paul also differs from the Stoics on the question of reason and faith. For Paul, we come to know God through faith; for the Stoics, man comes to know God through reason. This difference stems from their respective doctrines of sin. For Paul, sin was a matter of life or death, while the Stoics did not have any serious sense of sinfulness. These basic differences show that

Stoic philosophy did not affect Paul's central ideas at all. JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

THE INTERCHANGE OF THE PREPOSITIONS BETH AND MIN IN BIBLICAL HEBREW

In the *Journal of Biblical Literature* (December 1959) Nahum M. Sarna of the Jewish Theological Seminary, under the given heading, defends the thesis that in Biblical Hebrew the prepositions בֵּת and מִן may be employed interchangeably just as the Akkadian *bina* is used for "from" as well as for "in," as also in the Phoenician texts the preposition בֵּת may mean "from" as well as "in." He adduces numerous examples from Biblical Hebrew to illustrate his contention, which by the way is not new, but was pointed out already by Jewish scholars in the 12th and 13th centuries, e.g., Ibn Ezra and David Kimchi. The Biblical texts which the writer quotes all favor the translation of בֵּת with "from," but he offers no text where מִן is best rendered with "in." If בֵּת and מִן may be used interchangeably, then certainly מִן at times may denote "in," though its function originally is ablative. A brief examination of Wilhelm Gesenius' *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch für das Alte Testament* shows a number of idiomatic Hebrew expressions where מִן no longer has its original ablative meaning as: מִן־קֶדֶם: *ostwärts* (Gen. 2:8); מִן־רֶחֶק: *in der Ferne* (2 Kings 2:7); מִן־תַּחַת: *unterhalb, unten*; מִן־יָמַי קֶדֶם: *in der Urzeit* (Is. 37:26), to quote only a few. The point that interests us in this connection is that Luther translated Job 19:26: וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶחְזָה אֶחַיָּהּ בְּבָשָׂר וּבְבָשָׂר וּבְבָשָׂר וּבְבָשָׂר: *Und werde in meinem Fleische Gott sehen*. The KJV does the same: "Yet *in* my flesh shall I see God," though it gives a variant marginal reading: "yet without my flesh," which quite

evidently goes counter to the context. Luther's intuition may have grasped the force and function of the ¶ in the sense of ¶ in this passage much better than scholars ordinarily are willing to acknowledge.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

BRIEF ITEMS FROM THE NATIONAL LUTHERAN COUNCIL

Atlantic City, N. J. — Four theologians have been named by the National Lutheran Council to prepare a study on the doctrinal basis of Lutheran co-operation and its implications for present and future joint activities.

The study is being made in behalf of the NLC for use in talks scheduled next summer between its executive Committee and members of the Committee on Doctrinal Unity of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The latter is expected to draft a similar statement on the theological questions involved in co-operative efforts.

The two groups agreed last November to hold informal discussions of inter-Lutheran relations during "the first part of July" in Chicago. The meeting has been scheduled for July 7—9.

Dr. Norman A. Menter of Detroit, president of the council, reported to its 42d annual meeting here that he has appointed the following theologians as consultants:

Dr. Conrad Bergendoff, president of Augustana College, Rock Island, Ill.; Dr. Edward C. Fendt, president of Evangelical Lutheran Theological Seminary, Columbus, Ohio; Dr. Walter Kukkonen of the Suomi Synod's faculty at Chicago Lutheran Theological Seminary, Maywood, Ill.; and Dr. Alvin Rogness, president of Luther Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minn.

The NLC is the common agency for eight church bodies numbering 5,362,000 members. The Missouri Synod, which has 2,315,000 members, is not affiliated with the council but has working relationships with it in several fields of endeavor.

With merger of seven of its participating bodies into two units "virtually assured," Dr. Menter noted in his report, the NLC last year authorized a study of the council's future.

"This committee held several meetings, and although far from completing its work," he said, "it had arrived at the conclusion that a council would be absolutely necessary if consultations and co-operative efforts were to be carried on in the future."

The activities of the committee were temporarily suspended when the Missouri Synod accepted the NLC's invitation to discuss the subject of co-operation between the various branches of American Lutheranism. Dr. Menter described the Council as "a vital force in the development of unity, co-operation, and understanding among Lutherans in this country and throughout the world."

"Signs on the horizon seem to indicate that its responsibilities will continue to increase and its future to be more challenging," he said.

Atlantic City, N. J. — A new program for American Lutheranism will be introduced in selected metropolitan centers during the coming year to assist churches in city situations to meet the challenge of modern urbanism.

So-called master planning studies—concentrated on an entire area rather than on specific congregations—will be undertaken in Baltimore, Md., and Cleveland, Ohio, in 1960, the National Lutheran Council was told at its 42d annual meeting here.

The plans were made known by Dr. H. Conrad Hoyer of Chicago in his 18th and last annual report as executive secretary of the NLC's Division of American Missions. Dr. Hoyer has resigned to become an associate secretary of the Division of Home Missions of the National Council of Churches. He will assume his new post in New York about July 1.

Pointing out that 97 per cent of the 29 million increase in the United States popu-

lation since 1950 has been in metropolitan areas, Dr. Hoyer declared that this one statistic "vividly confirms the fact that urbanization is one of the significant social phenomena of our generation."

"The dramatic changes within our cities resulting from population flow and neighborhood change stagger the imagination," he said. "To serve in the city the churches must know what is happening, and they must adapt their programs to the changes that are taking place. Because of our rural heritage Lutheran churches must be especially alert."

Atlantic City, N. J.—Plans were laid before the National Lutheran Council at its 42d annual meeting here to expand its activities on the campuses of America's colleges and universities.

Major increases in funds and personnel are needed if this joint Lutheran ministry is to provide adequate and effective services, the council was informed, in view of the rising number of institutions of higher learning and the mushrooming enrollments of students.

The report was presented by Dr. Henry A. Hetland of Chicago, executive secretary of the NLC's Division of College and University Work, which this year is observing its 15th anniversary.

Dr. Hetland reported that the enrollment of students at colleges and universities has risen from 1,365,000 in 1940 to 2,457,000 in 1950 and 3,200,000 in 1958, with predictions of 6 million by 1970. Some authorities put the probable figure at 7 million and some even suggest 12 million as a definite possibility, he said. It is also estimated, he added, that the number of schools will double to 4,000 by 1970.

Noting that some 60 per cent of the students are in public and 40 per cent in private institutions, he estimated that more than 90 per cent of some 120,000 Lutheran students are enrolled in non-Lutheran colleges and universities.

During the past year the division made

preparations to continue its special program to help purchase or build student centers on various campuses throughout the country.

The program was launched in 1947, and between that year and 1954 the NLC's member bodies contributed \$974,528 to 31 projects. During the same period \$308,769 was sent directly to local areas for the same purpose by constituent units of NLC bodies.

Thus far in the second phase of the program, from 1955 to 1960, a total of \$1,240,325 has been invested in 36 projects.

During 1959 residence-type student centers were completed at San Jose, Calif., Missoula, Mont., and Seattle, Wash. Approval was also given for an addition to the present center at the University of Minnesota.

The council has approved a third phase of the program, calling for expenditure of \$2 million from 1961 to 1965. Of the total, \$1,200,000 is to be provided by the NLC's member bodies and the rest by churches on the territories where the projects are scheduled. Use of reserve funds has permitted the activating of projects at De Kalb, Ill., East Lansing, Mich., and Mankato, Minn.

Fully 546 Lutheran campus workers are serving more than 700 institutions of higher learning. The figure includes 41 campus pastors, two foundation directors, 27 counselors, two seminary interns, 20 part-time workers, and 454 "contact workers." In the latter category are pastors of near-campus churches or faculty advisers who represent the NLC when there is no campus pastor available. In addition there are six national staff workers.

Atlantic City, N. J.—A script is now ready for the cameras and shooting will begin next spring, it was reported here, on a Lutheran feature film depicting the role of the Christian faith in meeting the relentless pressures of life under a Communist state in Europe.

The motion picture is being sponsored by the same church groups that undertook the

highly successful film *Martin Luther*, including the National Lutheran Council, which is holding its 42d annual meeting here.

Other participants are the American Lutheran Church, Augustana Lutheran Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, and United Lutheran Church in America.

According to Robert E. A. Lee, executive secretary of Lutheran Film Associates, the member groups have established a new corporation, LFA Productions, Inc., to undertake the financing and management of the new project.

Mr. Lee told the council that filming will center in a West German community. He said the exact site is currently being selected for its suitability and similarity in appearance to some actual setting located inaccessibly across the border in East Germany.

The film story, tentatively titled *And the Glory*, was written by Allan E. Sloane, who had a major role in developing the screenplay for *Martin Luther*. He has devoted several years of intensive study to church-state conditions in East Germany. This research yielded documented incidents which became the basis of a composite drama, highlighting the pressures which the Communist regime exerts with increasing intensity upon Christians in East Germany, most of whom happen to be Lutherans.

Mr. Lee announced that others who collaborated on the Luther film project have also been engaged for the new picture, including Lothar Wolff as producer, and Louis de Rochemont Associates, whose facilities and services will again be employed in production.

The exact budget of the film has not been announced. It may be released in the fall or early winter of 1960, although release and

distribution plans have not been fully determined as yet.

Mr. Lee also reported that *Martin Luther* has been seen by TV audiences in over 90 telecasts thus far in the United States and Canada. Nearly two million persons were estimated to have viewed the movie over 18 different stations at the time of Reformation Day observances last fall.

He said new audiences in Spanish-speaking countries were gained for the picture last year through theatrical premières in Argentina and Chile. A Japanese soundtrack version is about to make its debut in Tokyo. In France three groups have been licensed to distribute French subtitled versions, utilizing either the English voice or German voice version.

Rustenberg, S. Africa.—After 102 years of missionary efforts in western Transvaal, South Africa's largest Lutheran body, the 120,000-member Batswana Church, became an autonomous body at a constituting assembly here.

The new church will maintain close ties with its parent body, the German Hermannsburg Evangelical Lutheran Mission, which will continue to supply personnel for special assignments, said Dr. Wolfram von Krause of Moorleigh, Natal, the agency's general superintendent. However, all church offices will be held by indigenous Batswana under the constitution adopted at the sessions.

During the assembly a newly completed \$140,000 first unit of the church's projected educational center was dedicated at the Marang Lutheran Theological Seminary, where the meeting was held. A total of \$60,200 will have been given to the project, when completed, by the Lutheran World Federation Department of World Mission, it was announced.