

Concordia Theological Monthly

Volume 31

Article 80

11-1-1960

Theological Observer

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Recommended Citation

Mueller, John Theodore (1960) "Theological Observer," *Concordia Theological Monthly*. Vol. 31, Article 80.
Available at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm/vol31/iss1/80>

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THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER

TO BE AND TO DO

Under this heading *Theology Today* (July 1960), with the permission of the publishers, the Highway Press, 6 Salisbury Sq., London, E.C. 4, presents to its readers a few paragraphs from Douglas Werner's book, *What Is Evangelism?* which appeared in 1959. We quote from them the following sentences because of their urgent appeal: "Every time we give Christ to men we receive him back again and perceive him to be yet greater than we knew before. That is the momentum of the evangelist and the wonder of the missionary enterprise. Jesus describes this task in picture terms: it is like a fisher of men, like a farmer sowing seed, like a shepherd seeking a lost sheep. Patience, skill, and persistence are required in all these occupations; they are essential also in the evangelistic mission of the church. For the shepherd goes on seeking the lost sheep *until he finds it* [italics in original]. The evangelist therefore is filled both with expectancy and despair. His despair arises from a full assessment of the situation he confronts: a gang of wayward juveniles, a factory canteen, a theater line-up, a vast Muslim city. How impossible it is for a mere man to convey the Gospel which will make sense! Only God himself can communicate it effectively. But the expectancy of the true evangelist arises out of this certainty—that God does this and that he deigns to use men as his instruments. To have seen God at work once is to expect him to work always, whether or not we see the results. It was not an American evangelist but St. John Chrysostom . . . who wrote: 'Nothing is more useless than a Christian who does not try to save others. . . . I cannot believe in the salvation of anyone who does not work for his neighbour's salvation.'"

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

THE CIRCUMCELLIONS OF HIPPO REGIUS

Under this heading Hans-Joachim Diesner, Halle, in *Theologische Literaturzeitung* (July 1960), endeavors to clarify this strange group of Donatist troublemakers from legal documents dating especially from the time of St. Augustine (A. D. 354—430), bishop of Hippo, North Africa, who no doubt was the most capable opponent of the Donatists and the circumcellions. The *New Standard Dictionary of the English Language* defines a "circumcellion" as "one of a fanatical party of Donatists (4th and 5th centuries) of northern Africa courting death by deeds of violence."

Diesner tries to show that despite the vast literature on the circumcellions relatively little is known of these violent fanatics. The legal documents, however, seem to show that among them there existed a more moderate party which was by no means impoverished and of which even St. Augustine speaks with moderation. Incidentally Diesner's article points out how great the harm was which Donatism inflicted upon the orthodox Christian church and how its extreme fanaticism did its regrettable part to cause the church in North Africa at a later time to succumb to Islam. By comparison it also depicts the greatness of St. Augustine as a church leader who did his best to suppress circumcellionism and effect a reconciliation between Christian orthodoxy and Donatism.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

BRIEF ITEMS FROM NATIONAL LUTHERAN COUNCIL

Thiensville, Wis.—The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod's participation in unity talks was strongly defended here by the denomination's President, Dr. John W. Behnken of St. Louis, Mo. Speaking at an informal conference of conservative Lutheran

theologians from nine nations, Dr. Behnken referred to the Missouri Synod's recent conversations with the National Lutheran Council and its plans for doctrinal discussions with the newly organized American Lutheran Church. "We are committed on the basis of Scripture to talk to these people," he said. "The rest we will leave to God."

In a paper presented earlier, Dr. Behnken insisted that "isolation is never the answer" to the problem of relations with other Christian churches, either Lutherans or other denominational families. "If Rome came to us with an honest invitation — which she hasn't — to discuss doctrine and not just listen, I think we would be in duty bound to bear testimony," he said.

Representatives of the NLC and the Missouri Synod met in Chicago early in July in a three-day session to explore the theological implications of inter-Lutheran cooperative relationships. A second meeting is scheduled in St. Louis Nov. 18—19.

Ferrin, Ill. — This 100 per cent Lutheran community in Southern Illinois has been tentatively declared by the U. S. Census Bureau to be the new center of population of the United States. The final decision concerning the exact center will not be made until next year.

Ferrin is a town of 50 Lutheran residents, 18 houses, one small supermarket, a grain elevator, a farm implement store, a church, and a parochial school. The recently built Lutheran school is the only school in the community. The congregation is affiliated with The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod. The community has no ordinances, no crime, no juke boxes, no soda fountains, no filling stations, no movie theaters, and no saloons. But it does have quiet charm, motorists approaching the town on U. S. Highway 50 soon discover.

On August 7 Dr. Robert Scharlemann, a former professor at Valparaiso (Ind.) University, was installed as pastor. William

Brandt, 24, a native of Nebraska and a graduate of Concordia Teachers College in Seward, Nebr., teaches 27 pupils in the eight-grade school.

Geneva. — A bibliography listing 54 of the modern languages in which Martin Luther's Small Catechism is currently in print was published here by the Lutheran World Federation Department of Theology. Department director Vilmos Vajta said the list was not complete, but that it did "show something of the radiation of the Reformer's work into the various cultural and geographical areas."

The Small Catechism, Luther's simple question-and-answer exposition of basic Christian doctrine, which has been used to prepare Lutheran youth for adult church membership in innumerable countries since the Reformation, is one of the most widely translated and published works of world literature, outstripped by few books besides the Bible.

Over two thirds of the 54 languages were of the non-Christian areas of the globe, while only 17 were languages of Europe and the Americas. Listed were 22 African and seven Asian tongues, as well as eight of the Pacific island of New Guinea, where Lutherans have the largest Protestant mission in the world.

Other writings of the Reformer were listed for 20 of the 54 languages. They included all but three of the 17 western tongues, but only six of the 37 Asian, African, and New Guinean ones. Significantly, the listed English, Spanish, and Portuguese versions of Luther's writings were published not in Europe but in the Americas.

Logically, the longest single-language list of writings is that of the Reformer's mother tongue, German. It includes 24 single works and seven multivolume collections, headed by the monumental Weimar edition.

Washington, D. C. — A Missouri Lutheran Navy chaplain has been selected for the rank of Rear Admiral. According to the Depart-

ment of Defense here, he is the first Lutheran clergyman so honored. The promotion of Chaplain Joseph Floyd Dreith, who is presently officer in charge of the Navy Chaplain School, Newport, R. I., is to become effective in June 1961.

A native of Berthoud, Colo., the Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod chaplain is a graduate of Concordia College, Oakland, Calif., and Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo.

The Defense Department reported that he was appointed to the Navy Chaplain Corps in 1937. Since then he has served aboard the USS *Arizona*, USS *Pensacola*, USS *Black Hawk*, and USS *Bunker Hill*, in addition to many shore assignments.

Chaplain Dreith is authorized to wear the Presidential Unit Citation, which was awarded the USS *Bunker Hill* for service from Nov. 11, 1943, to May 11, 1945, during World War II. He also has the China Service Medal, the American Defense Service Medal, the American Campaign Medal, the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, with one silver star and four bronze stars, the World War II Victory Medal, and the National Defense Service Medal.

New York.—A pastor of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod who has been teaching at a college of the Augustana Lutheran Church has accepted an overseas assignment from the Lutheran World Federation. The Rev. Rodney Dean Dannehl, 32, assistant professor of sociology and social work at Gustavus Adolphus College in Saint Peter, Minn., during 1959—60, will serve the LWF's Department of World Service as director of its material aid program in Hong Kong. Appointed for a three-year term, he left for the Orient early in August.

The bulk of the food and clothing distributed by LWF/WS in the British Crown Colony is supplied by Lutheran World Relief, the material aid agency of the National Lutheran Council and of the Board of World Relief of the Missouri Synod.

LWR's schedule of shipments during 1960—61 to Hong Kong includes some 1,000,000 pounds of powdered milk, 2,500,000 pounds of rice, and 900,000 pounds of corn meal from Government-donated surplus commodities. About 400,000 pounds of clothing and substantial quantities of medicines are also sent annually to Hong Kong by LWR.

The Rev. Mr. Dannehl will supervise the distribution of these supplies, working under the direction of the Rev. K. Ludwig Stumpf, senior representative in Hong Kong.

Eshowe, South Africa.—Four Natal Lutheran bodies whose mission backgrounds are of as many different nationalities joined at the Kwa Mondli mission station here in July to constitute a united provincial church. The resulting 160,000-member Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Zulu-Xhosa-Swazi Region is the first of several such regional united Lutheran bodies that are to be set up in the different provinces of the South African union and Southwest Africa, according to over-all unification plans.

Merging Natal bodies are the Mankankanana Lutheran, Evangelical Lutheran Zulu, and Norwegian Lutheran Zulu churches, and the Zulu-Xhosa-Swazi Synod. They are related, respectively, to the (American) Evangelical Lutheran Church mission, Church of Sweden mission, Norwegian Missionary Society, and (German) Berlin mission.

The occasion was hailed in a telegram received here from Lutheran World Federation headquarters in Geneva. "The LWF rejoices that missions from four nations and churches using three African languages have constituted a new Lutheran Church," it said. The message was signed by LWF Executive Secretary Carl E. Lund-Quist and Director Arne Sovik of the Department of World Mission.

Major issue debated at the assembly here was whether the new body should be headed by a president or a bishop. Opinion on the

question was divided among both missionaries and African churchmen, and three alternatives were proposed by the Union Committee. Of the four merging bodies the Evangelical Lutheran Zulu Church has had a Swedish missionary bishop, the incumbent being the Rt. Rev. Helge Fosseus.

Fifteen delegates from each of the four groups took official part in the assembly, whose main business was adoption of a proposed constitution for the united church. The gathering culminated several years of merger negotiations among these bodies, which functioned in overlapping territories, but which have long co-operated in educational and evangelistic work.

Not participating in the union action here were the (German) Hermannsburg mission church and the Free Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Hope was expressed, however, that the Hermannsburg body might later join the united church.

Madras.—Dr. A. N. Gopal of Guntur, president of the Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church, has been elected president of the Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India. He succeeds Dr. Rajah B. Manikam of Tiruchirapalli, bishop of Tranquebar and head of the Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church, who has filled the office for the past seven years.

The 257,109-member church which Dr. Gopal heads is the largest Lutheran church body in this country. The FELCI is an association of ten such bodies, of which seven are member churches of the Lutheran World Federation. Also associated with it are five "co-operating missions," all of which are agencies of LWF member churches in the West.

One of the conference's main items of business was planning for the establishment of a new board of missions to be a unified supervisory agency for the missionary work which the FELCI's member churches have been carrying on jointly both in India and abroad. Until now the work in this country has been under the Lutheran National Missionary Society, while that in other countries has been under the FELCI's Commission on Overseas Missions.

Oslo.—Several Lutheran parishes in this area have embarked on the novel undertaking of playing hosts for one year to nationals from Asian and African churches to enable them to become familiar with Norway, particularly her language and congregational life.

The parish church of Røa, near here, has invited a young African—probably from Tanganyika—while the Ris and Ullern parishes of Oslo have invited a Chinese student who reached this country in June after a period of study in America. In both cases all the expenses of the young men's stay in Norway are to be paid by members of the sponsoring congregations.

The invitation to the African was extended through the Norwegian Missionary Society by two families of the Røa parish, both of which have young people of their own. He will stay six months with each family.

The Chinese, Louis Yen, will give special attention to learning Norwegian. When he returns to Hong Kong he hopes to be able to translate Christian literature from the Scandinavian languages for the Lutheran Literature Society of that Far Eastern British colony.