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John Theodore Mueller
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

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THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER

RELIGIOUS REORGANIZATION AMONG THE MONTANA BLACKFEET

Under this heading the *Review of Religious Research* (summer 1960), a Catholic periodical, reports the occasional dualism of pagan and Catholic beliefs and rites among the Blackfeet Indians in Montana, numbering about 7,394. Of these 88 per cent adhere to Catholicism, while 12 per cent belong to various Protestant groups active on the reservation. Pagan Blackfeet beliefs, the article says, resemble those of other Plains Indians, but they have their distinctive characteristics. Napi, the "Old Man," was believed to be the creator of the world and all living things. After creating the world he made himself a wife who helped him design human beings; but no sooner had he taught them all they needed to survive than he climbed a high mountain and disappeared. Though he was treated with great respect, he was also considered as something of a scamp. The Blackfeet believed in supernatural powers existing on land, in the skies, and in the waters, as also in the survival of the soul after death in an existence similar to that of this earthly life. After Catholic missionaries had contacted them, they showed considerable persistence to retain remnants of their pagan beliefs, and this resulted in a fusion of Indian and Catholic religious ideas. An aged Indian thus enjoyed great prestige as a representative of the old Indian tradition. But when he became ill and the visiting priest offered him a rosary, he produced his own and led his friends in the recitation of the rosary. Thus while holding to the ancient beliefs, he was willing also to be guided by the Catholic missionary. The Indians in general do not attend Mass regularly, but they are greatly attracted to the "sacramentals," such as holy water, blessed candles, and the like, which no doubt remind them of their ancient medicine

bundles and other paraphernalia. The report does not mention any Gospel preaching by the Catholic missionaries.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

THE FEAR OF THE LORD IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM

On this text (Ps. 111:10) Karl Barth on July 20, 1958, preached a sermon in the prison of Basel which with other sermons Harper & Brothers intend to publish in March 1961, and which, with the permission of the publishers, *Interpretation* (October 1960) presents to its readers. To us the sermon, well translated by Marguerite Wieser, seemed remarkable for both the simplicity of diction and the relative orthodoxy of content, as this is witnessed, for example, by the following statements:

We discover that God, since the beginning of time, has not hated or threatened you and me, but has loved and chosen us, has made a covenant with us, has been our helper long before we knew it and will continue this relationship. The fear of the Lord springs from the discovery that the high and eternal God gave his beloved Son for us, for you and me, taking upon himself our sin and our misery; he made his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, himself our sin and our misery; he made his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to be our brother, for whose sake we may call God our Father and ourselves his children. The fear of the Lord springs from the discovery that I did not merit this gift, that it has been given to me by the pure and free goodness of God, in spite of all I deserved. . . . The fear of the Lord springs from the discovery that it might be high time to awake from sleep, to arise and live as the men we really are, God's elect and chosen people, brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ, set free by him from our sin and our misery. The fear of the Lord springs from the discovery that God calls us unto himself and that his calling urges us to wake up, to arise, and to begin to live as his children.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

CONFERENCE OF EDUCATIONAL EXECUTIVES

Nearly 40 District and synodical leaders in parish education traveled to Concordia Teachers College, River Forest, Ill., for the 39th annual meeting of the Conference of Educational Executives of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. In session Dec. 6—9, members of the conference, formerly called the superintendents' conference, explored a variety of topics under the theme "The Challenge of Christian Education for Our Day."

Conference keynote speaker was Arthur L. Miller, Executive Secretary of the Missouri Synod Board of Parish Education. Noting some implications of the 1960 White House Conference on Children and Youth for the church's educational efforts, the St. Louis leader encouraged conference members to remain alert to rapidly changing local, national, and world conditions.

Arthur E. Wittmer, Executive Secretary of parish education for the Synod's Atlantic District, outlined the tasks facing District educational leaders during the next decade. He urged District workers to continually discover the extent and the value of the total parish education effort and to work for improved teaching in both full-time and part-time educational agencies. While stressing the need to establish more Lutheran elementary and secondary schools, Wittmer cautioned the superintendents to "admit that many parishes cannot and should not have full-time schools." However, where studies show that a school is not possible nor feasible in a congregation, superintendents should encourage the congregation to join in an interparish school arrangement.

Oscar E. Feucht, Missouri Synod Secretary of Adult Education, explained the proposed workings of a new plan for training lay Bible class teachers in every congregation holding synodical membership. Called the Train Two Program, the plan envisions holding some

15 regional workshops during the next three years.

Remus C. Rein, executive secretary of education, missions, and stewardship for the Synod's Central Illinois District, focused conference attention on the issue of subsidizing new and existing congregations so that they may establish or maintain elementary schools. Districts should be willing to grant subsidies for schools, Rein concluded. However, such subsidies should be granted to congregations within specified limitations. "The decision to grant subsidy for a school program in a mission congregation, the amount of subsidy to be granted, and the duration of the subsidy are decisions that should be made by the District board of directors after full consultation with the District mission and education boards."

Attending conference sessions were representatives of the Synod's Board for Young People's Work and the International Walther League. William H. Kohn, Hyattsville, Md., pastor and member of the Missouri Synod Board of Directors, appealed for a "sensitive conscience" concerning the importance of youth work.

Elmer N. Witt, Walther League executive director, singled out implications of the recent Lutheran youth research findings for Lutheran education. Among other findings, these studies conducted by the Evangelical Lutheran, American Lutheran, United Evangelical Lutheran, and Lutheran Free Churches showed that Lutheran youth want help in seven areas: vocational counseling, boy-girl relationships, Christian outreach, problems with self, spiritual growth, and school and family relationships.

Conference members approved a "statement on nonsegregated education in church and state." The four key paragraphs of the statement—

Commend those citizens of the United States who are seeking to preserve and extend the public schools in keeping with the Su-

preme Court decision upholding nonsegregated and nondiscriminatory schooling.

Encourage pastors, teachers, and congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod to support constructive efforts to preserve and to extend nonsegregated schooling and, where necessary, to initiate such efforts.

Encourage Missouri Synod congregations to open and expand Lutheran elementary and higher schools solely for purposes of better Christian education, not for the purpose of avoiding racially or culturally integrated schooling.

Encourage each Missouri Synod congregation to adopt as a working principle the policy of serving all people in its immediate neighborhood, also in regard to its educational agencies, particularly its elementary and higher schools.

FREDERICK NOHL

JOHN XXIII RESCINDS BAN ON VERNACULAR

The Catholic Herald for Sept. 9, 1960, somewhat belatedly discloses the contents of a letter which Pope John XXIII sent on March 31, 1960, to Maximos IV Saigh, the Melchite (Roman Catholic) Patriarch of Antioch, and in which the pope rescinded a decree of the Congregation of the Holy Office. Eugene Cardinal Tisserant, Cardinal Cicognani's predecessor as Secretary of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches, had authorized Eastern rite Roman Catholic parishes in English-speaking lands to use the English language in their services. The Congregation had also authorized Roman Catholic clergymen of the Latin rite to celebrate Mass in English when they were using an Eastern rite. When a number of American and British clergymen, among them the Most Reverend Fulton J. Sheen, availed themselves of this privilege in 1959, however, the Congregation of the Holy Office instructed the Apostolic Delegate to this country, the Most Reverend Egidio Vagnozzi, to prohibit at once any further use of English at celebrations of Mass according to an Eastern rite. Thereupon the Reverend Joseph Raya, a

Melchite priest of Birmingham, Ala., addressed himself to Patriarch Maximos, who in turn wrote a letter to Pope John on Feb. 6, 1960, in which he called attention to the fact that the directive to archbishop Vagnozzi had originated not with the Congregation for the Eastern Churches but with the Congregation of the Holy Office, which was not canonically competent to rule in this matter. In his letter of March 31 to Patriarch Maximos Pope John accordingly rescinded the prohibition. (Source: *Herder-Korrespondenz*, Vol. XV, No. 2 [November 1960], p. 61)

ARTHUR CARL PIEPKORN

BRIEF ITEMS FROM THE NATIONAL LUTHERAN COUNCIL

Evanston, Ill.—Retired Bishop Anders Nygren of Lund, Sweden, is scheduled to spend 14 months as a research scholar at the Evanston Institute for Ecumenical Studies here.

Bishop Nygren, who celebrated his 70th birthday on Nov. 15, served five years as the first president of the Lutheran World Federation after it was organized at Lund in 1947 as the successor organization to the Lutheran World Convention.

He is one of two scholars to join the Evanston Institute through a grant from the Danforth Foundation. The other is Canon Theodore Wedel, warden emeritus of the College of Preachers, Washington, D. C., who began a year of study here in September. Dr. Walter Leibrecht, a Lutheran, who has been director of the institute since it opened in 1958, said that Bishop Nygren will devote most of his time to research on the relationship of theology and contemporary philosophical thinking. In addition, however, he will also offer courses for graduate students from colleges and seminaries in the Chicago metropolitan area and will participate in various conferences sponsored by the institute.

Munich, (West) Germany.—A new the-

ological seminary to serve the territorial Lutheran churches throughout both parts of Germany was solemnly dedicated in November at Pullach, near here. Conducting the dedication was Bishop Hanns Lilje of Hannover, presiding bishop of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany (VELKD), which is sponsoring the institution. The VELKD is an all-German federation of 10 territorial churches (*Landeskirchen*) with a combined membership of about 17 million.

This is the first time in their history that the German Lutheran churches have jointly engaged in an undertaking of this sort. The new \$240,000 center, known as the Preachers' and Study Seminary, is intended for advanced theological research and teaching and for training in special kinds of religious service.

Dedication of the institution signaled the opening of its first course, in which are enrolled 20 students from West German churches. The three East German Lutheran *Landeskirchen* were not able to send students.

Copenhagen. — The road to Christian unity is a "road back"—but it is back to Christ and not back to Rome, the Lutheran World Federation's Commission on Inter-confessional Research heard here in November.

Bishop Hermann Dietzfelbinger of Munich, Germany, chairman of the commission, declared that the Biblical allusion to one flock under one shepherd referred only to Christ Himself and not to the pope. Martin Luther's work as a church reformer was begun with an ecumenical perspective, said Dr. Dietzfelbinger, whose 2.5-million-member Bavarian Evangelical Lutheran Church is situated in the most Roman Catholic part of Germany. But, he added, Luther's ecumenical goal was "back to Christ alone, to the Holy Scriptures, to faith and truth."

He contrasted this position with that of the Roman Church, which, Bishop Dietzfel-

binger said, "demands distinctly, plainly, and clearly the return to Rome" as the basis of Christian unity. "It refuses to acknowledge that it, too, can be at fault and commit errors."

While taking account of present contacts between Rome and non-Catholic churches and noting that the hopes of even Catholics had been raised by the papal announcement of an "ecumenical council," he commented, "But meanwhile it has become quite clear that Rome understands 'ecumenical' only in the sense of Roman Catholic."

Christian unity must not be an end in itself, nor must it be sought out of human enthusiasm, the German churchman asserted. "The one church must be a community in Christ as the only Savior of the world." He reiterated that for followers of the Reformation the ecumenical road is "not return to Rome, but only a return of all of us to Christ alone."

His statement as chairman at the commission sessions here, based on the theme "The One Church and the Reformation," was similar to a lecture he gave earlier at a gathering in Stuttgart.

Attending the sessions were commission members Archbishop Gunnar Hultgren of Uppsala, Primate of the (Lutheran) Church of Sweden; Etienne Jung of Strasbourg, France, president of the Directorium of the Lutheran Church of Alsace and Lorraine; Prof. Peter Brunner of the University of Heidelberg, Germany; Prof. Warren A. Quanbeck of Luther Theological Seminary, Saint Paul, Minn.; and Dr. Hans Peter Treuenfels, Lutheran layman from Norwalk, Conn. Federation staff members from Geneva who were present were Acting Executive Secretary Kurt Schmidt-Clausen, Dr. Vilmos Vajta, director of the Department of Theology, and the Rev. Jurgen Roloff, assistant to Dr. Vajta.

Parkland, Wash. — Pacific Lutheran College, the only Lutheran senior college west of the Rocky Mountains, has now assumed

full university status. The 70-year-old school was formally designated Pacific Lutheran University in special ceremonies during a three-day celebration here early in October.

The university is owned by a corporation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church and has received support from two other church bodies, the American Lutheran Church and Augustana Lutheran Church. Two Lutheran schools in Washington — Columbia Lutheran of Everett and Spokane College — merged with Pacific Lutheran several years ago.

Establishment of another Lutheran educational institution in the west, California Lutheran College, near Los Angeles, is now underway. It is a joint project of five Lutheran bodies and is expected to open next fall or early in 1962.

Albany, N. Y. — Legality of the words "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance recited by school children was upheld unanimously by the Appellate Division of the State Supreme Court here.

In affirming a 1957 decision by Supreme Court Justice Isadore Bookstein, the Appellate Division said recitation of the pledge did not involve improper use of the schools for the dissemination of "religious dogma."

The appeal had been filed by Joseph Lewis of North Salem, N. Y., president of the Free-thinkers of America, and Alfred L. Klein of Staten Island, N. Y., on the grounds that the words "under God" violated the church-state separation principle when said in public schools.

"Members of a religious sect," the Appellate Division said, "who viewed the ceremony as a form of idolatry offensive to their tenets and beliefs need not recite the pledge. We find no sound basis for any claim of coercion or pressure directed toward 'an establishment of religion' or interfering with 'the free expression thereof.'"

These references were to the First Amendment to the U. S. Constitution.

Use of the revised pledge was recom-

mended by the State Education Department after Congress had added the words "under God" in 1954. The pledge now reads: "One nation, under God, indivisible with liberty and justice for all."

The State Education Department, in its recommendation, had noted that children could omit the two words, remain silent throughout recitation of the pledge, or leave the room altogether.

In its ruling the Appellate Division quoted a U. S. Supreme Court decision which stated: "There cannot be the slightest doubt that the First Amendment reflects the philosophy that Church and State should be separated. The First Amendment, however, does not say that in every and all respects there shall be a separation of Church and State.

"Rather, it studiously defines the manner, the specific ways, in which there shall be no concert or union or dependency one on the other. It is the common sense of the matter. Otherwise, the State and religion would be aliens to each other — hostile, suspicious, and even unfriendly.

"Prayers in our legislative halls, the appeals to the Almighty in the messages of the Chief Executive, the proclamations making Thanksgiving Day a holiday, 'so help me God' in our courtroom oaths — these and all references to the Almighty that run through our laws, our public rituals, our ceremonies would be flouting the First Amendment."

In his 1957 decision, Judge Bookstein denied the application of Mr. Lewis and Mr. Klein for an order directing the education department to delete the two words from the pledge.

Cairo. — Twenty schools operated by the Catholic Association of Free Schools in the Asyut region of Upper Egypt were closed by order of the government, it was reported here.

The government said the schools would not be permitted to open for the new academic year because teacher qualifications

and building management did not conform to the law. According to the report, three telegrams of protest sent to the government by Catholic officials failed to obtain any immediate results.

Coptic Rite Bishop Alexandros Scandar of Asyut told the faithful in a sermon: "Whatever the administrative vexations, nobody will stop Christianity from remaining in this country and even prospering."

To prevent the government from requisitioning the school buildings, the free school association plans to use them as reception centers for poor children. The children will receive catechetical instruction at the centers.

Saigon. — Two Catholic seminaries in Hanoi, North Vietnam, have been forced to close as a result of pressure from the Communist regime. Rather than include in the curriculum a Communist "culture program" as ordered by the government, seminary officials decided not to reopen the schools for the current term.

Colombo, Ceylon. — Tension mounted here and in other parts of this predominantly Buddhist country as some 2,500 private schools, mostly Roman Catholic, were formally taken over by the state.

Nationalization of the schools was approved by parliament in mid-November, and the take-over date was set for Jan. 1. However, the government later decided to change the date to Dec. 1. Meanwhile demonstrations of protests were staged, particularly by Catholic mothers who appealed in vain to Prime Minister Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike to respect the rights of parents to educate their children "in schools of our own choice."

As a precaution against further public demonstrations the government kept all the nationalized schools operating only for part of the time on the opening day. It was reported, however, that parents had moved

into some 60 Catholic schools in West Ceylon in an attempt to prevent their take-over. Catholic parents also occupied a school in Colombo. Philip Dissanayake, general manager of the Catholic schools, described the occupation of the schools as "a spontaneous protest by parents and children against the take-over."

No serious incidents were disclosed in the wake of the Catholic parents' action. Leaders of other denominations were reported by the Ceylon Radio as not opposing the government take-over. In fact, the station claimed, some of them had actually appealed to their followers to co-operate with the state in the new situation.

The Catholic schools numbered 750, with an enrollment of 250,000 pupils, of whom about 65 per cent are Catholics. Protestant schools have around 140,000 students, the great majority of whom are Buddhist or Hindu. Hindu education leaders have strongly associated themselves with Catholic leaders in opposition to the take-over of the denominational schools.

Eight primary Catholic schools that had hoped to become private institutions and thus avoid nationalization were taken by surprise when the government appropriated three kindergartens which they operated.

Meanwhile an estimated 3,000 students camped on the steps of a newspaper here in protest against the take-over. Some of them wore black ties, arm bands, and shirts and carried banners with the slogan, "Give Us Justice or Death." Parents and sympathizers distributed food packages among them.

Buddhist groups, which have long demanded state management of all schools as the first step toward framing an education system suited to the national culture, organized firecracker displays to celebrate "National Education Day."