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THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

In the *Anglican Theological Review* (January 1961) Prof. C. E. Hopkins of the Episcopal Divinity School in Philadelphia discusses the meaning of systematic theology, with the special question in mind where Dr. Tillich belongs with respect to it. We quote a few striking statements to illustrate the writer's "basic principles": "The systematic theologian produces a theologically oriented, systematic world view. He is a philosopher secondarily, but a theologian primarily. In his system theology is the master, and philosophy the servant."—"We do not mean merely a world view as illuminated by certain random dogmas of Christianity. We also mean a world view as organized around a system of dogmas taken in some kind of order and exhibited in something like a complete whole. . . . While not every dogmatic theologian is a systematic theologian, nevertheless, by this criterion every systematic theologian is a dogmatic theologian."—"Not only must systematic theology serve the church to keep her corporately away from erratic positions; it must also serve the individual believer in making clear to him what is specific about Christian belief in contrast with that which is a mere change in the common world view."—"In so far as systematic theology is also a human endeavor, it too makes a genuine contribution when it retains its own discipline distinctly. In so far as it is a God-directed action it will speak not only with the time but to the time. It will have a good influence upon the church, and what it has to say will be identifiable with the message of Scripture."

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

BRIEF ITEMS FROM THE NATIONAL LUTHERAN COUNCIL

Geneva.—Crowning a year of negotiations, the Imperial Government of Ethiopia

has signed a contract authorizing the Lutheran World Federation to establish a powerful Christian radio center in Addis Ababa, it was announced at LWF headquarters here. The document, which will serve as both a franchise and a broadcasting license, was signed at the Ethiopian capital on Feb. 15, it was reported by Dr. Arne Sovik, director of the LWF's Department of World Mission. Final definition of the terms under which the radio project is to be carried out clears the way for the LWF Broadcasting Service to call for bids on construction and equipment of the program studios, administrative offices, transmitters, and staff residences.

Spokesmen of the service were not prepared to state when the station would begin functioning. Unofficially, however, it was anticipated that a one-kilowatt experimental transmitter might be habilitated by next August, with at least one of two 100-kw transmitters on the air late in 1962.

Establishment of the station is expected to involve a capital cost of about one million dollars. Religious and cultural programs, prepared in a chain of production studios located in scattered countries, are to be beamed to all parts of Africa, the Near East, and southern Asia.

Geneva.—A \$150 prize for the best new explanation of Martin Luther's Small Catechism, suitable for instruction purposes in Asia or Africa, was offered here by the Department of World Mission of the Lutheran World Federation. Dr. Arne Sovik, director of the department, announced that its annual writing competition this year will concern the textbook use of the shortest and simplest of world Lutheranism's confessional writings—the 431-year-old catechism which has been translated into scores of languages and used to instruct millions for church membership.

"One of the acute problems confronting pastors and other workers in the churches in

Asia and Africa," he said, "is the necessity to explain the Church's catechism not simply in the language and thought patterns of the West or of a century ago, but in such a way as to speak to catechumens against the background of their own heritage and present-day situation."

Dr. Sovik stated that "any person or group of persons"—nationals, missionaries and others—"with first-hand experience in Christian education in Africa or Asia is eligible to compete" for the first prize and for two others of \$100 and \$50. He explained that entries should not be "an essay on the theory or methods of catechetical instruction" but rather should "provide explanatory material for the use either of the catechetical teacher or his students or both." It may include illustrative material in the form of learning devices, stories and charts.

Those interested in competing were advised to request a copy of the contest rules from the LWF Department of World Mission at 17 route de Malagnou, Geneva. Deadline for the mailing of entries is Jan. 31, 1962.

Geneva.—Relations between Roman Catholics and Protestants in Latin America have begun to improve and give hope of continuing in that direction, according to the director of the Lutheran World Federation's Committee on Latin America. An important factor in this "change of climate" has been the call of Pope John XXIII for an "ecumenical council" and contact with "separated brethren," said the LWF official, Dr. Stewart W. Herman. He expressed views on the matter at stops on an official visit to several European countries and upon his return to his office in New York.

Two other factors he cited were related to the ways that Latin American affairs have been affected by the rise to power of the Cuban leader Fidel Castro. They were, on the one hand, the continentwide social revolution with which Castro has identified himself

and, on the other, his "alliance with Communism."

At the same time, he said, "the events in Cuba . . . have had quite an effect" on the Latin American churches' growing appreciation of the challenge they face in changing social conditions. "If developments are to be an evolution and not a revolution, the churches have to assume their responsibility," Dr. Herman said in an interview with the Copenhagen Christian daily *Kristeligt Dagblad*.

"This means that the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches, if they cannot actually work together, must at least be able to work side by side and on speaking terms with each other." Meanwhile, he added, "Lutheran churches have as much freedom as they can desire for their work" in Latin America.

At New York upon his return, Dr. Herman mentioned Colombia particularly as a country showing a "change of climate" between Roman Catholics and Protestants. "The most important reason for this . . . is undoubtedly the change of government," he said. "But another important reason is the Pope's call for a council and contact with 'separated brethren.'"

"Still another important reason is the embarrassment to the Roman Catholic Church caused by widespread attention given to incidents of deliberate persecution. Last but not least, Castro's alliance with Communism seems to call for a united Christian front."

The LWF official said that when he visited Colombia in December "a first-page photograph in one of Bogota's leading dailies showed priests and pastors sitting down to discuss differences of religious faith before a crowd of 5,000 in Cali." A few years ago, he asserted, "such a meeting would have been not only impossible but inconceivable."

During his visit to Europe Dr. Herman conferred in Switzerland with fellow LWF executives, met at Fulda with a consultative committee of German churches and Protes-

tant agencies interested in Latin America, and then held discussions at four Scandinavian capitals aimed at strengthening the Nordic Lutheran ministry in Latin America.

His talks in the northern countries were mainly with leaders of Lutheran seamen's missions concerning joint action in Central and South American ports and with officials of LWF national committees respecting support for the work of which Dr. Herman is director.

Geneva.—India's largest Lutheran church body, which functions in the Telugu-speaking area in the southeastern part of that country, has elected new officers.

The Rev. T. Krupadanam has been named to succeed Dr. A. N. Gopal as the president of the 265,000-member Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church. Dr. Gopal had held the office since 1958 and was previously president from 1950 to 1954.

The Andhra Church, which developed from ULCA mission activity dating back to 1842, is now an "affiliated Church" of the latter body. It has five regional synods and 2,300 local congregations.

Montevideo, Uruguay.—A Lutheran church that will stand almost on the boundary line between this country and Brazil is being built in the center of the twin towns of Rivera and Livramento. Ground for the construction was broken in September. The Lutheran work in this country is a mission undertaking of the Augustana Lutheran Church of North America, with the United Lutheran Church in America co-operating.

Minneapolis, Minn.—The American Lutheran Church has decided to drop its capital "T" in popular usage of the name. Henceforth, the new denomination of 2,258,000 members will be referred to as the American Lutheran Church and will be abbreviated as "ALC" instead of "TALC" or "The ALC," by common consent of the various publications of the church.

In the future the former American Lu-

theran Church will be designated as "the former ALC" or "the old ALC" to distinguish the two bodies.

Detroit, Mich.—A political candidate's religious faith is a "valid concern" of voters and should receive consideration along with other qualifications for office, it was asserted here by the National Lutheran Council. The NLC's position was outlined in a special postelection study on "Religious Faith as a Factor in American Elections" which was approved at the co-operative agency's 43d annual meeting here. The statement was recommended to NLC participating church bodies and "to other interested persons" as being worthy of "serious study and deliberate discussions."

The study was proposed last year by the council's Social Trends Committee, and a three-member committee was named to consider the question. The committee's conclusions, however, were not announced until after the recent election because of concern over the appropriateness of a pre-election statement on the issue.

In approving the brief document, the council—which represents six Lutheran bodies with some 5,500,000 members—noted that the religious issue "received a great deal of attention" in the presidential election in spite of efforts to keep it out of the campaign.

Political analysts, it was pointed out, "have affirmed that the religious affiliation of candidates and of voters was among a number of major factors determining the outcome of the election." And since the election, it said, "much confusion and sharp difference of opinion regarding the religious issue exist within the Christian community," and "the religious affiliation of candidates will continue to be a factor affecting the voting of many citizens in future elections."

The statement was presented by Milton V. Burgess, Martinsburg, Pa., weekly newspaper editor and an NLC councilor, who was chairman of the three-member committee.

The other members were Dr. Donald R. Heiges, dean of Chicago Lutheran Theological Seminary at Maywood, Ill., and Dr. O. H. Hove, former Evangelical Lutheran Church secretary and public relations director now supervising an old people's home in Minot, N. Dak.

The main conclusion reached by the committee was that the religious affiliation of a candidate "is a valid concern of the voter."

"But it has to be balanced," it said, "against all the qualifications of this candidate and the other candidates and should not be taken out of the context of the total political situation in which the voter has to make his decision."

"This places the responsibility exactly where it belongs," Mr. Burgess commented in presenting the statement. "No church or any other group has a right to tell an individual how to vote."

The statement said that a candidate "in a democratic order . . . ought not to be opposed merely on the grounds of his religious affiliation without regard to his record or to his other qualifications." Such personal qualities as integrity, courage, wisdom and understanding, it added, "are essential for a candidate to deserve the support of church people," and his past record and that of his party should also be taken into account.

"Unless we are prepared to grant that religion, and in particular the Christian faith, is irrelevant to public life in the United States," it was said, "it will have to be admitted that the religious faith of any person will influence his private and public conduct to some extent."

Efforts to disclaim completely all relevancy of religious convictions to political life was called "regrettable" by the committee. "Such disclaimers," it said, "are a danger sign since they reveal that the 'image' of the church in the American mind is such as to make religion essentially irrelevant in those areas where the important decisions of our time are made."

Pointing out that a "multitude of pres-

ures" are exerted in the conduct of public affairs, the committee said, "It is naive to assume that a public officer's conduct of his public office would be exclusively determined by such religious loyalties."

Also termed "regrettable" was the fact that "some church people show concern about the qualifications of candidates only when high federal office is involved." State and local elections and primaries often are "just as important" in deciding policies and leadership in government, the committee said.

Washington, D. C. — Senator Warren C. Magnuson (D., Wash.) has introduced a bill to place religious activities at West Point under the Chaplains Branch of the U.S. Army, similar to what is now in effect at the other service academies.

Several Lutheran groups, over the past ten years, have endorsed proposals to discontinue civilian chaplains at West Point. These have included the National Lutheran Council, The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod, the United Lutheran Church in America, and the former Evangelical Lutheran Church, now a part of the American Lutheran Church.

Senator Magnuson's bill calls for a repeal of the act of Feb. 18, 1896, which provides for a chaplain for the military academy. He introduced a similar bill in the last Congress; however, it was not acted upon.

West Point is the only one of four U.S. military academies where civilians serve as chaplains. The chaplains of the Naval Academy at Annapolis, Md., the Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs, Colo., and the Coast Guard Academy at New London, Conn., are commissioned officers of the Navy or Air Force Chaplain services.

Mr. Magnuson's bill was referred to the Senate Committee on Armed Services.

Washington, D. C. — National Lutheran Council opposition to government aid for nonpublic elementary and secondary schools was brought to attention in a statement issued here at a meeting of the Council's Division

of Public Relations. Members of the division committee, in session March 8 and 9, took note of current proposals to make loans or grants available to private and parochial elementary and secondary schools and pointed out that the NLC at its annual meeting in February 1960 had gone on record against similar proposals then being considered in Congress.

The NLC resolution stated:

"Resolved, That the National Lutheran Council views with concern the proposal made in connection with legislation currently before the Congress which would authorize loans to non-public elementary and secondary schools for the construction of school buildings, on the basis that:

"a) Such government aid previously given to colleges and universities operated by religious groups has been considered by many as a borderline practice in proper relation between church and state, but government aid for the construction of church-operated schools at the elementary and secondary level is clearly a form of tax support for sectarian instruction; and

"b) The availability of such aid to non-public schools would facilitate with public funds the establishment of racially segregated private schools as an alternative to integration in the public schools."

"It is clear from this resolution," said Dr. Philip A. Johnson, NLC public relations secretary, "that the Council stands in opposition to the proposals now being advocated which would authorize loans or grants to non-public elementary and secondary schools. While advocating the right of any religious group to establish and maintain its own schools, it should be emphatically emphasized that the existence of such schools does not in any way constitute a claim on public funds either for grants or loans or for salaries of teachers and administrators. Obviously the extension of public grants or credits to private or parochial schools would raise grave

questions of constitutionality, since it would clearly be a form of tax support for sectarian instruction."

"It would also constitute an invitation to sectarian groups to expand their schools beyond their ability to support them, and would encourage other groups to establish schools either for sectarian instruction or to preserve racial segregation, thereby also weakening our traditional American public school system."

"Therefore, any bills or amendments in the Congress which would authorize public funds for non-public primary or secondary education would not be in the best interest of our nation."

The NLC action last year was prompted by Senate consideration of an amendment to an education aid bill which would have granted construction assistance to private and parochial elementary and secondary schools. The amendment was defeated before the NLC's annual meeting adjourned; however, Lutheran leaders expressed concern that similar measures would again be introduced.

Stuttgart, Germany.— Ways to keep track of German Lutherans who emigrate overseas were explored during an 11-day visit to this country on behalf of the Lutheran World Federation Department of World Service by the department's senior representative in Austria, the Rev. Eugene Ries.

It has been estimated that some 36,000 Lutherans emigrate abroad from Germany each year. Half of these go to the United States, a third to Canada, 5,000 to Australia, and the other 1,000 to other countries.

Since pastors of this country's very large congregations cannot keep well informed on their parishioners who emigrate, part of Pastor Ries' task was to look into other possible channels for getting such names and addresses.

To this end he visited consulates and shipping agencies in Hamburg, Bremen, Frankfurt, Berlin, and Munich, besides conferring

with church leaders in those cities and in Hannover.

Ngaoundere, Cameroun.—A constitution for a united Lutheran Church in this new West African republic was adopted at a general synod meeting here. The church will embrace nearly 9,000 Christians now affiliated with the Sudan Mission of The American Lutheran Church and some 4,000 related to the Cameroun mission of the Norwegian Missionary Society.

A leader of the American mission said the new united body is to be "a self-governing church recognized by the Cameroun government." The two missions have been collaborating in medical work here for a number of years, and in the past two years they have opened a joint normal school and a joint theological seminary.

Geneva.—Lutheran and Reformed churches of France are currently studying two new draft documents on ordination with a view to their possible joint adoption, a periodical of the World Presbyterian Alliance reported here.

The documents are a set of six theses on the meaning of ordination and a draft liturgy for consecration of new ministers. The quarterly bulletin of the alliance's department of theology published full texts of both in translations that Editor Lewis S. Mudge said were "to our knowledge the first to be made into English."

Mr. Mudge, who is secretary of the department of theology, said the documents were submitted in 1960 "for discussion during 1960—61" by the legislative bodies of France's two Lutheran and two Reformed church bodies.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of France and the Church of the Augsburg Confession of Alsace and Lorraine are both member bodies of the Lutheran World Federation. The Reformed have parallel churches, one serving Alsace and Lorraine and the other the rest of France.

The six theses which the four bodies have received "as a basis for discussion" were drafted by Lutheran Pastor Albert Greiner and Reformed Pastor Jean Bosc. Pastor Greiner is general secretary of the *Mission Interieure* of the Lutheran Church of France at Paris.

"Taken as a whole," Mr. Mudge said, "the theses strive to maintain the importance of God's initiative, the conviction that what is done in ordination is already done by God, and that the church submit herself to and recognize, in term of her order, what God has accomplished.

As for the ordination liturgy, he pointed out that the candidates' vows "include an explicit commitment to a daily discipline of prayer and meditation, a vow to hold as secret information received in the course of counseling, and a vow to make the fullest possible use of the ministries to which God has called the members of the parish.

"These are points which seldom, if ever, are found among the ordination vows required in English-speaking Reformed churches," Mr. Mudge commented. (An observer here said the same remark would apply to English-speaking Lutheran churches.)

Two other points respecting the liturgy were noted by the bulletin editor:

1. "The issue of the 'indelibility' of orders is avoided by the implication that the ministry means active discharge of the ministerial office and the suggestion that this is a commitment undertaken for life.

"The idea of life commitment, however, does not appear among the vows but in the preamble."

2. "It is assumed in the language of this service that the candidate's specific commitment to the church's Confession of Faith has preceded the ceremony of ordination itself." Such a declaration is referred to in the preamble, but in the vows themselves is only a general mention of "the faith of the church whose servant you are to be."