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THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER

THE CREEDS OF A. D. 325: ANTIOCH, CAESAREA, NICAEA

The *Scottish Journal of Theology* (September 1960), under this heading, offers a thorough examination of the three creeds mentioned in the caption. Of the Creed of Antioch the writer says:

The Creed of the Synod of Antioch makes the Son-concept regulative, emphasizing, in opposition to the Arian distinction between the Logos and the Son, their identity and safeguarding the authenticity of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ by affirming the uniqueness of His relation to God the Father. The divine Logos, whom it identifies with the Son of God, is not the metaphysical Logos of the old Alexandrian tradition, but the creative and revealing Word of God attested in Old Testament thought.

Of the Creed of Caesarea the author writes, in part:

It emphasizes the distinction between the Father and the Son, but contains nothing which testifies to their one-ness with each other, while the terms which it uses to describe the Incarnation, by their very vagueness are inadequate to the task of bearing witness to the Incarnation as a real Incarnation of God in man.

He comments:

The Nicene Creed makes the Son-concept regulative, ignoring entirely the Logos-concept and emphasizing the uniqueness of the Son's begetting from the Father by asserting the essential one-ness of the Father and the Son and thereby safeguarding the central truth of the Christian Gospel that in Jesus Christ God Himself has acted for us and our salvation. In N [the Nicene Creed] is enshrined the deepest insight of the common faith of the Church. . . . N preserves the two great paradoxes which are central in the New Testament witness to Christ—the *distinction-within-unity* [italics original],

which characterizes the relationship between Father and Son, and the God-Man relationship within the person of Christ.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

PAPIAS ON MARK'S GOSPEL

Vigiliae Christianae (North-Holland Publishing Co., Amsterdam; December 1960) under this heading examines the Papias fragments, quoted by Eusebius, which contain the statement that "Mark did nothing wrong in thus writing a few things (ἔβια) as he remembered them." After a careful examination of the term ἔβια and other accompanying circumstances the writer reaches the conclusion: "The statement which actually constitutes Papias' defense of Mark says nothing about Mark's order being under attack. On the contrary, the use of ἔβια demands that Papias' defense of Mark be a defense of his having written a few things from memory. Moreover, the construction of the opening sentence permits the interpretation that Mark first translated Peter's written reminiscences and then added to them what he remembered from Peter's oral teaching. Taken together: what the opening sentence permits and what Papias' defense of Mark demands show the purport of the entire Papias passage to be that Mark first translated Peter's writing and then added to it other material from Peter's oral teaching. There were objections to the additions, and Papias meets these by pointing out that Mark, who was not merely the translator of Petrine writing but actually a disciple and follower of Peter himself, desired to preserve all the apostolic lore about Jesus that he could remember accurately and thus was not culpable in adding to his own translation some Petrine material from memory."

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

ON DEMYTHOLOGIZING THE TRINITY

The *Anglican Theological Review* (April 1961) under this title re-examines the theology of the ancient Christian church in view of the problems raised by Friedrich Gogarten in his book *Demythologizing and History*. The writer declares that he does not intend to demythologize the Trinity, but since Gogarten "has extended the term to cover his attempt to find a viable translation of the metaphysical doctrine of the Trinity" and since his book "attempts to carry the Bultmann challenge forward from the New Testament kerygma to the formulated doctrines of the church, from mythology to metaphysical proposition," he wishes to consider a number of questions stimulated by Gogarten's treatment of the incarnation. He reaches the conclusion: "A 'historical' interpretation of the Trinity would therefore be that God in himself is engaged in communicating himself in creation, revelation (both general and in Israel's history) and supremely in the Christ event, and constantly making the Christ event present in the church through the kerygma and the response of faith."

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

THE CONFESSIONS IN OUR CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

The *Lutheran World* (March 1961), a publication of the Lutheran World Federation, under this heading discusses the question whether the Lutheran Confessions can play a decisive role in building up the life of Christian congregations. The writer stresses the point that the Lutheran Confessions, except perhaps Luther's Small Catechism and the Augsburg Confession, are commonly assigned too much for academic, and not sufficiently for congregational use. As he points out, the Confessions are of the greatest importance for the congregation's life by shedding light upon the meaning of life, the most urgent problem of men. This is true especially as the meaning of life is seen in the

framework of the problem of sin and forgiveness. This, he says, is one of Lutheranism's most profound insights. In this connection the author suggests three weighty points: (1) We must keep the orientation to the problem of sin and grace central in our churchmanship. (2) We must recover the living connection between man-to-God relations and man-to-neighbor relations and must not allow any hiatus to develop here. (3) We must use the language most meaningful to modern man to communicate the message adequately. The writer closes this part of his essay with the fitting words: "Finally, the Confessions teach that we shall learn what love is and acquire the power to put the ideal of love into practice through the Savior Jesus Christ whom we find set forth in the Holy Word." The article concludes with a striking statement by Bishop Heinrich Meyer of Lübeck: "The Lutheran Confessions do not place the Lutheran Confessions in the center of our faith; they place Jesus Christ there."

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

THE 19TH ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE N. A. E.

Observing for the Committee on Lutheran Unity, the undersigned attended the 19th convention of The National Association of Evangelicals, held at the Civic Auditorium of Grand Rapids, Mich., April 10 to 14, 1961. Some thousand plus delegates representing conservative evangelicals of almost every Protestant denomination were in attendance, including Lutherans, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, Congregationalists, United Brethren, and a host of others.

The address by the editor of *Christianity Today*, the Rev. Dr. Carl F. H. Henry, was perhaps the high point of the program. He addressed a special luncheon gathering of almost 1,000 delegates on the subject "Theological Trends Facing Evangelicals Today."

In discussing the present theological situation in Protestantism he said:

"In Europe the tide has turned already from Barth to Bultmann, from neo-orthodoxy to neo-liberalism. Today Bultmann's theology is entrenched among pulpit intellectuals as firmly as Schleiermacher's, Ritschl's, or Barth's ever was. This means the essence of the Gospel (including the virgin birth, deity, atonement, bodily resurrection and second coming of Christ) is once more dismissed as myth; theology is again reduced to anthropology or to psychology of religion; divine revelation once more becomes simply another term for human reevaluation. In a word, the existential philosophy is substituted for biblical theology."

In his conclusion he suggested the following:

"I would like to see N. A. E. somehow stimulate great evangelical dedication to the enterprises of theology, evangelism, and social ethics. This can no longer be done successfully, I think, as an activity that simultaneously promotes N. A. E. The image of the movement on its 19th birthday is well established, and unaffiliated evangelicals (such as Southern Baptists, Missouri Synod, Christian Reformed, and many scholars in ecumenically identified denominations) may hesitate if their participation simultaneously implies organizational identification. But if the N. A. E. were to invite participation simply for the mutual pursuit of truth, with expenses for such activity as firmly and eagerly budgeted as is gasoline mileage for the regional secretaries, the spark might leap into a flame."

Other clergymen of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod who attended were Dr. Eugene R. Bertermann, president of the National Religious Broadcasters, and Dr. Oswald C. J. Hoffmann, the Lutheran Hour speaker, who addressed a large assembly at the closing luncheon on Friday, April 14, at 1 P.M., on the topic "What the World Needs."

The convention issued *A Declaration of*

the basic principles on which the N. A. E. intends to continue. It reads:

"I. The National Association of Evangelicals is a fellowship of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not a Church over churches nor does it exercise coercive influence upon its members.

"II. We affirm our faith in the sole authority of the Bible as the written word of God, infallible and final.

"III. We deplore the present national apathy in spiritual life, confusion in theology, rampant materialism in society and laxity in morals. Recognizing the only remedy to be a spiritual awakening, we urge the spread of the Gospel with renewed effort and intensified vigor in accordance with our Lord's command.

"IV. We adhere to the historic American principle of separation of church and state, thereby to preserve liberty and freedom. We are unalterably opposed to a totalitarian state whether materialistic or religious in its tyranny. We hold that strong public and private morality are bulwarks against degeneracy of liberty into license and replacement of freedom by force, and this morality is ultimately dependent on faith.

"V. To all who freely accept the Bible as the infallible Word of God and who experience the new birth through the power of the Holy Spirit, we offer fellowship and cooperation.

"VI. In this time of crisis let all believers give themselves to a careful study of God's Word, to private and family prayers, being careful to maintain a consistent witness before God and men."

THEODORE F. NICKEL

BRIEF ITEMS FROM THE NEWS BUREAU OF THE NLC

Geneva. — The Lutheran World Federation's new radio station in Ethiopia, "Voice of the Gospel," plans to begin local experimental broadcasts over a one-kilowatt trans-

mitter in September, Dr. Sigurd Aske, director of the broadcasting service, said here.

Operation of the experimental transmitter will be a prelude to full-scale broadcasting which is expected to start late in 1962, according to Dr. Aske, who stopped at LWF headquarters en route from Addis Ababa to meetings in northern Europe. When completed, the \$1,100,000 station will be one of the most powerful Christian missionary broadcasting centers in the world. Its two 100-kw shortwave transmitters are to beam religious and cultural programs in two dozen languages over a radius from Nigeria to Indonesia and from the Near East to South Africa.

The LWF radio director said ground has already been broken for some of the station's buildings and that construction bids will be opened in May. He predicted that the first buildings will be finished by August and that by the end of this year work will be well advanced on one of the two big transmitters.

Berlin. — Bishop Hanns Lilje vigorously warned representatives of 17 million German Lutherans here against giving an absolute theological color to their political views, no matter to which side of the Iron Curtain they belonged. "We can never — never — serve a political system theologically," the presiding bishop of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany (VELKD) declared in his official report at the body's general synod meeting in mid-April. "I would be grateful if it were understood that this is valid for both East and West." Dr. Lilje, who heads the 3,770,000-member Lutheran Church of Hannover, said many problems arising from Germany's divided East-West political situation were placing a heavy burden on the conscience and unity of the church in the country as a whole. In comparison, he said tensions between confessional groups have not menaced German

Evangelical unity anywhere near so much as have the discussions over the political road which Protestants in this country should follow.

Bishop Lilje stressed the weaknesses in Germany's "folk church" system by which Evangelical residents of each territory are automatically regarded as members of their corresponding *Landeskirchen*, although he firmly opposed any suggestion of discarding it hastily. He urged church leaders to look ahead and avoid undue adherence to past traditions in their patterns of church organization and life.

New York. — The United Lutheran Church in America has completed ratification of a merger with three other bodies that will bring into being a new denomination of 3,200,000 members to be known as the Lutheran Church in America. Approval by at least two thirds, or 22, of the ULCA's 32 synods was necessary, and this was achieved on May 23, when the Texas-Louisiana Synod, meeting in Houston, Tex., became the 22d and deciding synod to ratify the organic union. Among the first 22 synods to cast their ballots, 14 voted unanimously, and the eight others gave overwhelming endorsement, by a combined popular vote of 1,484 to 29, to the agreement of consolidation for the four-way merger.

Besides the ULCA, the uniting bodies are the Augustana Lutheran Church, the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (Suomi Synod), and the American Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Geneva. — (LWF). A Roman Catholic theologian advised the Lutheran World Federation here to develop its voice as a central teaching authority of global Protestantism's largest confessional constituency. This — rather than the fostering of full altar and pulpit fellowship among its member churches — should be the first consequence of a more serious pursual of the implications of the federation's precisely stated doctrinal

basis, said the Rev. Jerome Hamer, O.P., of Etiolles, France.

Father Hamer, who is rector of the Dominican Faculties at Etiolles, was one of four Christian theologians of major non-Lutheran traditions who commented on the nature of the LWF in the June number of the federation's quarterly, *Lutheran World*, published here. The others were the Rt. Rev. Leslie Newbigin, general secretary of the International Missionary Council and former bishop of the Church of South India; the Rt. Rev. Emilianos Timiadis, Greek Orthodox Bishop of Meloa and representative of the Ecumenical Patriarch to the World Council of Churches; and the Rev. Lewis S. Mudge, secretary of the theological department of the World Presbyterian (Reformed) Alliance.

Their articles dealt with the argument by a prominent German Lutheran dogmatician that it is an "anomaly" that the common organization of churches which confess the same doctrinal basis should be nothing more than "a free association" of bodies that do not even accord one another altar and pulpit fellowship. Referring to "the perspective opened up" by this argument of Prof. Peter Brunner, who is a member of the LWF Commission on Theology, Father Hamer asked: "Would it not be more logical to wish . . . in the first place, for the development of the teaching function of the Lutheran World Federation?"

The French theologian voiced the view that "if the federation is to evolve beyond the status of a 'free association' toward that of a church, this teaching function will have to be the first to receive attention." He characterized "the firm establishment of an effective teaching function on the level of the federation" as "a condition of the authenticity of the doctrinal basis" of the LWF.

Bishop Newbigin challenged Dr. Brunner's underlying Lutheran idea of the church "which gave absolute primacy to doctrine

and structure in the life of the Church. . . . Does a study of the New Testament really leave us with the picture of the Church of Christ as a series of independent associations based upon a doctrinal consensus and feeling their way towards forms of order and structure which are future and indeterminate? I cannot think so."

The former Church of Scotland missionary reiterated: "Order is not something secondary; it belongs with faith to the essential substance of the Church. It cannot be relegated to a subordinate 'sociological' area of discourse. . . . It is not something merely in the sphere of 'practical politics.' It is necessarily involved in a true theology of the Church."

While Father Hamer noted that because of the nature of its doctrinal basis "the ecclesiological problem of the World Council of Churches is radically different from that of the Lutheran World Federation," Bishop Newbigin questioned whether it was possible to have "a responsible discussion of the ecclesiastical nature of the LWF without going . . . beyond Lutheranism to all who confess Jesus Christ as God and Savior."

Similarly, Mr. Mudge stressed "the ecumenical dimension of the debate," stating that "we must inquire how our own particular confessional formulations are related to the stream of Christian tradition down the ages."

The U.S. Presbyterian theologian said, "I can think of no more relevant theological work for the world confessional organizations . . . than to prepare themselves to be partners in dialogue in the most responsible way possible" with other Christian groups.

In interpreting "the Orthodox point of view, expressed by an Orthodox clergyman," Bishop Timiadis took issue with another Lutheran assumption found in Professor Brunner's examination of the LWF: "that the Scriptures are the only authority." The Greek churchman posed the question: "Was

the principle 'sola scriptura' valid in the first century?" He warned that "if this principle is accepted, we run the danger of falling into a biblicistic legalism which is contrary to the very nature of the New Covenant. . . . It is beyond any doubt whatsoever that the oral tradition which guided the primitive Church preceded the New Testament. . . . Early Christianity, before becoming a written codified doctrine, had been a living doctrine, under the form of a worshipping community, a eucharistic assembly and an ecclesiastical society, including both the 'collegium episcoporum,' the college of bishops, and the 'laos,' the people."

With respect to the question of how much authority should be assigned to an international federation of churches having a common doctrinal basis, Bishop Timiadis advocated the Orthodox pattern, in which the different churches having "the same canonical authority" are autonomous but have a general assembly which, "guided by the Holy Spirit, settles all matters of discipline and doctrine."

Within the system, he said, certain bishops and churches are accorded "predominance in honor according to ancient historical privileges," and the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, "being the more ancient among the patriarchates, is commonly accepted as the first in dignity." However, he clarified, "No right is given to any patriarch to function as an authoritative agency expressing the voice of the Churches. It is only the assembly of all the bishops together with the pious laity which maintains the right of exercising this solemn prerogative."

Bishop Timiadis asserted that "the system of inter-church relationships in the Orthodox communion is not a pure human invention of canonical order and for administrative efficiency. We contend that it is established from apostolic times, confirmed by the ecumenical councils which were held in the name of the Holy Spirit."

He expressed hope that the LWF might "reach a solution of its problem by escaping the fragility of an irresponsible amorphous fellowship and establishing a sound, well-founded communion of sister Churches, in conformity with that ancient classical system that prevailed in the undivided Catholic Church before the lamentable great schism of 1054."

Dublin. — (LWF). Lutherans in the capital of the Irish republic now have their own church building for the first time in nearly a century. At a Pentecost festival service on May 21 they rededicated the renovated Saint Finian's Church here, which they have leased from Anglicans for 99 years at a shilling (\$0.14) a year. Officiating was Bishop Gösta Lundström of Strängnäs, Sweden.

Special guest at the service was the Anglican Archbishop of Ireland. Greetings from the Lutheran World Federation and the Lutheran Council of Great Britain were brought by Rev. William B. Schaeffer of London, LWF senior representative in the United Kingdom.

Lutherans formed their first congregation in Dublin in 1697 and erected their first church building here about three decades later. The original Lutheran church, however, apparently went out of existence in the late 19th century, and the present congregation has been developed only since World War II. Occasional services were started here in December 1952 by the Lutheran Council of Great Britain, and since early in 1955 Dublin has had a resident pastor, Rev. H. D. Mittrop from Germany. The membership of the congregation now totals about 200.

Sao Leopoldo, Brazil. — (LWF). This country's oldest and largest Lutheran synod — that of Rio Grande do Sul — celebrated its 75th anniversary on May 19 at the close of a four-day general council meeting here. Formed in 1886 by German settlers and their descendants, the Rio Grande Synod now has more than 300,000 members in the most

southern part of Brazil. They are grouped in 613 congregations served by 110 pastors.

The synod is nearly three times as big as the next-largest Lutheran body in this country, the 109,000-member Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil, which is an affiliate of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod of North America. Known officially as the Evangelical Church in Rio Grande do Sul, the synod is federated with three smaller Brazilian Lutheran synods in a 560,000-member body which belongs to the Lutheran World Federation. The Synodical Federation was constituted in 1949.

Participating in the celebration was Dr. Adolf Wischmann of Frankfurt, head of the foreign office of the Evangelical Church in Germany, which financially assists the federated synods. Presiding at sessions here was the Rev. Karl Gottschald of Sao Leopoldo, who has headed the synod since 1957.

Helsinki.—(LWF). Removal of legal bars to the ordination of women in the Finnish Lutheran Church will be recommended to the next church assembly by a special committee that has been studying the question.

This was revealed here by the semiweekly Christian paper *Kotimaa*, which said the full report of the five-member committee will be published before the end of this year. The quinquennial meeting of the church's supreme legislative body is scheduled to take place early in 1963.

The last church assembly in 1958 failed to give a required three-fourths favorable vote for a previous committee's proposal that women theological graduates be given a special office in the church, with most but not all the privileges of ordained clergy. Instead, the body deferred action and named another committee.

Kotimaa said the new committee's report has the approval of four of its members. It added that the dissenter, Dr. Erkki Kurki-Suonio, senior pastor of St. John's Church,

Helsinki, will attach a minority opinion to the committee report.

Acceptance of the committee recommendation would open the door legally for the National Church of this country to follow those of three other northern countries in admitting women to the ministry. The Danish Church has done so since 1948, but the first women Lutheran pastors were ordained in Sweden only last year, and the first one in Norway in March of this year. Implementation of the recommendation would require an amendment to existing church law. However, in Finland the Parliament can act on a proposal for church legislation only after the Church Assembly has approved it.

According to *Kotimaa*, the committee report will point out that the number of Finnish women completing theological studies has continued to rise, but that not enough have been entering the unordained parish service for which they were eligible. The paper quoted figures showing that by the end of last year the university faculty of theology here had 305 women graduates, of whom 54 completed their studies in the past four years.

A phenomenal increase is expected in the next few years. Sixty-four of the 134 new students who enrolled in the autumn of 1959 were women, and 99 of the 207 in the autumn of 1960. The latter new enrollments brought the total number of current theological students here up to 640, of whom 254 are women. At the Swedish-speaking Abo Academy, 23 of the 55 currently enrolled theological students are women. These two are the only Lutheran theological faculties in Finland.

In its majority report the committee expressed the judgment that existing church law does not specify that ordination candidates must be men. However, since the law has been generally taken to have that meaning, it proposed some changes that would clearly open the ministry to both sexes.