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## Theological Observer

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## THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER

### BRIEF ITEMS FROM THE NATIONAL LUTHERAN COUNCIL

#### HELSINKI ASSEMBLY TO HAVE ROMAN CATHOLIC OFFICIAL VISITORS

*Geneva.* — Roman Catholic authorities have notified the Lutheran World Federation that their church will send two official observers to the federation's fourth assembly in Helsinki this summer, LWF Executive Secretary Kurt Schmidt-Clausen announced here.

He said this would be the first time that Roman Catholic representatives will attend an assembly of the federation, or, as far as he knew, that of any other world confessional body. Dates of the assembly are July 30 to Aug. 11.

Present in the name of their church will be Father Johannes Witte, S. J., professor of Evangelical theology at the Gregorian Papal University in Rome, and the Rev. Dr. Peter Blaeser, M. S. C., member of the Johann Adam Möhler Institute and lecturer at the Theological Academy in Paderborn, Germany.

#### LWF WORLD SERVICE PROGRAM TOTALS \$2 MILLION FOR 1964

*Belgrade.* — A \$2 million annual program budget for interchurch aid, refugee assistance, and other service projects in 20 countries was approved here in mid-April by the Lutheran World Federation's Commission on World Service.

The resulting "statement of needs" will be submitted to LWF national committees and member churches for support during 1964. Action on the budget was taken after receiving reports which revealed that support for the LWF/WS worldwide program is now stronger than ever before.

"All the current items in our 1961—62 statement of needs were underwritten," Dr. Muetzelfeldt commented.

"In addition, the substantial amounts received as extra assurances indicate that several member churches are willing to contribute to interchurch aid and welfare services beyond the amounts called for in the statement of needs."

Toward the 1963 statement of needs, he reported, his department already has income assurances adding up to \$1,830,000. The expected donors include the Austrian and Italian Lutheran churches, in addition to the 1961—62 donors.

A major segment of the 1964 funds is intended to help European Lutheran churches that exist in environments not favorable to their normal development. However, considerable sums for churches in South Africa and Australia are included also in the interchurch aid program. Churches in other parts of Africa, Asia, and Latin America are assisted by other program units of the federation.

#### LUTHERANS CHIEF GIVERS TO ALGERIA AID PROGRAM

*Belgrade.* — During the first 12 months of the operation of the Christian Committee for Service in Algeria about 70 percent of its cash support was given by Lutheran churches and their agencies, it was reported at a Lutheran World Federation commission meeting here in mid-April.

Moreover, approximately 80 percent of the goods not donated by the government and distributed by the CCSA came from Lutheran sources, the LWF Commission on World Service was informed.

The CCSA is a common agency of 17 Christian organizations—international and national, interdenominational and confessional—established last year to bring relief and rehabilitation to millions of Algerians rendered destitute during their country's war



for independence. The Federation and the World Council of Churches are among its charter members.

#### FRANCKE TRICENTENARY MARKED IN HALLE AND WEST GERMANY

*Luebeck, Germany.* — Simultaneous celebrations in both parts of Germany during the latter half of March marked the 300th anniversary of the birth of this country's 17th-century pietist leader August Hermann Francke, whose influence encircled the globe.

The German Federal Republic observance took place in Lübeck, his birthplace, while that of the German Democratic Republic (DDR) centered in Halle, the university city with which Francke's great lifework is linked.

In a festival address Dr. Kurt Scharf of Berlin, council chairman of the Evangelical Church in Germany, called the simultaneous commemorations an evidence of the unbroken fellowship still held by German Protestantism.

At the Halle celebration the list of prominent churchmen from abroad was led by Archbishop Ilmari Salomies, head of the Lutheran Church of Finland, which still today treasures a strong pietistic tradition.

Others included two Lutheran churchmen from Czechoslovakia — Bishop A. L. Katina of the Slovak Church in Zvolen and Bishop Jiri Cymorek of the Silesian Church in Tesin (Teschen) — and Archbishop Sergius of Berlin, Russian Orthodox Exarch for central Europe.

#### LUTHER VOLUME IN JAPANESE SELLS BETTER THAN EXPECTED

*Tokyo.* — Sales of the initial book of a 12-volume Japanese edition of Martin Luther's writings unexpectedly surpassed 800 copies in its first month of appearance, it was disclosed on April 2.

The figure was reported to the Board of Directors of the Japan Lutheran Literature

Society at its 12th annual meeting here. The new book came out early in March.

Publication of the first Japanese version of the Reformer's works is made possible by capital funds of \$5,000 granted by the Lutheran World Federation's Department of Theology and \$7,000 by the Lutheran Brotherhood, a U. S. life insurance company.

It is the largest publication project in which the 11-year-old society is currently engaged. Between two and four volumes are expected to be issued each year until the series is complete. Scholars and translators have been preparing the manuscript since 1958.

The Rev. Douglas Swendseid, general secretary of the society, said the collection "has been eagerly anticipated by both Christian and non-Christian groups."

Another report presented to the directors here showed that sales of Christian books through the society's four retail outlets totaled more than 70 million yen (\$200,000) in 1962. Fifteen new books were published during the year, of which nine were by Japanese authors.

Still the society's "best seller" and one of this country's currently most popular Christian books is *Gemeinsames Leben (Life Together)*, by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, young German theologian who was martyred by the Nazis. It was translated and published by the society in 1960.

The board approved plans to publish for the first time a Japanese Lutheran hymnal. Until now Lutherans in this country have used a hymnbook produced by the United Church of Christ in Japan.

Final plans were approved also for establishment of a new bookstore in Sapporo on Hokkaido, Japan's northernmost island. The outlet will be opened on May 1 under the financial auspices of the Japan mission of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod. Present LLS bookstores are located in Tokyo, Nagoya, Kobe, and Kumamoto.