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THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER

BRIEF ITEMS FROM THE NATIONAL LUTHERAN COUNCIL

"LIGHT TIME" CONTINUES TO DRAW WARM RESPONSE

New York. — Television stations and viewers are continuing to show enthusiastic response for "Light Time," the National Lutheran Council's television show for children. Of the 125 stations presenting the quarter-hour series, approximately half are now rerunning programs telecast previously, it was reported by Mrs. Helen Stockton of the NLC's Radio-TV department. In addition, she said, there are indications that nearly all the stations still on a first-showing basis will rerun the programs.

A total of 104 "Light Time" episodes have been filmed, providing a complete two years of scheduling, Mrs. Stockton said. The series is offered free to individual viewing markets.

Viewer response to the series, which has been heralded as one of the most successful in the religious program field, also continues to be "very encouraging," Mrs. Stockton said. She reported that in the New York market, where "Light Time" is shown each Sunday at 8:30 A. M., about 1,500 cards and letters were received from viewers in a three-month period. Reaction has been comparatively good in many other areas, she added, with letters coming from adults as well as children of many ages.

NORTH EUROPEAN CHURCHMEN MEET IN EAST GERMANY

Greifswald, East Germany. — Scandinavian churchmen and theologians met with East German counterparts here in May for the annual sessions of the Nordic-German Convention.

The convention is an informal association which has been holding meetings since 1950 to promote ties between the Evangelical

churches of this country and those of Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Finland.

Presiding here was the organization's chairman, Dr. Conrad Bonnevie-Svendsen of Oslo, chairman of the Relief Committee of the Church of Norway and a member of the Lutheran World Federation's Commission on Stewardship and Congregational Life.

Host to the 1963 sessions was Bishop Friedrich-Wilhelm Krummacher, head of the Evangelical Church of Pomerania, chairman of the East German Evangelical Bishops' Conference, and a member of the LWF Executive Committee.

Among other prominent participants were Bishop Niklot Beste of Schwerin, head of the Lutheran Church of Mecklenburg; Bishop Emeritus John Cullberg of Västerås, Sweden; Bishop Halfdan Hogsbro of Lolland-Falster, Denmark; and Dr. Yrjö Salakka, pastor of the Meilahti church in Helsinki.

GERMAN EVANGELICAL MISSIONARY ROSTER SHOWS HUGE GAINS

Hamburg, Germany. — German Evangelical overseas missionary personnel have increased from 180 to 1,155 since the end of World War II, according to a 1963 yearbook published here.

It reported that the number — which includes doctors, nurses, and teachers as well as pastors — had more than doubled since 1952, when there were 499 German Evangelical missionaries abroad.

German Protestant missionary fields include India, Indonesia, South Africa, Ethiopia, Egypt, Japan, and New Guinea. Medical work is especially stressed in German missions.

Before 1958 mission work was left entirely to missionary societies. In that year, however, the Lutheran Church of Lübeck, Germany, sent a clergyman and a doctor to India.

Since then several regional churches have assumed responsibility for segments of the mission work, either by creating permanent missionary posts within their own organizations or by assuming financial sponsorship of individual missionary societies.

In order to coordinate mission forces and institutions within the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), its synod in March established an Evangelical Working Committee for World Mission that will work under the auspices of the EKD Council and the German Evangelical Missionary Council, which represents the mission societies.

With headquarters in Hamburg, the new agency will coordinate and promote such central mission institutions as the Missionary Academy at Hamburg University, the German Institute for Protestant Medical Missions in Tübingen, and the Society for Missionary Science.

In addition the committee will be responsible for the establishment of chairs for teaching about Christianity at Asian and African universities, and the distribution of Bible translations and other religious publications throughout the two continents.

LWF PLANS CONSULTATION ON CHURCH AND JEWS

Geneva. — An international consultation on "The Church and the Jewish People," organized by the Lutheran World Federation's Department of World Mission, will be held in Germany from April 26 to May 1, 1964, it was announced at LWF headquarters here.

Dr. Arne Sovik, director of LWF/WM, said the consultation would take place in the Loccum Evangelical Academy near Hannover and would have as its chairman the Abbot of Loccum and head of the Lutheran Church of Hannover, Bishop Hanns Lilje, immediate past president of the federation.

Invited will be theologians, church representatives, and "persons involved in the

general missionary enterprise, as well as missionaries to the Jews and laymen in daily contact with their Jewish neighbors," according to an authorizing action taken by the LWF Commission on World Mission.

The commission acted at a meeting last September in Neuendettelsau, Germany, after hearing recommendations from a conference committee on Jewish missions. The committee called upon CWM "to help the Lutheran churches and missions to see their special responsibility in this field and to help them rethink both their understanding of Christian witness as well as their attitude toward the Jewish people."

This, the committee said, involves:

1. "The need for individual Christians and theologians to enter into dialog with Jews about that which we have in common and about that in which we differ;

2. "The need for a reexamination of our theological conception of Israel past and present, and of our Lutheran understanding of the Old Testament and its use and interpretation in worship;

3. "The need for a study of our specifically Lutheran theological emphases (such as the distinction between Law and Gospel, faith and works) in relation to our view of historic and contemporary Judaism;

4. "The need for an honest and penetrating examination of the attitude of Lutherans to Jews since the time of the Reformation;

5. "The need to confront our churches as a whole with their responsibility towards the Jews and not let them feel that Jewish missions are a hobby of a few self-appointed individuals;

6. "The need to reevaluate the content and character of the Christian witness as it relates to Israel."

LUTHERANS IN ECUADOR FORM NATIONAL FEDERATION

Guayaquil, Ecuador. — Three Lutheran groups in this country have joined to form

a federation. Two are large international congregations organized by pastors serving under the Committee on Latin America of the Lutheran World Federation, and the third is a mission of the World Mission Prayer League, an independent North American society.

Started in 1952, the WMPL work centers in Cuenca, while the LWF-related congregations, both formed in the past decade, are located at Quito and Guayaquil. On the basis of the constitution which the three groups have drafted, they hope to have a federation that will be accorded a recognized status by the LWF.

Washington, D. C. — Lutheran retirement homes have received more than \$34 million through programs of the Federal Government. According to figures made available by the Housing and Home Finance Agency here, 10 Lutheran projects for senior citizens have received direct government loans totaling \$7,987,784 since 1961, when this type of financial aid became available. This low-interest money is for 748 living units. In addition agency officials said that they have either committed or are in the process of approving mortgage insurance totaling \$26,457,890 for 24 housing projects identified as Lutheran, which will provide 2,299 units for the elderly. Since 1956 the Federal Government has insured mortgages for multiple dwellings to be used by senior citizens.

Although identified as Lutheran, some of the 34 projects have no official connection with Lutheran church bodies or congregations. However, figures have been included in these totals if the project had (1) the terms "Luther" or "Lutheran" in its title, (2) the terms "Luther" or "Lutheran" in the sponsoring organization's name, or (3) the sponsoring agency or institution listed in the 1963 Lutheran Health and Welfare Directory. The annual directory is published by the National Lutheran Social Welfare Con-

ference, which has headquarters in New York.

Largest loan approved by HHFA's Community Facilities Administration (CFA) of the 10 Lutheran projects was for \$2,356,800 and went to First Lutheran Developments, Inc., San Diego, Calif. The sponsoring organization will build a 14-story, 202-unit apartment building to be known as Luther Tower. It will be adjacent to First Lutheran Church, a congregation of the Lutheran Church in America, in downtown San Diego.

Largest mortgage to a Lutheran group approved by HHFA's Federal Housing Administration (FHA) was for \$4,904,000 and went to Lutheran Senior Citizens Foundation, Miami, Fla. Included in this project, which is known as East Ridge, are 320 living units. East Ridge is sponsored by a federation of Lutheran congregations holding membership in the Florida-Georgia District of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod.

The Housing and Home Finance Agency is responsible for the principal Federal activities and program concerned with housing and community development. Nonpublic or private housing expansion is carried on through two of HHFA's five units, the CFA and FHA, which administer funds and insurance programs to provide homes and apartments for senior citizens.

The Community Facilities Administration has a direct loan program which nonprofit corporations may utilize for construction of housing for persons 62 years of age or older. The Federal Housing Administration insures private mortgage loans for the construction or purchase and rehabilitation of rental housing projects of eight or more units for elderly persons.

Sponsors that qualify for a Federal loan pay CFA a current interest rate of 3½%. Those who obtain funds through local lending institutions to construct multiple living units for the elderly and who qualify for the

FHA program must obtain the private loan at an interest rate not to exceed 5¼%. Added to this is an FHA mortgage insurance premium of ½% of the outstanding loan balance.

A report just released by the President's Council on Aging said that during the year ending June 30 the Federal Government will spend or administer \$17,000,000,000 for the nearly 18 million people 65 or over.

The report, entitled "The Older American," notes that an adequate home for an older person is often quite different from what would be adequate for a younger person. Among other things the report said that older people have smaller incomes and usually are in poorer health.

Problems of the older American "have come dangerously close to making him a second-class citizen," the special Presidential council reported.

A recent foundation-financed study of quality of housing of persons receiving Social Security payments showed, the report stated, that:

—Forty-five percent of all aged living in households were classified as being in need of better accommodations, based on the quality of the housing or the living arrangements with relatives.

—Eighty percent were living in houses at least 30 years old, and 40 percent in houses at least 51 years old.

—The aged in poorest health, by and large, occupied the poorest housing.

"The Older American" points out that "despite the unpleasant view these facts conjure, the outlook for improvement is bright. For in no area of Federal housing programs has progress during the past two years been more dramatic than in housing for the elderly."

The progress, it was noted, has been based on cooperation between private groups and governmental agencies with emphasis on

local initiative and local action. "Private developers and religious and labor groups have built retirement villages, mainly with housing purchased by the occupants and mainly in warmer parts of the country. Religious groups have stepped up the building of residential facilities for the aged and have introduced the residence club or large apartment-type building."

The report emphasized that a suitable place to live — a house, an apartment, whatever it may be — is a necessity for the older American who wants to live a useful and independent life, just as it is for a younger person.

TESTIMONIAL DINNER GIVEN MISSOURI SYNOD'S PR HEAD

Bronxville, N. Y. — Dr. Oswald C. J. Hoffmann, who is leaving the post of public relations director of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod to devote full time to the Lutheran Hour radio program, was honored here on June 3.

Some 200 persons attended a worship service at Village Lutheran Church and a testimonial dinner at Concordia Collegiate Institute, where Dr. Hoffmann served as professor and public relations director for eight years prior to assuming his present position.

Dr. Hoffmann, who has been director of public relations for the Missouri Synod ever since the department was organized in 1948, will begin his work as full-time Lutheran Hour speaker on July 1. For the past eight years he has been speaker on the worldwide broadcast in addition to his public relations duties.

Among those who paid tribute to Dr. Hoffmann was Dr. John W. Behnken of Fort Wayne, Ind., who headed the Missouri Synod for 27 years up to 1962 and is now its Honorary President.

Other Lutheran leaders who delivered testimonials were Dr. Paul C. Empie, executive director of the National Lutheran Council;

the Rev. Theodore Wittrock, executive secretary of the American Lutheran Publicity Bureau; Dr. Albert E. Meyer, president of Concordia Collegiate Institute; Dr. Alfred W. Trinklein, pastor of St. Matthew Lutheran Church in New York City, where Dr. Hoffmann has been preaching associate; Mr. Elmer Kraemer, publicity director of the Lutheran Hour; and Dr. Adolf F. Meyer, chairman of the Missouri Synod's Board for Public Relations.

Testimonials were also given by Dr. Claud D. Nelson, of the National Conference of Christians and Jews; Dr. Herbert S. Mekeel, past president of the National Association of Evangelicals; Dr. Robert T. Taylor, an executive secretary of the American Bible Society; Miss Lillian Block, managing editor of Religious News Service; and Miss Pamela Ilott, in charge of religious programming for the Columbia Broadcasting System.

The Rev. Norman Temme, associate director of public relations for the Missouri Synod, gave the invocation. Master of ceremonies was Mr. Roy C. Frank, a member of the Synod's Board for Public Relations.

Dr. Hoffmann and his family will move from New York City to St. Louis sometime

during the summer. He is scheduled to make a month-long trip to Japan in August to lecture at retreats for U. S. Air Force chaplains. He will also visit Lutheran Hour installations in the Far East.

Started in 1930, the Lutheran Hour is broadcast by some 1,200 stations in this country and 129 stations abroad and is heard by an estimated 30,000,000 persons in 43 languages.

**REP. WALTER, A LUTHERAN, DIES;
SERVED 30 YEARS**

Washington, D. C.—Congressman Francis E. Walter, a member of St. John's Lutheran Church, Easton, Pa., was buried in Arlington National Cemetery here.

Mr. Walter, a Democrat who held a Congressional seat for 30 years, died May 31 of leukemia, cancer of the blood.

A veteran of World Wars I and II, he was buried with full military honors from the Fort Myer chapel near the National Cemetery. Mr. Walter attained the rank of Lieutenant Commander in the Navy.

The Rev. John F. Steinbruck of Easton, pastor of the Congressman's home congregation, conducted the chapel funeral service.