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## THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER

### BRIEF ITEMS FROM THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD

#### MISSOURI SYNOD TO EXTEND TRAINING IN CARIBBEAN

*St. Louis.* — Extension of its theological training program in the Caribbean area was approved here by the Board of Missions in North and South America of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, the Rev. Dr. William H. Hillmer, executive director of the board, has announced.

The new program will include in-residence training on the seminary level. Previously the Missouri Synod has conducted in-service training in the field for its Caribbean workers.

The Missouri Synod has indicated its willingness to receive students from other Lutheran groups for the seminary, which will probably be located in Mexico City, Dr. Hillmer said.

A proposal for a joint seminary in the Caribbean area is being considered by parent Lutheran bodies in the United States, but no decision is expected until 1966.

#### "THIS IS THE LIFE" TV PROGRAM EVALUATED

*St. Louis.* — Statistical measurements on the number of persons converted should not be the basis for judging the success of Christian radio and television ministries, the Rev. Dr. William H. Hillmer, chairman of the missions division of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, told a television evaluation session here last week.

Television station executives, program producers, theologians, and churchmen met for two days to evaluate the Missouri Synod's half-hour television program "This Is the Life" and to offer suggestions for its improvement. The dramatic program is currently telecast on more than 350 stations in the

United States and Canada on a sustaining basis.

"The primary purpose of all broadcasting by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, its congregations, and its agencies must be to preach the whole Word of God," Dr. Hillmer told the group. He explained that a number of factors including "This Is the Life," The Lutheran Hour, Sunday schools, and other evangelistic endeavors help bring people into the church.

Queried on the possibility of bringing name stars into the 12-year-old television program, Producer Sam Hersh of Hollywood said, "Our star is Jesus Christ. We're glad to rise or fall with Him."

Dr. Eugene R. Bertermann, executive secretary of Lutheran Television Productions, cited facts and figures on the growth of television in foreign countries. He suggested "This Is the Life" might be on the threshold of great opportunities to expand its coverage throughout the world.

### BRIEF ITEMS FROM THE NATIONAL LUTHERAN COUNCIL

#### STRASBOURG TO BE CENTER FOR LUTHERAN RESEARCH

*Strasbourg, France.* — This Alsatian city has been chosen as the center for work under the newly established Lutheran Foundation for Inter-Confessional Research, which is to carry forward its investigation into the theological boundaries between churches.

The decision was taken here at the first meeting of the foundation's board of trustees, under the chairmanship of Bishop Hermann Dietzfelbinger of Munich, head of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria. While here, the six board members signed the foundation's incorporation papers in the presence of a Swiss consular official, since the body's legal seat will be in Geneva.



The foundation is to continue and develop the program of inter-confessional research that was begun in February 1960 by a special commission of the Lutheran World Federation. Its initial study concerns modern Roman Catholicism.

Establishment of the foundation was approved by the federation's Fourth Assembly at Helsinki last August and its board of trustees was elected by the LWF executive committee at a meeting there immediately afterward.

#### SAYS CHURCH SHOULD DECIDE WHEN CHILDREN MAY COMMUNE

*Oslo.*—A new Norwegian law being prepared concerning confirmation in the national Lutheran Church should say nothing about the age at which children may receive Holy Communion, the weekly *Var Kirke* has urged here.

Under legislation now in force, it is illegal to take the Sacrament of the Altar before the age of 14. The paper contended that the question of children's admittance to the Lord's Supper should be examined within the church, unhindered by any legal factor.

*Var Kirke* labeled as "monstrous" the present situation in which parents who took their unconfirmed children to the Holy Table would be guilty of breaking public law.

Current legislation on confirmation, dating from 1911, stipulates that it is through this rite that admission to Holy Communion is obtained. Confirmation was introduced into Norway in 1736, and the age limit was set at 14 in 1759.

It was pointed out that in Denmark the confirmation law was changed in 1909, giving children permission to commune "when the minister is willing to receive them as communicants."

#### \$70 TO \$100 PER MEMBER GIVEN BY LUTHERANS IN SEVEN BODIES

*New York.*—Seven Lutheran church bodies ranked from 18th to 31st in giving for

all purposes last year among 42 denominations in the United States, it was reported here by the Department of Stewardship and Benevolence of the National Council of Churches.

A statistical summary issued by the NCCCUSA department showed an average per-member contribution of \$68.76 for all causes in 1962, a decrease of 0.35 percent over the previous year, among the bodies that submitted figures.

In 18th place, as it was last year, and still first among denominations with a million or more members, was The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. It had an average contribution of \$100.66, compared to \$100.51 in 1961.

The Free Methodist Church, a 52,535-member body, led all the denominations reporting with \$312.58, followed by the 37,753-member Wesleyan Methodist Church with \$246.40 and the 40,375-member Evangelical Free Church with \$222.49.

Contributions reported by the Protestant bodies covered in the National Council's survey totaled a record \$2,799,670,577. Of this amount, \$2,292,731,491, or 81.89 percent, was earmarked for congregational expenditures, and \$506,939,086, or 18.11 percent, for benevolences, including home and foreign missions.

Per-member giving for congregational expenses in the 42 church bodies was \$57.18, an increase of 2.03 percent. For all benevolences, the per-member figure was \$12.45, a decrease of 3.9 percent. The latter included a per-member gift for foreign missions of \$2.18 for 1962, a loss of 1.4 percent.

The Rev. T. K. Thompson, executive director of the NCC's Stewardship Department, said the percentage decreases in per-member giving were attributable to an increase in total membership without a corresponding increase in dollars contributed. He noted that a large part of this was due to denominational



mergers and a consequent change in reporting procedures.

Four of the churches reporting a year ago are now merged in the Lutheran Church in America — the United Lutheran Church, Augustana Lutheran Church, Suomi Synod and American Evangelical Lutheran Church. The LCA ranked 21st in per-member contributions for all purposes with \$84.98.

Third in this category among Lutherans, and 23rd in relation to the other Protestant bodies reporting, was the Lutheran Free Church with \$78.68. This was the final report from the LFC, which as of last February united with the American Lutheran Church.

All seven Lutheran bodies reporting exceeded the average in giving for all purposes, six bettered the average for congregational expenses and for benevolences, but only two surpassed the average in gifts to foreign missions.

The Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches was first in gifts for foreign missions, with \$3.43 per member, replacing the Lutheran Free Church, which reported an average of \$3.10.

Lutheran per-member contributions for the various categories were:

All purposes — Missouri Synod, 18th, \$100.66; Lutheran Church in America, 21st, \$84.98; Lutheran Free Church, 23rd, \$78.68; Evangelical Lutheran Synod, 25th, \$76.68; Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Church,

26th, \$74.77; American Lutheran Church, 30th, \$72.47; and Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, 31st, \$70.76.

Congregational expenses — LCA, \$71.38; Missouri Synod, \$78.67; LFC, \$63.19; SELC, \$62.56; ALC, \$58.83; ELS, \$58.80; and Wisconsin, \$56.75.

Benevolences — Missouri Synod, \$21.99; Wisconsin, \$18.02; ELS, \$17.88; LFC, \$15.48; ALC, \$13.64; LCA, \$13.60; and SELC, \$8.19.

Foreign Missions — SELC, \$3.43; LFC, \$3.10; LCA, \$2.12; Wisconsin, \$1.98; ALC, \$1.96; Mo. Synod, \$1.84; and ELS, \$0.53.

Five Lutheran bodies, ranging in size from 1,500 to 12,500 members, did not participate in the National Council survey.

#### RETIRED CHAPLAIN NAMED TO LWR POST

*New York.* — The Rev. James F. Patterson, a retired United States Air Force chaplain, has been named an assistant executive secretary on the Lutheran World Relief staff.

The action was taken here by the board of directors of LWR — the material aid agency which represents the participating bodies of the National Lutheran Council and The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod.

Mr. Patterson assumed his new duties Nov. 1. The position, a newly created one which expands the agency's executive staff, includes the responsibility of supervising overseas programs in a number of countries.