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THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER

MISSOURI CHURCH IN INDIA VOTES TO JOIN FEDERATION

Nagercoil (Kerala), India.—Affiliation with the Federation of Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India has been given final approval by the India Evangelical Lutheran Church, a "sister church" of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (U.S.A.).

Taken at the IELC's fourth biennial convention here in mid-November, the decision means that the 35,000-member church will form part of an organization which is a member of the World Council of Churches.

Until now the IELC has had only an observer relationship with the federation, which is the common agency of eight other Indian Lutheran churches having a combined membership of 718,000.

Seven of the eight churches are members of the Lutheran World Federation, and the FELCI also serves as the Indian National Committee of the LWF. However, in joining the Indian federation the IELC would not be placed in any organizational relationship with the LWF.

Outgrowth of Missouri Synod mission work in South India begun nearly 70 years ago, the IELC was organized in 1958. At its second convention in 1960 it expressed a desire to join the FELCI, but a final decision was postponed then and again in 1962.

At its 1964 convention, which was attended by about 35 delegates and several visitors from abroad, the church also voted to take over the mission work of the Missouri Synod in neighboring Ceylon.

Delegates elected the Rev. N. J. Ezekiel of Ambur to a second term as general secretary of the church.

Among the attending guests from overseas were Dr. H. H. Koppelman, Executive

Secretary, and Dr. Paul F. Bente, Jr., recording secretary of the Missouri Synod's Board for World Missions.

CANADIAN LUTHERANS LOOK FORWARD TO NEW AGENCY

Kitchener, Ont.—The Canadian Lutheran Council looked forward at its 12th annual meeting here to the time when it will be succeeded by a new and more representative inter-Lutheran agency.

Dr. Earl J. Treusch, executive director of the CLC, told councillors from The American Lutheran Church and Lutheran Church in America that "all of us are jubilant at the possibilities of broadened programming and greater development which will be inherent in the new council."

To be called the Lutheran Council in Canada, the new association will include the territorial units of the ALC, LCA, and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Plans for a similar partnership are nearing completion by the parent bodies in the United States.

Dr. Treusch pointed out that in anticipation of the new agency joint study and work are already being undertaken by the present council and the Missouri Synod. A committee to plan Lutheran observances of Canada's Centenary in 1967 has been set up, he said. Study meetings on Canadian missions have been arranged. In welfare a study on institutional chaplaincy service has begun. A co-operative Committee on Scouting has also become operative.

"These examples," he said, "will indicate the rapidly growing spirit of good will and confidence in inter-Lutheran circles in Canada."

Dr. Treusch announced that the Executive Committee of the 50-million-member Lu-

theran World Federation will meet in Canada in 1967.

He also noted that the Lutheran churches in Canada will be one of the seven major denominations participating in the proposed Christian Pavilion at EXPO '67 in Montreal, "an event," he said, "of great historical significance."

The Division of Student Service, observing its 10th anniversary, reported a steady growth in its ministry since 1955. Today the division has a full-time executive secretary, five chaplains on five university campuses, three seminary interns, and 33 contact pastors. A proposed plan of future development calls for doubling the number of chaplains by 1970 and for \$50,000 in capital funds to help provide student centers for the various campuses in the coming 5-year period.

In 1956 the Lutheran Church became the first denomination in Canada to have a full-time chaplain for university work. He was the Rev. Donald H. Voigts, who has been executive secretary of the division since 1962 and was reelected to another term.

LWR REELECTS DR. FRY, ITS PRESIDENT SINCE '45

New York. — Directors of Lutheran World Relief reelected Dr. Franklin Clark Fry, president of the Lutheran Church in America, as president of the overseas material aid agency.

A founder of the agency, Dr. Fry has headed LWR since it was organized in 1945.

Other officers reelected were the Rev. Edwin A. Nerger, chairman of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod's Board of World Relief, secretary, and Dr. Paul C. Empie, executive director of the National Lutheran Council, treasurer.

The elections were held during a board meeting here that followed the corporation's annual meeting on Feb. 2.

LWR serves the participating church bodies of the NLC, the Lutheran Church in

America, the American Lutheran Church, and the Board of World Relief of the Missouri Synod.

AUSTRALIAN MERGER WOULD CANCEL MEMBERSHIP IN LWF

Adelaide, (South) Australia. — Australia's two Lutheran church bodies will act this year on an officially sponsored union plan that would leave the Lutheran World Federation without any member church in this country.

A specific provision to this effect is included in a document of union adopted unanimously on Jan. 11 by a joint meeting of the two churches' intersynodical committees, which are charged with matters relating to Australian Lutheran unity.

If both adopt it, the only immediate effect would be mutual recognition of pulpit and altar fellowship. However, it would commit them to go ahead with plans for the formation of a united church.

The document points out that union would automatically terminate all existing external ties of both churches.

Most important of such ties are the UELCA's church fellowship with the American Lutheran Church, its participation in the international Lutheran Mission New Guinea, its LWF membership, and the ELCA's church fellowship with the Missouri and Wisconsin synods.

Concerning them the union plan makes these provisions:

1) "We face the immediate obligation of having to determine our future common relationship to the churches with which we severally have been in fellowship."

2) Continuing support to "the native Lutheran churches in New Guinea" is pledged, but "we declare that we do not hereby enter into any direct church fellowship with the other supporting bodies" — the ALC and the Neuendettelsau and Leipzig mission societies of Germany.

3) "We are agreed not to seek affiliation with the Lutheran World Federation until the implications of such affiliation are resolved to the satisfaction of the united church."

Dr. Max Lohe, president general of the UELCA, explained that this meant that federation membership will not be considered until "the ecclesiological problem of the LWF has been settled by the federation itself."

The document itself includes this "declaration concerning our attitude to the Lutheran World Federation":

1) The LWF "has clearly indicated its intention to be a federation of churches and not a church. There is no reason to doubt the genuineness of this intention. However, the ecclesiological problem still remains: Can a federation with a specific doctrinal basis act in essential church work (*in sacris*) on behalf of its member churches without itself assuming the character of church in the New Testament sense?"

"This problem is unresolved within the federation itself, for member churches not in church fellowship with other member churches have been asked to give their reasons for not entering into church fellowship with them."

2) "In the uniting churches there are some who hold that membership in the Lutheran World Federation is not contrary to the Word of God, while others hold that it is."

3) "In view of these facts and because Lutheran union is for Scriptural and practical reasons the paramount duty of the Lutheran churches in Australia, we are agreed not to seek affiliation with the Lutheran World Federation until the implications of such affiliation are resolved to the satisfaction of the united church."

To further justify the position taken on LWF membership, the document asserts that

"membership in an association or federation of churches is in itself neither bidden nor forbidden in the Holy Scriptures, so that it is an adiaphoron and therefore a matter of free choice for a church in keeping with its confessional character and such principles as it may hold to be necessary for its well-being."

Committee agreement on the plan was characterized as "a real breakthrough" in Australian Lutheran unity efforts which have been deadlocked since 1952 over the issue of "sinful unionism"—the description applied by the ELCA to the UELCA's associations in the Lutheran Mission New Guinea and the LWF.

It was in 1952 that the intersynodical committees finished a 4-year task of drafting theses of agreement which were adopted by both churches.

The UELCA interpreted this as the achievement of sufficient doctrinal agreement to warrant pulpit and altar fellowship and practical steps toward union, but the ELCA refused to go further until the question of the churches' external associations was settled.

Last year, after two years' work, the faculties of Australia's two Lutheran theological seminaries—the UELCA's Immanuel and the ELCA's Concordia—completed an assignment from the intersynodical committees to work out a statement on "The Theology of Fellowship and Cooperation."

The statement was accepted at a joint meeting of the committees early in December. A subcommittee was then named to present to the Jan. 11 meeting what has come to be called the Document of Union. Unanimous adoption at the latter meeting took place after the document was "thoroughly discussed and evaluated," it was reported. The ELCA took favorable action at its March meeting in Toowoomba, Queensland. The UELCA will act at its meeting in October.

In the document's preamble it is stated that "we believe that the union between our

churches is (God's) holy will for us at this time" and "we . . . give each other the solemn pledge to unite together. . . ."

VALPARAISO UNIVERSITY RECEIVES SECOND \$1 MILLION GIFT

Valparaiso, Ind.—For the second time in five months Valparaiso University here has announced receipt of a \$1 million gift, President O. P. Kretzmann announced after a meeting of the university's board of directors. The gift will be used for the Julius and Mary Neils Science Memorial Building. The previous gift was a bequest from William A. Gellersen and will be used to erect a new administration building.

Nine children and eight grandchildren have contributed sums ranging from \$2,500 to \$375,000 for the building of the Center of Science on the university's new campus. The donors live in nine states and Canada. Julius Neils was the former president of the Neils Lumber Co., which he founded in 1895 after brief careers in teaching and the hardware business. He died in 1933.

A grant under the Higher Educational Facilities Act has been recommended to the U. S. Office of Education by the Indiana Commission on Higher Education Facilities to supplement the gift from the Neils family. The first unit of the proposed \$3 million Science Center will house facilities for the chemistry and biology departments. Subsequent units will house additional classrooms for chemistry, biology, and mathematics, as well as laboratories for the physics department.

The new unit will be the first major instructional building of the college of arts and sciences to be located on the East campus. Pending approval of federal funds it is hoped construction will begin early in spring, and completion will come prior to the opening of the 1966-67 school year.

President Kretzmann also announced the

erection in the near future of a new admissions building and an addition to Moellering Library. The Valparaiso University Guild has pledged \$40,000 toward the new one-story admissions building, and friends of the university are contributing \$100,000 to add a third floor to the library.

WELFARE AGENCIES WIN MISSOURI SYNOD APPROVAL

St. Louis.—Nine welfare agencies are included in the first list of agencies to be granted accreditation by the Department of Social Welfare of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, according to Henry F. Wind, department Executive Secretary. The action came in response to a resolution of the Synod and approval of the procedures and standards by the Synod's Board of Directors.

Included in the initial list are: East Ridge Retirement Village, Miami; Lutheran Child Welfare Association, River Forest, Ill.; Lutheran Social Services, Fort Wayne; Lutheran Home Finding Society, Fort Dodge, Iowa; Wartburg Lutheran Home for the Aging, Brooklyn; Lutheran Child and Family Service, San Francisco; Lutheran Home for the Aged, Westlake, Ohio; Lutheran Association for Works of Mercy, West Roxbury, Mass.; Lutheran Child Welfare Association, New York.

Additional agencies are expected to receive accreditation in the near future, Dr. Wind reported. Aim of the accreditation, which is voluntary on the part of the agency, is "to assist in the establishment of standards and improvements in the social welfare program within the Synod," Dr. Wind said. Currently 46 social welfare agencies are operated by organizations affiliated with the Synod.

ARMY CHAPLAIN BECOMES MISSOURI SYNOD PERSONNEL DIRECTOR

St. Louis.—Chaplain (Col.) John F. Gaertner has been named the first Director of Personnel for The Lutheran Church—

Missouri Synod, Dr. Walter F. Wolbrecht, Synod's Executive Director, has announced. He will assume his new position at the headquarters building on or after April 1, 1965.

The 57-year-old clergyman served congregations in Mexico and Arkansas before entering the military chaplaincy in 1939. He served as theater chaplain in the south of Europe at the close of World War II. In the postwar period he administered all the Army service troops in Germany. He has twice been designated president of the United States Army Chaplain Board, a post he currently holds with headquarters at Fort George E. Meade, Md.

CONGREGATION SEEN PRIMARY OUTLET FOR CHURCH WELFARE

Los Angeles.—Congregations may ultimately be the primary channel of expression for the church's social welfare concern, the National Lutheran Council was told at its 47th annual meeting here.

The Rev. G. S. Thompson of New York, executive secretary of the NLC's Division of Welfare, based his forecast on the continuing growth of public welfare and its effect on church-related programs.

"The creeping tendency to become a welfare state has now been all but realized in our nation," he declared. "From the cradle of the illegitimate child to the grave of the social security client, the state has accepted the duty of providing care for its people."

If the pattern of the welfare state in Europe, and especially in Scandinavia, is followed here, he continued, "the church may well find itself without a welfare program, at least in the traditional sense."

The address amplified his division's written report in which he held that church-

related programs are being underwritten more by fees from clients and state purchase-in-service contracts than by church contributions.

The council was told further that as a result "the element of charity is also tending to decrease in our church agencies."

"And it also calls into question," Mr. Thompson added, "whether there is anything unique about church welfare, or Lutheran welfare services, which a public or other voluntary welfare agency could not render."

The executive contended that "the role of the congregation among its own members" and in its community may eventually replace the traditional role of the church in welfare.

At the same time he stressed that "this is not to say that the skills to which we have trained so many social workers are to be cast aside as unnecessary to the congregation," and added:

"The future will see each parish having access to the guidance of such trained persons, either as a part of its staff or available for consultation from a Lutheran agency.

"Under the leadership of pastors awakened to the challenge of diakonia (service), church members will be trained to recognize the hidden needs of their neighbors and to give intelligent help to troubled people all around them."

Disputing the claim that the congregation is no longer a relevant unit of society, Mr. Thompson emphasized that "the role of the congregation in an urban, mass society must become even more important than ever."

"The congregation is destined to be the arena where the love of God will have its real test in the lives of Christians who look for meaning in an impersonal, computered, automated, and regimented society," he said.