

9-1-1967

Approved Workman: In Memoriam John Theodore Mueller

Martin H. Franzmann

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm>



Part of the [History of Christianity Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Franzmann, Martin H. (1967) "Approved Workman: In Memoriam John Theodore Mueller," *Concordia Theological Monthly*. Vol. 38, Article 49.

Available at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm/vol38/iss1/49>

This Editorial is brought to you for free and open access by the Print Publications at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Concordia Theological Monthly by an authorized editor of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact seitzw@csl.edu.

CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY

Approved Workman
MARTIN H. FRANZMANN

History and Theology in the Writings
of the Chronicler

PETER R. ACKROYD

Ezekiel 28 and the Fall of the First Man

NORMAN C. HABEL

Preaching from the Old Testament

CARL GRAESSER, JR.

Overview of Pastoral Counseling

LEONHARD C. WUERFFEL

Homiletics

Book Review

Vol. XXXVIII

September 1967

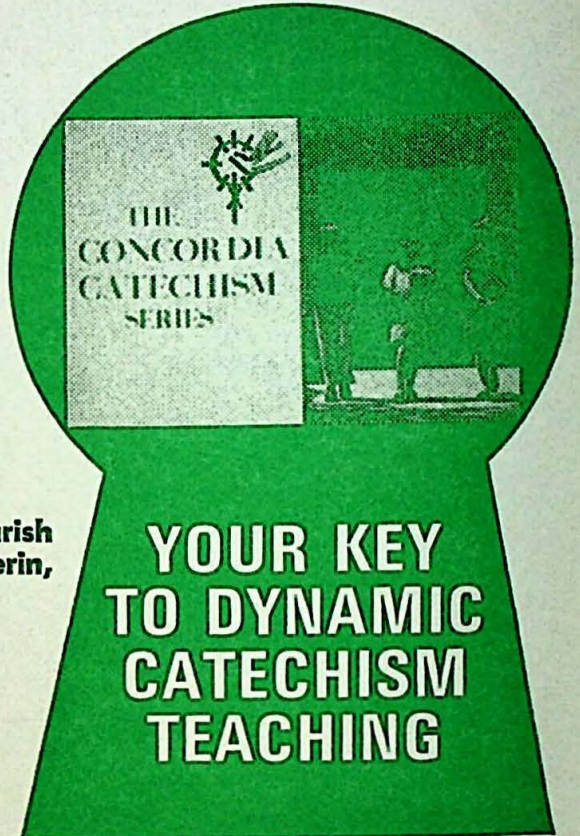
No. 8

Concordia Theological Monthly, Vol. 38 [1967], Art. 49.
"I BELIEVE THE PUBLICATION OF THESE CATECHISMS IS THE BIGGEST STEP FORWARD WE HAVE EVER TAKEN IN THE PRODUCTION OF GOOD, USABLE, UP-TO-DATE CATECHISM TEACHING MATERIAL."

— **George H. Sommermeyer, pastor,**
Resurrection, St. Louis

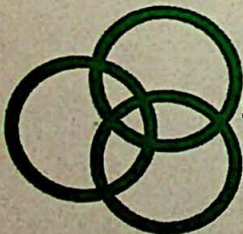
THE NEW CONCORDIA CATECHISM SERIES

**Produced by the Board of Parish
Education, Dr. Walter M. Wangerin,
Editor.**



Dedicated to God at the New York Synodical Convention 1967

The complete in-depth story of this all-new, graded 3-course catechism series is colorfully presented in the PROSPECTUS shown above. It's an interesting, important tool for using these dynamic teaching materials in your fall confirmation classes and school program. Save your PROSPECTUS. It's a story worth reading.



**Free PROSPECTUS available from CONCORDIA PUBLISHING
HOUSE 3558 South Jefferson, St. Louis, Mo. 63118**



CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY

Volume XXXVIII

September 1967

Number 8

The Theological Journal of
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH — MISSOURI SYNOD

Edited by
THE FACULTY OF CONCORDIA SEMINARY
SAINT LOUIS, MISSOURI

CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY is published monthly, except July-August bimonthly, by Concordia Publishing House, 3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis, Mo. 63118, to which all business correspondence is to be addressed. \$3.50 per annum, anywhere in the world, payable in advance. Second-class postage paid at St. Louis, Mo. © 1967 Concordia Publishing House. Printed in U. S. A.

CONCORDIA PUBLISHING HOUSE
SAINT LOUIS, MISSOURI

Contents

Approved Workman MARTIN H. FRANZMANN	499
History and Theology in the Writings of the Chronicler PETER R. ACKROYD	501
Ezekiel 28 and the Fall of the First Man NORMAN C. HABEL	516
Preaching from the Old Testament CARL GRAESSER, JR.	525
Overview of Pastoral Counseling LEONHARD C. WUERFFEL	535
Homiletics	544
Book Review	554

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

VICTOR BARTLING, ROBERT BERTRAM, ALFRED O. FUERBRINGER
GEORGE W. HOYER,* HERBERT T. MAYER (Managing Editor) *
ARTHUR CARL PIEPKORN,* GILBERT A. THIELE
WALTER WEGNER (Acting Editor), ANDREW WEYERMANN

* On leave of absence

*Address all communications to the Editorial Committee in care of
Walter Wegner, 801 De Mun Ave., St. Louis, Mo. 63105*

CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY *now available on Microfilm*

One of the most pressing problems facing libraries today is inadequate storage space for the ever-increasing flow of publications. To help librarians plagued with this problem we have entered into an agreement with University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Mich., to make CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY available to libraries in microfilm form. Microfilm makes it possible for libraries to use and store an entire volume of 12 issues of this magazine on a single roll.

For further details concerning purchase and date when volumes will be available, write to University Microfilms, 313 N. First Street, Ann Arbor, Mich.

Approved Workman

In Memoriam John Theodore Mueller

MARTIN H. FRANZMANN

"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth."

2 Tim. 2:15

God uses the men with whom we live and work to write things into our lives; He works their message into the stuff of our biographies. Not all men qualify as pens of the Ready Writer; not all have hearts that indite a goodly matter. These fill our pages with the futile tracery of their flattery, the evanescent lines of amusement, the easy curves of casual camaraderie, or the acid etchings of their spite. But there are those who are good and honest pens in the Almighty Hand, and God says notable things to us through them. He uses men to underscore and incarnately rehearse His Word to us. This is a goodly gift and should not be interred with their bones. The Word they traced should be remembered and live on in grateful transmission. That is the justification for memorial services; and in the case of a man like John Theodore Mueller there is ample justification.

What did God write into our lives through him? Surely the imperative of 2 Tim. 2:15 was a live imperative in the life of this man. "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved." John

Martin H. Franzmann is chairman of the Department of Exegetical Theology of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. He delivered the accompanying sermon at the memorial service for Dr. J. T. Mueller in the chapel of Concordia Seminary on May 11, 1967.

Theodore Mueller lived with a high sense of accountability. Our colleague Richard Caemmerer at the burial service spoke, movingly and as a loving eyewitness, of his sense of the value of time. There was in his disciplined regimen a directness and an intensity of living which made our more relaxed and "balanced" ways seem somehow dubious, if not futile. He "did his best," and it was an unremitting, strenuous best; but what made his best really good was the fact that it was a best presented to God. He lived and worked as ever in his great Taskmaster's eye, for His approval.

He knew, as all of us know, that a man is "approved" only under the heaven of God's forgiveness, that "approvedness" can grow only on the good earth of God's grace. But he also knew, better than most of us, that man is not created to be an earthworm, endlessly engaged in the ingurgitation of his life-element. He knew that on this good earth a man is a man, responsible, articulate, and active. He not only "had his being" under the heaven of forgiveness; he "lived" and "moved" as one for whom "God" is in the dative case, the case of "to" and "for."

This way of living liberated him from the neurotic quest for novelty, which is one of the seven deadly sins of theology (O Relevance, what sins are committed in thy

name!). It freed him from academic ambition and removed him from the scholar's scramble. There was a daily beauty in his life, but this beauty was not for pose and parade. He was too busy for that sort of thing.

He was "a *workman* who has no need to be ashamed of his work." His high sense of accountability made his life a life of hard work. He pursued his profession with a rigor that was nothing less than ascetic. But he never thought of his life as ascetic, and that saved him from the secret sin of the ascetic, "the pride that apes humility."

Thus he became a workman who "has no need to be ashamed." He prayed the Fifth Petition as all men must, even theologians, just theologians. But when the Great Inquirer came down the garden path in the cool of the evening and asked, "Theologian, where art thou?" He did not find John Theodore Mueller decked out in fig leaves of obfusatory verbiage, nor hiding in thickets of fruitless conjecture and sterile hypothesis. His was not a theology that orbits around the theologian's sickly ego.

His theology orbited around the Savior whom he loved and the Word at which he trembled. His high sense of accountability and his hard work issued in healthy teaching. He was orthodox (tell it not in Gath): he liked the word, and he liked what it denoted. He was passionately concerned about the *pure* of our Confessions' *pure docetur*—and was not ashamed to be caught with a proof text in his pocket.

He echoed Luther's feeling: "Das Wort ist nicht mein und dein." He cut a clean furrow in handling it, and he was therefore still capable of a stout 16th-century-type *damnamus* (not the modern sneeze-

type, half smothered by the white handkerchief of our fearful amenities).

A life like his evokes a cluster of four-letter words, not the four-letter words that are wafted, stinking, across the footlights in current dramas which, for all this messing around with human misery, never succeed in being tragic—but four-letter words that are beginning to sound old-fashioned: good, pure, kind (he was 22 years my senior, yet none of my colleagues treated me with more exquisite collegial courtesy), meek, sane (he was capable of an impish humor and could make wry estimates of his own importance), love, work, fear, teach. But above all, there was one word that marked the man: faith, faith both in its beggary and in its courage.

Men like that, lives like his, do not happen; they are God's productions. He could write 2 Tim. 2:15 into our lives because the grace was given him to hear and heed imperatives like 2 Tim. 2:2, "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus," and 2 Tim. 2:8, "Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descended from David."

Men like that are often hurt in the world—and in the church. The remembrance of them is often fraught with some pain. But he is with his Lord now, and past all hurt. Let us thank God for all that He gave to our beloved brother and let us thank Him for what He has written into our lives through John Theodore Mueller. Pliny tells the story of a young man who, at the death of an old and wise and virtuous friend, remarked: "I fear that I shall live more carelessly hereafter." As we look back on the life of our brother, we may, each of us, be moved to say: "I trust that I shall live more carefully hereafter."

St. Louis, Mo.