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THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER

ISLAM'S VICTORY OVER CHRISTIANITY IN NORTH AFRICA

Prof. H. Rottmann quotes in *Igreja Luterana* (Vol. 17, No. 2) an article by Prof. Walter Freytag, professor of missions at the University of Hamburg, which first appeared in the *Lutheran World* (I, 4). The article concerns itself with the question how Mohammedanism could so easily conquer Christianity in North Africa, which very early had been gained for Christ. As Professor Freytag shows, Christianity in North Africa had been largely confined to the cities, while the rural population remained largely unevangelized. Then, too, hardly any provision was made to provide Christian literature in the languages of the natives. This was true especially of the Berbers, who were among the first of the North African peoples to adopt Islam. But it was true also of the Punic population. They had no Bibles, no sermons, and no other Christian literature in their native tongue. In addition, in Nubia and Ethiopia there was no indigenous ministry; the church slowly starved to death because all ministers were foreigners. Again, the church in North Africa failed in maintaining fellowship with Christians in other lands, in consequence of which it became inbred and nativistic. In Egypt, for example, the Copts separated themselves from other Christians largely for nationalistic reasons. There is no doubt that also the many controversies increased the confusion which made it easy for Islam to gain the victory. It was therefore a decadent, dying church to which the conquering hordes of Mohammedanism gave the deathblow. There were, of course, many zealous Christians when Islam came to North Africa, with scores of martyrs who joyously died for Christ. But, on the whole, the church was internally too weak to defend itself against a determined foe.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

MORAL THEOLOGY AND THE CRIMINAL LAW

The *Anglican Theological Review* (July 1956), under this heading, publishes an essay delivered by Wilber G. Katz of the University of Chicago Law School at a Conference on Law and Society, held at the Southern Methodist University. Mr. Katz applies the threefold use of the Law, as set forth in the Formula of Concord, with proper restrictions, to criminal law, "considered in the light of modern psychological analysis of criminality and of the social demand for punishment." While the reader may not agree with every deduction or application, the writer satisfies his theme, that "particular fields of law can be illu-

minated . . . also by religious ethics and moral theology." Using "the summary statement of the purposes of the Law which appears in the Lutheran Formula of Concord," he states that "this threefold analysis of the purposes of the Law is not specifically Lutheran [but that] similar statements appear in Calvin's *Institutes* and in the writings of other reformers." Of the first use of the Law, namely, to deter men from breaking the Law through fear of penalties, he says that "this insight as to the average man's need for the threat of punishment is confirmed by modern psychology." "The aggressiveness of the ordinary citizen is held in check only with the help of the social threat of punishment." Again, "secular and religious thought . . . run parallel with respect to the second use of the Law," namely, to bring men "to an acknowledgment of their sins." However, "secular penology speaks of reformation," which is "a process of moral development or of growth in responsibility." Finally, secular law serves men also as a rule for their life. But this can come about only as there is provided for the transgressor "an environment of forgiveness." The writer seems to be well acquainted with Christian theology, and his parallels are strikingly presented. At any rate, it seems a unique procedure to try to illustrate the purposes of secular law from the threefold use of the Moral Law as presented in the Lutheran Formula of Concord.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

CHURCH BUILDING IN 1956

In *Religion in Life* (Summer 1956) the Rev. J. R. Blackwood, pastor of the Westminster Presbyterian Church, located on the campus of the College of Wooster, Wooster, Ohio, analyzes the present-day building trend in church edifices. In 1955 the religious bodies of America invested more than \$750,000,000 in their houses of worship. For 1956 the amount estimated will be over \$900,000,000, which proves that "we are in the biggest church building spree of all time." Practically all of these new churches deviate in style from the ancient pattern, following what Eliel Saarinen has called either the romanticist architect, who gives his imagination free utterance, or the classicist church designer, who concentrates on formal dignity, simplicity, correctness of proportion and nicety of detail within an accepted mode. Describing various churches of both types, he singles out Christ Lutheran Church of Minneapolis, Minn., as "the nearest thing to a prototype for a modern Protestant architecture." He writes: "It [Christ Lutheran] blends the historic past with the present day. . . . Eliel Saarinen has placed the Communion rail not in front of the lectern and pulpit, like a barricade, but behind them, where the kneeling communicant might almost

reach out and touch the table itself. The pulpit looks massive and, in the right sense, authoritative; it is not central, but neither is it a side-thought or a shadow box. It stands in God's clear light. One sees a shadow on the wall behind the pulpit and above the Communion vessels—the outline and shadow of the uplifted Christ. Christ Church puts the choir in the rear balcony, a position that in good Lutheran fashion emphasizes the importance of congregational singing, the centrality of the Sacraments, and the preaching of the 'bare Word' of God . . . Lutherans are among those who are pointing the way back to congregational worship."

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

BRIEF ITEMS FROM "RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE"

Philadelphia.—Several thousand Polish Catholics participated in a pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa at the Pauline Fathers' monastery at Doylestown near here.

The Doylestown shrine is a replica of the shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa in Poland, in which is enshrined a reputedly miraculous painting of the "Black Madonna," ascribed to St. Luke the Evangelist.

Oslo.—Formation of a United Evangelical Lutheran Church in South Africa through merger of a number of Lutheran missions and activities in that area is expected shortly. Delegates to a conference at nearby Hurdals Verk of the Lutheran World Federation's commission on world missions were told that mission churches in South Africa have agreed upon a constitution for a new union church which would have a membership of about 500,000 persons.

Church bodies participating in the merger negotiations are chiefly outgrowths of German, Swedish, or Norwegian Lutheran mission activities.

The delegates also were told that a post-ordination course in theology will be organized soon, probably in Tanganyika, for the benefit of Lutheran clergymen and missionaries serving the whole of East and South Africa.

Establishment of a Lutheran theological seminary in Ethiopia through co-operation of the various mission boards active in the Africa field was recommended by the conference on the suggestion of the commission director, Dr. Fridtjov Birkeli.

A proposal by the (U.S.) National Lutheran Council that the LWF department of world missions be authorized to take over administrative responsibility for the former German mission fields in Tanganyika was rebuffed when the conference voted to table the matter, leaving its final decision to next year's meeting. Bishop Heinrich Meyer of Luebeck,

Germany, commission vice-chairman, said in opposing the proposal that it would "lead inevitably to the pooling of all missionary activities in one great society in Geneva." He said he felt this would destroy "the essential personal links between those offering money and those receiving it" and in addition would complicate the whole administrative process.

Dr. Arne Sovik of the U.S. argued, on the other hand, that it was precisely this "mother-daughter" relationship between mission societies and the fields that has delayed the development of independent younger churches.

London.—The Lutheran World Federation will send a delegation to Czechoslovakia for the first time since 1948, it was announced here by Dr. Carl E. Lund-Quist, the organization's executive secretary. The LWF official said the visit would be made in response to an invitation from Czechoslovakia's two Lutheran church bodies.

In addition to himself, Dr. Lund-Quist said, the delegation will comprise Bishop Nygren of Lund, Sweden; Bishop Moritz Mitzenheim, head of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Thuringia, East Germany; and Prof. N. H. Soe of the University of Copenhagen theological faculty.

Dr. Lund-Quist said the LWF has had no official contact with the two Czech Lutheran bodies since its representative there, Dr. Igor Bella, left Czechoslovakia in 1948.

The two churches have a combined membership of more than 580,000, of which some 433,535 are in the Slovak Church, he said.

London.—Officials of the Lutheran World Federation's commission on world service voted here to expand its work in the Communist satellite countries of eastern Europe. The action followed reports that increased shipments of relief goods will be permitted—at least for a time.

In view of the urgency of needs in the area and the fact that there is no guarantee how long the eased regulations will continue, the commission authorized boosting the world service department's current \$15,000 budget for work in Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia by another \$25,000 for the nine remaining months of the fiscal year.

In the past it has been impossible to send mass shipments into these countries under an agency name, the LWF leaders said, but they believe it now will be possible to send large shipments with the permission of the governments concerned as well as for distribution of these goods to be supervised by the sending agency.

The director of the new office, it was indicated, would be a European

and probably will be instructed to look into the possibility of increasing aid to Lutherans in the Baltic countries, Romania, Bulgaria, and Russia.

Commission members attending the meeting here included Dr. Paul C. Empie of New York, director of the National Lutheran Council; Dr. Henry F. Schuh of Columbus, Ohio, president of the American Lutheran Church; and Bishop Volkmar Hertrich of Hamburg, Germany.

Detroit.—A message from Pope Pius XII praising the Knights of Columbus for their eight-year-old campaign to advertise the Roman Catholic faith was received at the opening of the fraternal organization's 74th annual supreme convention here. Read by Supreme Knight Luke E. Hart of St. Louis, Mo., the Pope's message was sent through Msgr. Angelo Dell 'Acqua, Substitute for Ordinary Affairs in the Vatican Secretariat of State.

"The Holy Father," the Vatican prelate wrote, "has been pleased to learn that the 'Catholic Advertising Program,' sponsored by you already for many years with notable success, has been extended beyond the boundaries of the United States to Canada, Mexico, and Cuba, and is reaching, with its information concerning the Church and catechetical instructions through the press and individual correspondence, an ever wider and more numerous public."

Harrisburg, Pa.—Distribution of Gideon Bibles in the public schools was ruled here a violation of the state and federal constitutions by Deputy Atty. Gen. Elmer T. Bolla. The opinion was rendered at the request of Charles H. Boehm, state superintendent of public instruction.

Mr. Boehm asked for a ruling by the state department of justice on the matter after Spencer Coxe of the American Civil Liberties Union had questioned a proposal by officials of Haverford (Pa.) High School to permit the Gideon Society to place New Testaments on a table in the principal's office where students wishing to do so could pick them up.

Pennsylvania's Public School Code provides that at least ten verses from the Bible be read, without comment, in public school classrooms each day. Many of the Bibles used for this purpose in schools throughout the state have been provided by the Gideons.

Miami, Fla.—Officials of the American Jewish Committee's local chapter said here it may seek a court ruling on the Dade County school board's recent decision to permit distribution of Gideon Bibles to seventh-grade pupils in public schools.

The board's decision was made in a vote accepting an opinion by its attorney, Edward F. Boardman, that such distribution does not violate any constitutional provision against sectarianism and does not "illegally interfere with religious freedom." In accordance with the ruling, board officers said, seventh-graders "may be given the opportunity to accept, on a strictly voluntary basis, complimentary copies of the Holy Bible — or the official holy book of any other religious sect — provided that the principals and teachers conduct this distribution without any sectarian comments."

Washington, D. C. — A Protestant minister will help write President Eisenhower's speeches during the fall campaign.

The Rev. Frederic Fox of Williamstown, Mass., has taken a position on the White House staff as assistant to Dr. Keven McCann, the President's special aide. Dr. McCann helps the President in drafting his speeches and executive proclamations, and Mr. Fox will assist in this work.

Mr. Fox has taken a year's leave of absence from the pastorate of First Congregational Church of Williamstown, which he has served since 1953. A graduate of Princeton University, he was a newspaper writer and worked for the National Broadcasting Company network in New York City before his ordination. He has been a frequent contributor in recent years to the *New York Times* and the *Christian Science Monitor*.

New Orleans. — Archbishop Joseph Francis Rummel of New Orleans announced here that the archdiocesan school system will maintain separate classes for white and Negroes for at least one year more. In a pastoral letter read at Masses in every church of the archdiocese, the prelate who last February denounced racial segregation as a sin, told his flock that "certain difficulties and circumstances" made him "deem it advisable" to postpone general integration "at least until September 1957."

Such Catholic schools as are already integrated, he said, would continue their program without interruption. At others, he promised, integration when it came would be "gradual," one grade at a time, and under "moderate conditions" which would be made known in advance.

Archbishop Rummel did not cite the "difficulties" which caused him to postpone integration. But he expressed the conviction that "our problem will be solved only in the spiritual atmosphere of prayer."