

Concordia Theological Monthly



D E C E M B E R ♦ 1 9 5 8

THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER

"CATHOLIC REFORMATION"

Under this heading Peter Brunner in the *Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirchenzeitung* (September 1, 1958) sharply criticizes a recent volume entitled *Katholische Reformation*. This venture presents what appears to be a home-to-Rome nostalgia of a small group of men who published a series of leaflets under the title *Sammlung*. The seventh of these (May 16, 1957) contained eleven — not ninety-five! — theses which professed to represent "evangelical assertions regarding Catholic truths." *Katholische Reformation* takes up these theses and expands the ideas expressed in them.

Brunner is convinced of the authors' determination to remold the evangelical church. He does not regard their efforts as a fleeting sensation. On the contrary, he believes that they are here raising questions which will continue to be a matter of concern to the evangelical church.

The authors, Brunner points out, are pained by the divided state of the church. Their suffering, as he puts it, they share with many people in all confessional churches. That such suffering has appeared so extensively and intensively in our century Brunner regards as a characteristic feature of church history in our generation. Thinking ecumenically, he believes that one may view this pain over the divided state of the church as a work of the Holy Spirit, who has some specific intention regarding the fellowship of the people who have been born again of water and the Spirit. But he senses danger on the part of these writers to become unduly impatient.

Referring to a statement by the authors which was published May 1, 1958, Brunner quotes them as declaring the separation between the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran Church to be a wrong (*Unrecht*). He concludes that this can only mean that it has no right (*Recht*) to exist and must be abolished. On the basis of 1 Cor. 11:19 Brunner, however, points to a divine "must." He does not apply this passage immediately to the divisions among the churches of Christendom. Furthermore, he warns that it would be a mark of carnal security to seek comfort in it for the existing divisions. But he fears that the question to what extent the eschatological necessity of 1 Cor. 11:19 sets a limit to our will to unity and to what extent this divine limit applies to the separation between the Lutheran and the Roman Catholic Church apparently no longer troubles the authors of this volume.

Though the authors of *Katholische Reformation* say that both the Lutheran and the Roman Catholic Church must be improved, they speak of a mere reform on the part of the Roman Catholic Church but of a reformation on the part of the Lutheran Church. This distinction in terms disturbs Brunner, for it implies that, as the authors of the volume maintain, the Roman Catholic Church possesses the truths that are essential, though they may be hidden or distorted, but that the situation is basically different in the case of the Lutheran Church. Therefore regaining the Catholic truths which the authors hold were lost in consequence of the Reformation, is according to them, the "Catholic Reformation."

Brunner admits the justice of some of the criticism directed against the evangelical church. He also admits some of the criticisms leveled at the Lutheran Reformation. But he confronts the authors with this question: "Did the Lutheran Reformation, in accord with the apostolic Gospel, give the right answer to the question how we are saved, or did it not do so?" He failed to find a clear answer to this question in *Katholische Reformation*. He has cause to wonder whether for these champions of the Roman Catholic Church the question is still: "How do I get a gracious God?" or whether it is not: "How do I find a life in the abundance of the Catholic truth?" Brunner concludes that whoever understands the doctrines concerning tradition, the Pope, and the Eucharist as the authors of the *Sammlung* manifestly understand them is in essential agreement with the dogma of the Roman Catholic Church and in pronounced disagreement with the Lutheran Confessions.

L. W. SPITZ

"AS IT IS WRITTEN"

Under this heading, as the major part of the complete theme "'As It Is Written'—a Basic Problem in Noematics [the science of thought] and Its Relevance to Biblical Theology," the *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* (July 1958) discusses a subject that is of permanent interest to all who compare O. T. prophecy with N. T. fulfillment. We shall ignore all facets of literary criticism, and of Romanism with its emphasis on the church and tradition as authoritative in interpreting Scripture to which attention is given in the article, and select only one point on which the writer is in general agreement with our own traditional hermeneutics. In view of 1 Peter 1:10-12, which suggests that the O. T. prophets did not always understand their prophetic utterances, the importance of the theme is evident. Referring to Zech. 12:10, the writer says: "In the Evangelist's [John 19:37] citation . . . we have evidence of a viewpoint distinctive of the Church and the N. T.

writers. The prophet who originally uttered the oracle may have been aware of its ultimate meaning, but only analogously [*i. e.*, 'as foreshadowed,' p. 344]. The prophet's faith, being only analogous to that of St. John, specified his understanding of the prophecy. Hence the prophet's understanding was not 'vaguer,' but simply 'different.' St. John . . . was clearly concerned with the full theological meaning of Zech. 12:10, not with its literal sense. This theological meaning was contained analogously in the prophecy itself; but the prophecy would become intelligible only when Christ brought it to fulfillment and when the Apostle, enlightened by the Spirit which Christ transmitted, contemplated the event in which it was realized. . . . Paul, John, Matthew, *e. g.*, . . . enjoy a magisterial authority which entitles them to state dogmatic truths that must be believed by every member of the faithful."

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

BUCHMANISM OR MORAL REARMAMENT

Interpretation (July 1958) offers under this heading a brief history and helpful evaluation of the movement known by these two names as also by those of "The Oxford Group" and "The First Century Christian Fellowship." While praising its four "absolutes": love, honesty, truthfulness, and purity, and expressing some appreciation of its two cardinal principles of "guidance" and "sharing," the writer, who himself has been a member of the Group, finds much to criticize. Its principle of "surrender," for instance, may lead to inactivity and lassitude about temptation and sin, letting the Lord fight the battle for the troubled individual. Then the "guidance," which means that of the Spirit, often pertains to a very secular or mundane thing as taking a certain train and the like. Again, while the "sharing" of the Group may do some good, it may also do harm. Of much greater seriousness is the fact that while the group does not oppose the church, it bypasses it, since it regards the church's methods of winning souls to Christ as outmoded. When a clergyman joins the group he is liable to form a clique of those who follow his techniques with separation from those who do not believe in the group methods. A most serious weakness of the group is its "broadmindedness about entrance into the Kingdom." We read: "Where the church has always stood, and rightly so, for rigid tests and high requirements for church membership, the Group tends to minimize the details of a man's theological beliefs. The basic truths of the Christian faith: the Incarnation, the Atonement, the Resurrection, are nowhere mentioned or stressed in the literature. In fact, lest anyone be deterred from joining the Group through any theological doubts, he is reassured at this point that the leaders of

the Group are not themselves agreed on these points. The inference is left that it doesn't matter much anyway. Theology and theological thinking have little or nothing to do in the formulation of group material. Their main emphasis is on 'experience,' borrowing in a sense from Ritschl and Schleiermacher. Therefore theological difficulties or differences of opinion are to be avoided. . . . At a recent meeting . . . there were gathered on the platform Hindus, Mohammedans, and other non-Christians. Such religious syncretism is not uncommon in Group circles."

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

BRIEF ITEMS FROM RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE

San Anselmo, Calif.—Dr. Theodore A. Gill, 38, managing editor of the *Christian Century*, was elected president of San Francisco Theological Seminary here by its board of trustees. Dr. Gill, is scheduled to assume his new post in November as the fifth head of one of the largest seminaries affiliated with the United Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. Associated with the *Century* since 1955, Dr. Gill will continue his relationship with the undenominational weekly as a contributing editor.

Hazor, Israel.—Six layers of civilization, buried one on top of another, are again being carefully exposed at this ancient site to yield secrets of history coveted by Christian and Jewish scholars. Amid tilled fields of twentieth-century crops, the James A. de Rothschild archeological expedition began its fourth season of digging into the eras of Joshua, Solomon, and other Biblical characters under the direction of Dr. Yigal Yadin, lecturer in archeology at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem. Among those present for the occasion was the President of Israel, Yitzhak Ben-Zvi.

Started with a subsidy from the late James A. de Rothschild, son of the father of Jewish colonization in Israel, Baron Edmond de Rothschild, the expedition is supported by funds from the Palestine Jewish Colonization Society, the Anglo-Israel Expedition Society, and the government of Israel. It began excavations at Hazor in 1955.

The expedition's work in the half-mile-wide meadow is efficiently planned, Dr. Yadin explained. With almost military co-ordination, airborne observers sight targets and relay specific directions via radio telephone to ground crews. There are eight well-equipped ground units, each supervised by an archeologist, with whom Dr. Yadin maintains constant communication by walkie-talkie radio.

Objective of this season's digging, said Dr. Yadin, is to clarify the dates of the Hazor conquests mentioned in the Bible, both in Joshua

and Judges. Whenever there has been contention in Palestine, the site has been pivotal, history shows. Capture and burning of the 1,000-foot-high fortified city, located near the headwaters of the Jordan River in northern Galilee, is recorded in chapter 11 of the Book of Joshua. Archeologists place the date of this conquest in the Bronze Age. Later King Solomon rebuilt Hazor and made it one of his chariot cities. (1 Kings 9:15)

Discoveries already made in Hazor include the destroyed camp of Joshua's period, some of the stables of Solomon, rocklike catacombs, and Canaanite temple objects, Dr. Yadin reported. After the excavation work is concluded, the important ruins will be preserved as a tourist attraction by the Israel Government Tourist Corporation.

Washington, D. C.—Congress passed and sent to President Eisenhower for signature a tax revision bill which will exempt all private, non-profit educational institutions from Federal excise taxes. The Treasury Department estimated that this provision will reduce the taxes paid by private schools and colleges approximately \$3,000,000 a year. About \$1,000,000 of this benefit will go to the Roman Catholic parochial schools. The rest will go to the nonpublic schools operated by other religious groups and to privately controlled colleges and universities.

It will exempt the nonpublic schools from payment of the Federal excise taxes on such items as their telephone and telegraph bills, and enable them to collect refunds of the Federal taxes on the school buses, trucks, automobiles, and other such equipment that they buy. It is estimated that it will save the schools from \$200 to \$300 on the purchase price of each school bus purchased, for example. It does this by placing private schools and colleges on the same basis as the public schools and state universities insofar as exemption from excise taxes is concerned.

Inclusion of the provision for the non-public schools in the 435-page omnibus tax revision measure—the longest bill of the recent session of Congress—represented a triumph for Rep. Aime J. Forand (D.-R. I.), chairman of the House subcommittee on tax revision. Mr. Forand won approval for the measure in the House Ways and Means Committee and on the floor of the House without a single dissenting vote, only to see it eliminated in the Senate, on the motion of Sen. Harry F. Byrd (D.-Va.), chairman of the powerful Senate Finance Committee. However, it was restored in the House-Senate conference which met to compromise differences in the bill, and the conference report restored this clause to the measure. Mr. Forand served as chair-

man of the House conferees on the bill. "I consider it a great victory for the cause of equality in education," Mr. Forand declared.

Washington, D. C.—President Eisenhower signed into law a bill authorizing the Department of the Interior to acquire slum areas surrounding historic Gloria Dei (Old Swedes) Church in Philadelphia and create a public park. Under terms of the act Gloria Dei will remain the property of the Protestant Episcopal Church, as it has since it was designated a "national historical site" by Congress in 1942. But the decrepit buildings which stand clustered about it in a run-down block of south Philadelphia will be razed and turned into a park area suitable to the dignity of the old church.

Congress was told that thousands of visitors come annually to the church, one of the oldest in America. Founded in 1642 as a Swedish Lutheran church, it was built by the first Swedish settlers who established the short-lived colony of New Sweden along the banks of the Delaware River. Forty years later William Penn laid out his "City of Brotherly Love" on a site just north of Gloria Dei and its surrounding settlement, after receiving the former Swedish lands as a grant from the King of England. Although the church was sold to Episcopalians a century ago, it remains a monument to early Swedish settlement of the New World.

BRIEF ITEMS FROM THE NATIONAL LUTHERAN COUNCIL

New York.—The Rev. Volkmar M. Hertrich, Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hamburg in Germany, was killed in an automobile accident on September 14, according to word received here by the National Lutheran Church.

Minneapolis.—The part played by the Lutheran Church in Minnesota during the past century is being depicted in a play-pageant presented in eight cities and towns throughout the state this fall. The event, marking the centennial of Minnesota's statehood, is being sponsored by 14 Lutheran bodies, representing nearly a million members in some 2,100 congregations. Entitled "Of Grace and Growth," the play-pageant consists of a series of flashbacks tracing the growth of Minnesota Lutheranism from the early 1850s to the present day through its activities in education, evangelism, missions, music, social action, and health and welfare. It is given by a cast of more than 100, including a 60-voice choral group.

Lutheranism was pioneered in Minnesota Territory in 1857 by "Father" John Christian Frederick Heyer of Philadelphia, Pa., who went to India late in 1841 as the first missionary of the old Lutheran

General Synod and stayed nearly 16 years. On his return he went to Minnesota and organized Trinity Lutheran Church in St. Paul, parent congregation of the denomination's Minnesota Synod, which he founded with five other pastors from the Pennsylvania and Pittsburgh synods.

Hamburg, Germany.—The *Kirchentag*, a phenomenon of German Protestantism since its birth at Essen in 1950, has crossed the border into Denmark, and its founder-leader voices hope that it will soon spread to other countries in Scandinavia and elsewhere. Dr. Reinold von Thadden-Trieglaff, head of the German Evangelical lay movement, told 4,000,000 people at the first Danish *Kirchentag* late in August that the idea of holding a mammoth Church Day rally was not merely a "German invention!" It is a matter, he said, for all Christianity which is anxious about the vitality of the Church.

Helsinki.—The Evangelical Lutheran Ovambokavango Church of South-Africa, with nearly 100,000 members, has decided to apply for membership in the Lutheran World Federation, according to the Church of Finland Information Service. The Church was organized in 1954 as an outgrowth of work of the Finnish Missionary Society. Its admission into the LWF would make it the federation's 62nd member and the 4th from Africa.

An Information Service news bulletin issued here said the decision to join the LWF was taken at the Church's first assembly, held in Engela, with 43 African pastors, 69 laymen, and 7 Finnish missionaries attending. The Missionary Society's latest yearbook reports that the Ovambokavango Church has 99,892 members grouped in 37 congregations. They are served by 46 national pastors and 830 other full-time African church workers. Assisting them are 71 Finnish missionaries, of whom 11 are ordained.

Maintained by the Church are 91 elementary schools, 16 schools of youth education, and six institutions of higher training, as well as eight hospitals and 14 dispensaries.

Copenhagen.—Scholarships to enable three former Roman Catholic priests from Italy to undergo theological preparation for Lutheran pastoral service in their homeland were approved here by a Lutheran World Federation agency.

The LWF Commission on World Service, meeting early in September, voted to include the theological scholarship request of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Italy in a list of projects which LWF member churches will be asked to underwrite in the coming year. According to the proposal submitted by the Italian church, the ex-priests would receive two years of training in Lutheran theological

institutions. The first year would be spent at the Augustana pastoral training institute in Neuendettelsau, Germany.

The scholarship project was one of several approved here for strengthening the 5,000-member Italian Lutheran church, which was organized as an independent body 10 years ago and which is an LWF member. Others would provide subsidies for the church's central administrative operation, building construction, pastors' salaries, a diaspora ministry, and a program of evangelism.

Aid for a major evangelical institution in a neighboring Latin country, Spain, also was put on the list of world service projects for sponsorship by Lutheran churches. The institution is the Protestant hospital at Barcelona, for which the commission approved \$3,200 for repairs and modernization. The institution is the only Protestant hospital in Spain. Since Spanish evangelicals are not permitted to carry on any cultural or social work, the hospital is under the protection of foreign consulates and is known as the Hospital for Foreign Colonies. More than one-third of its patients are Protestants able to pay little or nothing for their care — Spaniards or foreign seamen.

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

FREDERICK W. DANKER, assistant professor, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo.

ROBERT N. HULLINGER, pastor, First Ev. Lutheran Church, Auburn, Calif.

ROBERT H. SMITH, William Scheele fellow, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo.

STATISTICS FOR 1957: LUTHERAN CHURCH BODIES IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

| Church Bodies | Total Ordained Ministers | Serving Pastors | Organized Congregations | Regular Meeting Places | Baptized Membership | Confirmed Membership | SUNDAY SCHOOLS | | | CONGREGATIONAL FINANCES | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----|
| | | | | | | | Number | Teachers | Pupils | Property Valuation | Indebtedness | Local Expenses | Church Work at Large | Total Expenses | |
| 1 United Lutheran (NLC) | 4,613 | 3,319 | 4,503 | 85 | 2,395,611 | 1,630,990 | 4,527 | 101,047 | 823,168 | \$549,980,792 | \$65,774,220 | \$80,826,750 | \$19,915,233 | \$100,741,983 | 1 |
| 2 Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (S) | 5,663 | 4,152 | 5,307 | 128 | 2,228,133 | 1,429,676 | 5,118 | 80,302 | 703,155 | 532,067,000 | 118,650,328 | 97,619,629 | 23,996,677 | 121,616,306 | 2 |
| 3 Evangelical (NLC) | 2,120 | 1,479 | 2,625 | 55 | 1,082,809 | 713,534 | 2,524 | 39,375 | 328,611 | 192,849,160 | 33,627,629 | 34,173,979 | 9,696,328 | 43,870,307 | 3 |
| 4 American (NLC) | 2,111 | 1,632 | 2,079 | 8 | 972,929 | 647,109 | 2,077 | 36,762 | 332,015 | 201,446,920 | 31,341,583 | 38,424,002 | 5,862,634 | 44,286,636 | 4 |
| 5 Augustana (NLC) | 1,231 | 918 | 1,242 | | 576,198 | 390,881 | 1,196 | 23,749 | 214,057 | 131,577,808 | 19,686,150 | 21,906,562 | 6,273,590 | 28,180,152 | 5 |
| 6 Joint Synod of Wisconsin (S) | 804 | 695 | 813 | 28 | 342,992 | 227,744 | | | 841 | | | | 10,837,618 | 2,879,076 | 6 |
| 7 Lutheran Free (NLC) | 247 | 165 | 351 | | 77,304 | 51,627 | 1315 | 3,649 | 28,960 | 13,961,969 | 1,749,139 | 2,695,774 | 632,140 | 3,327,914 | 7 |
| 8 United Evangelical (NLC) | 218 | 140 | 183 | 8 | 64,629 | 40,346 | 182 | 2,908 | 25,395 | 13,174,423 | 2,321,578 | 2,657,529 | 498,649 | 3,156,178 | 8 |
| 9 Suomi Synod (NLC) | 102 | 80 | 155 | 23 | 38,281 | 26,233 | 129 | 1,483 | 11,704 | 6,346,911 | 914,664 | 1,484,488 | 125,239 | 1,609,727 | 9 |
| 10 American Evangelical (NLC) | 81 | 56 | 80 | 1 | 23,043 | 15,734 | 75 | 847 | 5,226 | 3,437,173 | 360,509 | 734,946 | 200,393 | 935,339 | 10 |
| 11 Slovak Church (S) | 60 | 56 | 70 | 6 | 20,140 | 14,602 | 54 | 442 | 2,712 | 5,061,200 | | 1,218,114 | 41,308 | 1,259,422 | 11 |
| 12 Norwegian Synod (S) | 69 | 50 | 76 | 4 | 13,601 | 8,973 | 77 | 479 | 3,403 | 2,661,185 | 469,414 | 420,636 | 133,046 | 553,682 | 12 |
| 13 National Evangelical | 32 | 29 | 66 | 9 | 9,500 | 6,104 | 58 | 481 | 3,314 | 1,640,936 | 268,169 | 361,123 | 44,654 | 405,777 | 13 |
| 14 Finnish Apostolic | *22 | *18 | *59 | | *8,001 | *6,589 | *32 | *234 | *1,526 | *390,246 | *14,355 | *47,008 | *8,964 | *55,972 | 14 |
| 15 Negro Missions (S) | 28 | 27 | 53 | 3 | 7,429 | 3,360 | 53 | 266 | 3,382 | | | 113,582 | | 113,582 | 15 |
| 16 Lutheran Brethren | 191 | 147 | 141 | 145 | 14,220 | 12,228 | 140 | 1425 | 13,076 | 11,491,500 | | | | | 16 |
| 17 Eielson Synod | 3 | 3 | 9 | 9 | 1,500 | 1,100 | 4 | 10 | 50 | 80,000 | | | | | 17 |
| GRAND TOTAL | 17,495 | 12,866 | 17,712 | 412 | 7,866,320 | 5,216,830 | 17,302 | 292,459 | 2,542,296 | \$1,656,167,223 | \$275,277,738 | \$293,521,740 | \$70,307,931 | \$363,829,671 | |
| Total—United States only | 16,897 | 12,375 | 16,668 | 325 | 7,627,738 | 5,064,838 | 16,388 | 285,139 | 2,483,968 | 1,623,736,218 | 269,315,507 | 288,384,545 | 69,041,431 | 357,425,976 | |
| Total—Canada only | 598 | 491 | 1,044 | 87 | 238,582 | 151,992 | 914 | 7,320 | 58,328 | 32,431,005 | 5,962,231 | 5,137,195 | 1,266,500 | 6,403,695 | |

(NLC) denotes members of the National Lutheran Council, (S) of the Synodical Conference.
 * Figures from 1953; no report received.
 † Figures from 1956. No report received.