

# CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY

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VOL. XXXII

*June 1961*

No. 6



ARCHIVES

## THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER

### BRIEF ITEMS FROM THE NEWS BUREAU OF THE NLC

*Washington, D. C.*—A Lutheran spokesman has opposed any form of federal aid for church-controlled schools. In testimony before subcommittees of the House (March 17) and the Senate (March 20), Dr. Robert E. Van Deusen asserted that when "a religious group accepts the option of conducting its own schools, it should provide the necessary financial support, thus insuring its own continuing autonomy and freedom."

"We feel that the responsibility for religious training rests upon the church rather than the state," said Dr. Van Deusen, who is Washington secretary of the National Lutheran Council's Division of Public Relations. He testified that Lutheran leaders recognize the right of any religious group to establish and maintain its own schools in order to integrate religious teaching with general instruction, provided it meets the standards of teaching competence and curriculum content set by the community. But he emphasized that the existence of such schools "does not in any way constitute a claim on public funds, either for grants or loans or for salaries of teachers and administrators."

"We believe that public subsidy of the program of any religious groups in our pluralistic culture is wrong, since it forces the individual citizens to contribute to the financial support of a faith with whose tenets they do not agree," Dr. Van Deusen said.

"We consider long-term, low-interest loans a form of subsidy to the extent that their terms are more favorable than those which are available on the commercial market."

He also warned that the availability of low-interest Government loans could result in "the expansion of existing parochial school systems and the formation of parallel systems by other groups, with a consequent erosion of the public school system and a fragmentation of American culture along religious lines."

Accompanying Dr. Van Deusen before the House Education and Labor subcommittee were Dr. Paul C. Empie, executive director of the National Lutheran Council, and Dr. Philip A. Johnson, executive secretary of the council's Public Relations Division. Both Dr. Empie and Dr. Johnson joined with Dr. Van Deusen in answering questions after he had presented the NLC position.

Dr. Van Deusen's testimony before both subcommittees was based on the official position of the council on federal aid to education adopted at the NLC's 1960 annual meeting. That resolution said in part that the council views with concern the proposal which would authorize loans to nonpublic elementary and secondary schools for the construction of school buildings, on the basis that:

"(a) Government aid for the construction of church-operated schools at the elementary and secondary level is clearly a form of tax support for sectarian instruction; and

"(b) The availability of such aid to nonpublic schools would facilitate with public funds the establishment of racially segregated private schools as an alternative to integration in the public schools."

Noting the relevance of this resolution passed a year ago, Dr. Van Deusen told the Congressmen that it was clear that the council stands in opposition to the proposals now being advocated which would authorize fed-

eral loans or grants to nonpublic elementary and secondary schools.

The House subcommittee, after learning the council's position on federal aid available for other church-sponsored institutions, asked that the NLC's statement on "Church Hospitals and the Hill-Burton Act" be inserted into the record of the hearings in both houses of congress.

This statement, adopted at the 43d NLC annual meeting in Detroit last February for transmission to the American Lutheran Church, urges religious groups to "make every effort" to finance their hospitals completely with their own resources and other voluntary contributions and to accept public funds "only when the possibility of providing much-needed facilities under community auspices has been thoroughly explored and found not feasible."

*St. Louis, Mo.* — Opposition to federal aid that would assist church schools in paying teacher salaries, purchasing equipment, and erecting buildings has been expressed by the Board of Parish Education of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. A statement issued by the Synod said "it would be unwise for the Government to grant such aid or for the church to accept it," because good stewardship would demand that the Government "concern itself with the use of these funds and must control their use."

The Missouri Synod's statement contended that "the church through such aid would become obligated to the Federal Government, and yet it could not in good conscience submit its teaching program to a secular authority." The statement distinguished between social services, such as library services, lunches, health service, and transportation — which the board stated it believes should be available to all children — and the question of federal aid for facilities and personnel.

Federal loans to church schools were also

opposed, though it was recognized they may be held constitutional. Such loans, it was stated, "may provide an opening wedge leading to outright grants to church-related schools."

In regard to tax relief the Missouri Synod officials said they would favor the deduction of tuition paid to private or church schools "under contributions to religious, charitable or educational purposes." They opposed "tax credits" for the full cost of tuition.

*Oslo* — Whether arguments against association with the World Council of Churches do not apply also to the Lutheran World Federation is being vigorously debated by Norwegian mission authorities. The debate has been prolonged because a Norwegian Missionary Council decision on having a consultative tie with the WCC after it is integrated with the International Missionary Council — expected to be settled in February — has been deferred until May 19.

Last autumn the NMC, which has formed part of the IMC, voted almost unanimously against full membership in the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism that is to be set up in the WCC after integration next November.

The member agencies of the Norwegian body are almost evenly divided on the consultative membership question, and prominent Lutherans are found on both sides, as their statements published in the Oslo Christian daily *Vart Land* and elsewhere show.

The governing board of one of this country's largest missionary societies, the Norwegian Lutheran Mission, voted in December to withdraw from the NMC if the latter decided to apply for World Council consultative membership.

Led by its general secretary Tormod Vagen — who is at the same time the chairman of the Norwegian council — the NLM has been a stronghold of opposition to any WCC tie whatever. Mr. Vagen has warned that a de-

cision for consultative status is likely to split the NMC.

The Norwegian home board of another outstanding Lutheran agency—the international Santal Mission—decided in February to cast its NMC vote against the consultative tie. The board took its decision after 12 of the mission's 16 "circles" and many of its missionaries expressed negative positions.

However, a criticism of inconsistency has been leveled against the opponents' position by such leading spokesmen as Dr. O. G. Myklebust, professor of missions at the Independent Theological Faculty here, and Bishop Fridtjov Birkeli of Stavanger, former director of the LWF Department of World Mission. Professor Myklebust, who is director of Oslo's Institute for Missionary Research, and Bishop Birkeli, who until recently was general secretary of the Norwegian Missionary Society, have contended that some of the doubts voiced with respect to the WCC could be applied also to the LWF. They argued, therefore, that critics of the World Council should not be associated with the federation as some of them are through its Department of World Mission.

Norwegian opponents of ties with the WCC have charged that it: fails to limit itself to a Biblical basis, opening its doors to liberal theology on the one side and Orthodox and Coptic Churches on the other; tends to become a powerful superchurch; shortcircuits the mission lines by which the older western churches and their "daughter" churches have traditionally been related.

With respect to their fear of being associated with exponents of liberal theology, Bishop Birkeli said this should likewise keep them from taking part not only in the LWF but also in the Christian councils in mission areas and even in the Northern Missionary Council, since such exponents can be found there too.

The analogy with the Lutheran World

Federation was partly refuted by one of the World Council critics, Prof. Carl Fredrik Wisløff, also of the Independent Theological Faculty. He pointed out that the LWF constitution clearly defines its doctrinal basis, stating that the federation "acknowledges the Holy Scriptures . . . as the only source and the infallible norm of all church doctrine and practice, and sees in the Confessions of the Lutheran Church . . . a pure exposition of the Word of God."

"If the World Council of Churches had a basis corresponding to the first of those two clauses," Professor Wisløff said, "that would be a great thing. . . . But this is not found. . . ." The reason, he explained, is that the WCC includes Orthodox and Old Catholic Churches "and is working now to try to bring along the Roman Church as far as possible." These churches, he declared, "will never go along" with a theological basis that places Holy Scripture above church tradition.

But Professor Wisløff added that his confidence in the LWF was waning because of certain recent developments, of which he mentioned two:

1. The federation's launching of its program for interconfessional research, beginning with a scholarly re-examination of contemporary Roman Catholicism. Statements of the program's director, Dr. K. E. Skjoldgaard of Copenhagen, have not calmed his fears concerning a venture that "might be interpreted as a reconciliation with Rome," Professor Wisløff said.

2. "The tendency to make a Lutheran world Church" out of the LWF, as reflected in an article by a member of the federation's Commission on Theology, Prof. Peter Brunner of Heidelberg, in last December's issue of the quarterly *Lutheran World*. Most other contributors to that issue, Professor Wisløff said, "fortunately take a position against this tendency, but the tendency is there."

Dr. Brunner had asserted that the ultimate

destiny of the LWF is to unite Lutheran churches everywhere in an ecclesiastical fellowship and to become "an organ of the one globe-circling Lutheran Church."

*Detroit, Mich.* — An international Lutheran executive warned here that interdenominational church mergers not based on sound theological doctrine may increase instead of reduce the number and variety of Christian creeds.

Some mergers now being considered "are theologically sound, some are not," those attending the 43d annual meeting of the National Lutheran Council were told by the Rev. Kurt Schmidt-Clausen, acting executive secretary of the Lutheran World Federation.

The Geneva official, making a five-week visit to the United States, was a principal speaker at the NLC meeting.

The "essence" of some interdenominational mergers, he said, "is to be found in the attempt to make the merging churches give up not only autonomy of their church organizations but also their doctrinal ties with their fellow confessional churches in other countries." The loss of international doctrinal ties, he maintained, will "inevitably" lead to the creation of national churches "all bound together by the name of 'Christian church' and by nothing else."

"In giving up their former worldwide consensus . . . they will be doing voluntarily what totalitarian governments normally tend to impose upon their respective churches by force — namely, developing themselves into purely national institutions." Such development, he contended, would also carry the threat of penetration by a wide variety of "national, ideological, and political" influences.

Discussing the LWF as one of the major world confessional organizations, Mr. Schmidt-Clausen acknowledged that some believe the existence of such bodies stands in the way of the ecumenical movement.

He argued this is not the case, claiming that such world groups are in the best position to further the movement. "The confessional bodies and world organizations represent the idea that truth is a basic element for Christian unity," he said.

"The confessional world organizations do not yet agree among themselves about the specific content of that truth revealed by God to mankind. But they nevertheless agree that truth is something so basic and so essential and so universal that without it a Christian union would be just the very opposite of the Church of Christ."

Among preparations now underway for the 1963 LWF Assembly in Helsinki, Mr. Schmidt-Clausen said, is a study of "the doctrine of justification of the sinner by faith alone." He said it is expected the study will "help Lutherans and non-Lutherans alike to understand what a wonderful instrument for Christian unity our Lutheran confession and doctrine can be and that it rather helps and not resists the ecumenical cause."

Studies also have been started, the executive said, to examine both the "nature and structure" of the LWF and the doctrinal beliefs and practices of other denominations. The latter activity — proposed establishment of a "Lutheran Foundation for Interconfessional Research" — was called by Mr. Schmidt-Clausen "the most notable approach Lutherans have ever made towards unity and understanding with Christians of other denominations."

A special commission has started planning for the work, he reported, and a noted scholar, Prof. K. E. Skydsgaard of Copenhagen University, is doing research work. His manuscript concerning the Second Vatican Council is now being completed for publication later this year. Lutherans, with a traditionally strong concern for doctrinal purity, "are perhaps fittest to do the work," Mr. Schmidt-Clausen suggested.

"We have never been overenthusiastic for

quick union with other denominations," he said. "But this work of interconfessional research needs just these qualities: doctrinal interest and concern, a quiet and yet sympathetic judgment, without that hectic, impatient 'ecumenia' which rather destroys than builds, and great patience and love for the other denomination."

He pointed out that the special commission made a special point of including "our Roman brethren" in the studies. "The times of persecution and common suffering under totalitarian tyranny have taught us a lesson," he said, "namely, that there is not only an 'iron curtain' of wrong and false Roman doctrine between them and us but also something to share."

The LWF official said it is his belief that the Lutheran confession of faith "not only allows but commands such a study" and that it will serve the entire ecumenical cause.

#### *NLC Church Conventions*

June 12—18 at Seattle, Wash.—102d annual synod of Augustana Lutheran Church (605,000 members).

June 14—18 at Minneapolis, Minn.—65th annual conference of Lutheran Free Church (84,000 members).

June 25—28 at Fairport Harbor, Ohio—72d annual convention of Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church of Suomi Synod (36,000 members)

Aug. 15—20 at Tyler, Minn.—84th annual convention of American Evangelical Lutheran Church (24,000 members).

Contingent on final approval of merger by the four participating bodies, the constituting convention of the Lutheran Church in America will be held in Detroit, Mich., June 28 to July 1, 1962, with sessions in Cobo Hall. It will be preceded by the closing conventions of the United Lutheran Church in America, Augustana Lutheran Church, Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church of Amer-

ica (Suomi Synod), and American Evangelical Lutheran Church, June 25—28.

The first general (biennial) convention of the American Lutheran Church will be held in Milwaukee, Wis., Oct. 18—24, 1962. The ALC of 2,258,000 members began operations Jan. 1 as successor to the Evangelical Lutheran Church, American Lutheran Church, and United Evangelical Lutheran Church.

#### *International Meetings*

*June 7—9 in Germany (probably Hannover).*—International Conference on Migrant Referral Service, sponsored by LWF's Department of World Service. American participants will include Vernon Bergstrom, director of the Lutheran Immigration Service.

*June 23—24 at Berlin, Germany.*—LWF's Committee on Latin America. American members are Dr. Melvin A. Hammarberg of Minneapolis, former executive director of the Board of World Missions of the Augustana Lutheran Church, and Dr. Earl J. Treusch of Winnipeg, Canada, executive director of the Canadian Lutheran Council. Dr. Stewart W. Herman of New York, executive secretary of the National Lutheran Council's Division of LWF Affairs, is director of the Committee on Latin America.

*June 27 to July 1 at Warsaw, Poland.*—Annual meeting of LWF Executive Committee. American members are Franklin Clark Fry of New York, president of the United Lutheran Church in America, who as president of the LWF is chairman; Fredrik A. Schiotz of Minneapolis, president of the American Lutheran Church; Henry F. Schuh of Columbus, Ohio, who was president of the old American Lutheran Church; Malvin H. Lundeen of Minneapolis, president of the Augustana Lutheran Church; and Harold Midtbo of Scarsdale, N. Y., a layman of the American Lutheran Church.

*July 8—16 at Aarhus, Denmark.*—International Conference of Lutheran Students.

*July 26 to Aug. 2 at Berlin, Germany.*—LWF Commission on World Mission. American member is Dr. Fredrik A. Schiøtz of Minneapolis, president of the American Lutheran Church, who is vice-chairman.

*July 31 to Aug. 1 at Copenhagen, Denmark.*—LWF's Special Commission on Interconfessional Research. American members are Dr. Warren A. Quanbeck, professor at Luther Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minn., and Dr. Hans P. Truenfels of Norwalk, Conn., a layman of the ULCA.

*Aug. 4 to 13 at Helsinki, Finland.*—LWF Commission on Theology. American members are Dr. Taito Kantonen of Hamma Divinity School at Springfield, Ohio, and Dr. Warren Quanbeck of Luther Theological Seminary at St. Paul, Minn.

*Sept. 11 to 14 in Canada (place to be announced).*—LWF Commission on World Service. American members are Dr. Paul C. Empie of New York, executive director of the National Lutheran Council, as chairman, and Dr. Henry F. Schuh of Columbus, Ohio, who was president of the old American Lutheran Church.

*Oct. 31 to Nov. 3 in northern Europe (place to be announced).*—LWF Commission on Inner Missions. American member is Dr. Carl F. Reuss of Minneapolis, director of the Commission on Research and Social Action of the American Lutheran Church.

*Nov. 17 at New Delhi, India.*—Central Committee of World Council of Churches. U. S. Lutheran members are Dr. Franklin Clark Fry of New York, president of the United Lutheran Church in America, who is chairman; Dr. P. O. Bersell of Minneapolis, president emeritus of the Augustana Lutheran Church; and Dr. Henry F. Schuh of Columbus, Ohio, who was president of the old American Lutheran Church.

*Nov. 18 to Dec. 6 at New Delhi, India.*—Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches. Four U. S. Lutheran church bodies

are members of the WCC—the United Lutheran Church in America, the American Lutheran Church, Augustana Lutheran Church, and American Evangelical Lutheran Church. They will be represented by 23 delegates, including 16 clergymen, five laymen, and two women.

*Dec. 6—7 at New Delhi, India.*—Central Committee of World Council of Churches.

*Geneva.*—For its size the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Australia far surpasses its sister churches in the rest of the world in pouring its resources into Christian service to other people, two Lutheran World Federation reports revealed here.

The UELCA in one year provided 121 missionaries and gave \$57,900 for missions and \$20,287 for the federation's World Refugee Year projects, according to the reports. This meant that its 54,894 members—which include baptized children—contributed more than \$1.05 each for missions and almost \$0.37 each for the LWF/WRY program.

Worldwide totals showed that 70 million Lutherans provided 3,850 missionaries, gave \$0.24 each for missions and less than \$0.02 each for World Refugee Year through the federation. Lutherans spent \$19,430,212 on missions in 1959 and gave \$1,346,958 for the federation's WRY projects in five major refugee areas.

The mission statistics were part of the results of a global survey by the LWF Department of World Mission. A summary was published in the spring issue of the federation's quarterly *Lutheran World*. The WRY figures were from the final report on receipts and allocations of the special \$1 million program of the LWF Department of World Service.

The mission statistics, which were compiled by Director Arne Sovik of the Department of World Mission, disclosed that the LWF-affiliated United Evangelical Lutheran

Church in Australia in 1959 supplied 79 missionaries to Lutheran Mission New Guinea, in which it is a partner with the federation and with American and German mission agencies.

The mission in New Guinea—a neighboring island territory which Australia administers under a United Nations trusteeship—is the largest Protestant enterprise of its kind in the world. In addition, the UELCA has mission work in aboriginal areas of its own continent. It has 31 missionaries at its Finke River Mission in the Northern Territory and 11 at its Hope Vale Mission in Queensland.

The WRY report was issued by the Rev. Bruno Muetzelfeldt, LWF secretary for resettlement and material relief. For Lutheranism's major national constituencies, the two sets of figures revealed the following outpouring of resources in a single year:

From 37 million Germans, 748 missionaries, \$2,248,870 for missions and \$304,793 for LWF/WRY; from 8 million Americans and Canadians, 1,378 missionaries, \$10,129,723 for missions and \$489,348 for LWF/WRY; from 7 million Swedes, 356 missionaries, \$2,201,650 for missions and \$194,184 for LWF/WRY; from 4 million Danes, 215 missionaries, \$648,402 for missions and \$30,391 for LWF/WRY; from 4 million Finns, 146 missionaries and \$818,151 for missions; from 3 million Norwegians, 448 missionaries, \$1,928,143 for missions and \$30,441 for LWF/WRY.

Among the smaller Lutheran constituencies, 60,000 Dutch spent \$6,986 on missions and contributed \$300 to LWF/WRY. Other

countries on the federation's list of WRY givers were Great Britain with \$90,755, Switzerland with \$1,049, Argentina with \$355, and Chile with \$41.

Mr. Muetzelfeldt pointed out that his report did not include the considerable sums which Lutherans of many countries contributed for World Refugee Year causes through channels other than the LWF. For example, the Finnish Lutheran Church raised \$10,411 as part of Finland's national WRY effort, which brought in a total of \$91,105.

Other countries listed in the mission report were France with six missionaries and \$17,000 spent; India with eight missionaries and \$4,900; Iceland with four missionaries, and Indonesia with six. No financial figures were obtained for the last two countries.

Also tabulated were the internationally sponsored activities of LWF/WM, with 10 missionaries and \$733,224 expended; the Santal Mission in India, with 78 missionaries and \$512,807; the Scandinavian Mission to Buddhists in the Far East, with 15 missionaries and \$71,755; and the mission to Asians in Tanganyika, with two missionaries and \$875. Supporting the Santal Mission are Americans, Danes, and Norwegians, while the Tanganyika Asian work is backed by Indians and Tanganyikans.

In his report for *Lutheran World*, Dr. Sovik said the results of the world mission survey clearly demonstrated that "there has been, on the whole, a distinct increase, both in personnel and expenditures." During the 12-month period reported on, the personnel total rose by 61 and finances by \$2,742,798.