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Theological Observer

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THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER

UNIQUENESS OF HUMANITY

In his article "Metaphorical Appeals of Biological Thought" (*American Scientist*, July 1956), Leo Kartman, a scientist with the Communicable Disease Center of the U. S. Public Health Service, cautions against the pitfalls which lie in wait for the scientist who is blinded by the brilliance of the happy metaphor. He objects in particular to the easy fallacy of equating the habits of animals with those of human beings and thus, at least by indirection, positing the existence of moral standards and absolute values in the animal world. "Thus the so-called 'survival of the fittest' principle in the animal world became one side of a philosophy which similarly separated men into those who were economically successful or unsuccessful, or that which is good or bad in the moral world." Mr. Kartman asserts that "analogical reasoning from the animal world to that of the sociocosm has failed to consider the uniqueness of humanity." He writes:

Man is distinguished from all other living creatures by the fact that his cognition of the external world is at the same time a consciousness of the need to transform that world. We know that animals are capable of a certain amount of learning and that social organization of varying degree is found in the animal world. Yet, in spite of Maeterlink's intriguing vistas of the bee world, we find no evidence of the influence of reason in the animal world. When "Darwinian collectivism" of the nationalist or racist variety captured certain European countries in the iron grip of authoritarianism, this was not a manifestation of instinctive or genetically determined behavior and its defeat was not a product of biological forces. The story of human history has nothing in common with the history of animal life. Only men possess historical awareness, and thus they alone can produce a society which is influenced by the experience of past generations.

Because of his high regard for the uniqueness of humanity, Mr. Kartman also approves of the statement by the biologist R. W. Gerard, who, comparing man and animals, concluded: "One biological detail, however, the amount of cerebrum, seems to have had inordinate consequences. *A few extra ounces of nerve cells and connections in the cortex have permitted symbolism in language and number and abstract reasoning to a degree so beyond that of other animals that something almost qualitatively new has resulted*" (italics ours). Considering what "a few extra ounces of nerve cells and connections in the cortex" have done to bring about *homo sapiens*, it seems hardly

more credulous to assume that the Almighty, by a fiat of His will, "formed man out of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life."

P. M. B.

MEETING OF NEW TESTAMENT SCHOLARS

To the readers of the CTM a little report on the recent meeting of the *Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas* may not be unwelcome. The meeting was held in Woudschoten near Utrecht, Holland, September 4—7. The undersigned attended in a private capacity, thinking that the meeting was of such importance that his own exchequer would have to co-operate.

Here one met scholars whose names are known throughout the world. From England had come, e. g., Dr. E. G. Selwyn of Winchester, whose commentary on 1 Peter is recognized as a classic, Prof. F. L. Cross of Oxford, Professors Chadwick and Moule and Dr. Sanders of Cambridge; from Sweden Drs. Odeberg (Lund) and Riesenfeld (Uppsala); from Germany Drs. Nestle (Ulm), W. Eltester (Tübingen), Kurt Aland (Halle), H. Greeven (Kiel), J. Schmidt (Munich), R. Bultmann (Marburg), K. H. Rengstorf (Münster); from Holland Dr. W. C. van Unnik and J. de Zwaan; from Strasbourg Prof. Gravier; from Jerusalem Père P. Benoit of the Ecole Biblique; from America Drs. J. H. Cadbury and M. M. Parvis. Switzerland and Denmark also were represented. The above list includes merely a few of the prominent men among the 70 or 80 scholars that had assembled.

Dr. Selwyn's presidential address had the topic "The Authority of Christ in the New Testament"; Dr. Cadbury discussed "We and I Passages in Luke-Acts"; Père Benoit spoke on "The Infancy of John the Baptist According to Luke 1" (his paper was presented in French); F. L. Cross had chosen the subject "The Primitive Christian Feasts—Some Problems"; Prof. J. de Zwaan presented an essay on "St. Paul and Marriage"; a report on the International Greek New Testament (a new Tischendorf) was given by Prof. M. M. Parvis, and Prof. W. C. van Unnik spoke on the "Corpus Hellenisticum," which is in the making and which can best be described as a new Wettstein; Professor Parvis, in the last paper of the meeting, spoke on "The Greek Gospel Lectionaries and the Text of the New Testament."

A few brief papers were submitted in addition, one by the Greek Orthodox bishop mentioned on the authenticity of John 21, and another one by Dr. Wilson of St. Andrew's, Scotland, on Gospel quotations in Gnostic Gospels.

It will be seen that to a large extent the papers dealt with matters

of highly technical scholarship; but these, too, ultimately have some bearing on the proper interpretation of the New Testament. While English was the chief language employed, German and French were heard often. Next year the meeting is to be held in Birmingham, England.

WILLIAM F. ARNDT

**BRIEF ITEMS FROM NEWS BUREAU
OF NATIONAL LUTHERAN COUNCIL**

New York.—The remarriage of persons who have repented of their guilt in a divorce has been approved by both the American Lutheran Church and the United Lutheran Church in America. Similar statements adopted by these churches at their recent biennial conventions emphasized an evangelistic rather than a legalistic approach to the problems of marriage and divorce. Previously, the churches had held to the traditional Lutheran position that only the "innocent" party to a divorce granted for adultery or desertion could be remarried under the auspices of the church during the lifetime of either party.

Both churches abandoned this rule in their new statements, but the ULCA went farther when it disposed of the whole question of whether there is an "innocent" and a "guilty" party in a divorce by maintaining that both are guilty. On this point, the ALC retained a distinction, but said that "regardless of the legal decision of guilt each party normally bears some responsibility for the failure of the marriage."

Stressing the sanctity of marriage, both statements laid down rigid requirements that must be met by divorced persons who seek to remarry.

In altering its stand on the issue, the ALC declared:

"Remarriage of a divorced person, even under the ministrations of the church, may . . . be permissible after full consideration of all the individual circumstances involved. . . . Each instance of a divorce or requested remarriage should be dealt with as an individual counseling situation, in which God's will for the parties involved will be diligently sought for in the spirit of justice and love, as revealed in His Law and Gospel.

". . . The pastor should satisfy himself, through careful pastoral methods, that this person is the innocent party in a divorce or one who has seen and repented before God of his sins and shortcomings which helped to break his former marriage.

"Every pastor should satisfy himself as a servant of Christ that both members of any couple coming to him to be married know what is required in a Christian marriage and that they sincerely intend by

the help of God to make this a Christ-centered marriage, resolved to overcome difficulties and to grow in understanding and patience through the redeeming love of Christ and the enabling power of His Spirit. If the pastor believes in his conscience that God has created such a clean heart and a right spirit within the applicants, he may properly perform the desired marriage."

In its statement the ULCA urged pastors and congregations to make their decisions in the remarriage of divorced persons on the particular circumstances in each case, based on the following considerations.

"While it is the Christian teaching that marriage is a lifelong, indissoluble union and that divorce and remarriage do violate God's order, nevertheless God in His love does accept the sinner and deals with him according to his need. The church has recognized that marriage may be a remedy for sin and has seen in such Bible passages as Matt. 5:32, 19:9, and 1 Cor. 7:15 the possibility of remarriage, but it also knows that the final basis of decision is loving concern for man in his actual situation.

"The divorced person seeking remarriage must recognize his responsibility in the breakup of former marriage. He must give evidence of repentance and have made an effort to overcome his limitations and failures. He must have forgiven his partner in the former marriage, and he and his intended spouse must give assurance that he will fulfill his obligations to those involved in his former marriage.

"The divorced person must give evidence of his Christian faith by his witness in the church and must have received adequate counsel and training in preparation for marriage. He must be prepared to undertake the full responsibilities of marriage in dependence upon God."

In its statement, the ALC urged its members to work for sound legislation to correct the "many evils and abuses" in the application of divorce laws to the relief of disrupted marriages.

It added, however, that it would "seek to reduce or eliminate divorce, not through repressive legislation but by the effective teaching of positive Christian principles of marriage and family living."

The ULCA called upon Christian citizens to seek the enactment of uniform and constructive marriage and divorce laws that would "encourage the procedures of adjustment and reconciliation rather than adversary litigation."

Both statements were adopted to serve as guiding principles to pastors and congregations of the respective churches in dealing with the questions involved.

Columbus, Ohio.—The "practical effect" of the American Lutheran Church's new statement on church fellowship was explained here by a leading theologian of the 900,000 denomination. An interpretation of the statement, adopted at the ALC's recent biennial convention, was made by Dr. Edward C. Fendt, dean of the Theological Seminary of Capital University, in reply to an inquiry from the NLC News Bureau.

As a result of its action, according to Dr. Fendt, the ALC "recognizes all Lutheran church bodies in America as eligible for pulpit and altar fellowship, but leaves it to the discretion of its pastors and congregations to implement this fellowship." Dr. Fendt said the new statement removed the specific qualifications which the ALC had previously attached to selective fellowship — agreement with certain articles of its constitution. In doing so, he pointed out, the ALC "did not make fellowship with other Lutherans dependent upon agreement in theological formulation." Instead, he said, the ALC "makes adherence to the Word of God and the Confessions of the Lutheran Church the only basis for church fellowship." Further, he added, the ALC "grants its congregations freedom to practice fellowship in worship and work with other Lutheran congregations when there is mutual agreement in confession and practice."

Two resolutions on the subject were adopted by the ALC, the first establishing the broad principle of fellowship which will be applied to all Lutheran church bodies, the second implementing this principle on the local level. In the first resolution, the ALC voted to "extend the hand of fellowship to all Lutheran Church bodies who faithfully adhere to the Word of God and the Confessions of the Lutheran Church, whose official declarations and congregational practice testify to their loyalty to the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions."

The second resolution provided that "wherever congregations and pastors of the American Lutheran Church find they are mutually agreed in confession and practice with congregations and pastors of other Lutheran bodies, they may in good conscience practice fellowship both in worship and work."

The phrase "pulpit and altar fellowship" means that two or more church bodies, being in agreement on all major points of doctrine, permit their pastors to exchange pulpits and their members to partake of the Lord's Supper at services of congregations within respective bodies.

(In "selective fellowship," it is recognized that there is sufficient doctrinal agreement between church bodies to allow pastors and congregations at their discretion to implement such fellowship on the local level.)

BRIEF ITEMS FROM RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE

Fulda, Germany.— One out of every four German Roman Catholics makes a mixed marriage, Joseph Cardinal Frings, Archbishop of Cologne, disclosed here. In his annual report to the Conference of Roman Catholic Bishops in Germany, of which he is chairman, the cardinal said that half the Catholics who contract marriage with non-Catholics leave the church.

Portland, Oreg.— Judge Alfred T. Sulmonetti ruled in Multnomah County Circuit Court here that the Gresham, Oreg., "Green River" ordinance restricting house-to-house solicitation cannot legally be invoked against the distribution of religious literature. He held that the ordinance, in so far as it is applied to such activities, violates guarantees of religious freedom contained in the Federal and state constitutions.

His decision was handed down in the case of the Rev. C. Lloyd Wyman, assistant pastor of the Seventh-Day Adventist church at Gresham, who had been arrested there for violating the ordinance. Such ordinances—which have been numerous in recent years, particularly in the Northwest—are modeled upon, and take their name from, one adopted at Green River, Wyo., in the early 1930's.

In his ruling Judge Sulmonetti said:

"The giving, selling, and distributing of religious literature, when done as part of the method of spreading the distributor's religious beliefs, is an exercise of religion within the meaning of the Federal Constitution's First Amendment." He added that if solicitation by religious groups is considered by some people to be an intrusion and invasion of their privacy, "that is part of the price that must be paid for the free exercise of religious liberty."

Harrisburg, Pa.— Delegates to the 20th biennial convention of the United Lutheran Church in America here approved the establishment of Lutheran parochial schools in communities where "conditions make such action favorable." They adopted a report by the Board of Parish Education, urging that such schools be set up.

The Rev. Herbert N. Gibney of Hempstead, N.Y., in calling for approval of the report said that "the total educational experience of the child should be a Christian one but public schools can't provide this approach."

The board reported that 60 per cent of the more than 2,000 pastors who replied to a questionnaire it sent out said they favored setting up parochial schools. Only 9.7 per cent of the pastors said the church

should discourage the establishment of day schools, it said, while 8.4 per cent suggested the denomination should take no position at this time but await future developments.

Board Secretary S. White Rhyne said the survey also disclosed that 16 ULCA congregations already have Christian day schools of one or more grades, with two of them operating schools from Grades One through Eight.

Blue Island, Ill. — Dr. Henry F. Schuh, president of the American Lutheran Church, called upon Lutherans to reverse their past tendency of shunning political office and take an active part in governmental affairs. He spoke on the theme "Christians Are Responsible Citizens" at the opening service of the denomination's 14th biennial convention here. As a citizen of the world, he said, the Christian has a responsibility to his fellow man, particularly in the area of government.

Dr. Schuh used as his text the passage from the Sermon on the Mount referring to Christians as the salt of the earth and the light of the world. "It's about time that Lutherans start being the salt of the earth and stop hiding their light under a bushel," he said. "Unfortunately, there are those Christians who fail to think of themselves as salt. They prefer to be saints and so withdraw from the problems of the world and the operation of government. They complain about the world, the state, their civic obligations, but do nothing about them. Salt only serves its purposes when its characteristics are used."

"There is no excuse for a Christian to withdraw from these duties of responsible citizenship," he asserted. "Christians should be in the forefront in the paying of taxes, in the application of Christian virtues to civic life, active in voting and in assuming all their civic duties."

Blue Island, Ill. — A statement defining the responsibilities of church and state was adopted by the 14th biennial convention of the American Lutheran Church here. Under the American pattern of separation of church and state, the statement said, "God has permitted His church to grow, flourish, and gain a dynamic vitality and influence." But it stressed that separation of church and state "must not be made to support the view that the state has no concern for spiritual values nor that the church has no interest in temporal realities."

Lutherans were urged to "repudiate the false teaching that separation means obedience to the powers that be with uncritical and passive acceptance of anything governmental." The statement asserted that church and state have in common the underlying purpose of meeting particular needs in human beings. "Where the interest and well-being

of persons are concerned," it declared, "church and state may co-operate freely in focusing their efforts on this common objective."

The goal of church and state is to "enhance man's productive and responsible independence" and to avoid what would "impoverish his spirit or make him weakly dependent upon others," the statement added.

Decorah, Iowa.—A new interest around the world in Martin Luther, sixteenth-century Protestant reformer, was reported by three scholars who began a lecture series at Luther College here looking toward the school's centennial in 1961. They are Dr. Roland H. Bainton, professor at Yale Divinity School and author of a Luther biography, *Here I Stand*; Dr. E. Gordon Rupp of the University of Manchester, England; and Dr. Warren Quanbeck, professor at Luther Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minn.

Dr. Bainton said Roman Catholic scholars in Germany are "showing a new respect" for Luther. But he expressed regret that "while common ground is being found in Europe," some Catholic journals in this country are renewing attacks on Luther.

Montpelier, Vt.—The Vermont Supreme Court upheld a ruling by the state's attorney general barring payment of state tuition aid for students attending private and parochial schools. That ruling had resulted in cuts of nearly \$20,000 from state grants to 96 Vermont communities that do not have high schools and were paying tuition costs for students in nonpublic institutions. The court, in a unanimous decision, held that, under the present law, state aid could be paid to communities only for students attending public schools.

Geneva.—A warning that "resurgent confessionalism" may develop in such a way as to "wreck" the ecumenical movement, was sounded by Dr. John A. Mackay of Princeton, N. J., president of the World Presbyterian Alliance.

Copies of his statement were sent from the alliance headquarters here to the organization's member churches over the world.

"In the rising new confessionalism," Dr. Mackay said, "there is no disposition on the part of any one confessional body—whether Anglicans, Congregationalists, Baptists, Lutherans, Methodists, or Presbyterians—to absolutize their separate confessional structures and loyalties. But the confessional movement could develop in such a way as to wreck the ecumenical movement or at least reduce the World Council of Churches to a venerated ecclesiastical façade. It could prevent unions between the 'younger churches' and, for that matter, between 'older churches' in new situations. On the other hand, the movement—if wisely directed—can and should enrich the ecu-

menical movement. But in order for this to happen the World Council must take the confessional movement seriously."

As evidence of the growing interest in confessionalism, the Princeton Theological Seminary president cited the fact that a leading American publishing company that has traditionally specialized in secular works is planning a series of religious books, each of which is to be written by a representative of one of the great confessions as an interpretation of its heritage and outlook.

At the meeting of the alliance's executive committee in Prague last August, Dr. Mackay proposed that an informal conference be held to consider the place of "resurgent confessionalism" in the ecumenical movement. The committee voted to suggest to other confessional bodies that such a gathering be held to "interpret to each other the nature and objectives" of the confessional groups within the context of the ecumenical movement.

The World Presbyterian Alliance comprises 70 communions in the Presbyterian and Reformed families of churches that have a combined membership of more than 40,000,000.

Lorain, Ohio.—Here Roman Catholic pastors told their congregations they have withdrawn their objection to the United Appeal fund campaign. They made public their change of attitude after Gene Hopkins, appeal chairman, announced that a capital fund for the erection of a Salvation Army building and a Young Women's Christian Association center had been stricken from the budget.

Earlier the Lorain Deanery Committee issued a pamphlet warning Catholics they "could not properly contribute" to the community fund because to do so would be to "recognize forms of religion" promoted by Protestant organizations.

Blue Island, Ill.—A missionary of the American Lutheran Church in India said here that responsibility for operating the denomination's mission work there is being gradually turned over to the native church. Dr. Carl Oberdorfer said that after two years all institutions on the India field administered formerly by the ALC Foreign Mission Board will be handed over completely to the South Andhra Lutheran Church.

"I am glad to report, too," Dr. Oberdorfer said, "that this plan was advanced by the missionaries before the Indian Church asked for it. During the last two years no missionary on our field has accepted a high office in the church. We have insisted that these offices be filled by the Indians." The missionary added that when he goes back to India after his furlough, he will receive his assignment from the Indian Church and not from the Mission Board.