

10-1-1945

Theological Observer. - Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

J. T. Mueller

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

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



Part of the [Practical Theology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Mueller, J. T. (1945) "Theological Observer. - Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches," *Concordia Theological Monthly*. Vol. 16 , Article 67.

Available at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm/vol16/iss1/67>

This Article 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.

Theological Observer

The Atomic Bomb and the Cessation of Hostilities.— In amazement and horror the world heard of the incredible destructive power of the latest means devised by man to destroy his fellows and all they have produced and built. How the crazy emperor Caligula would have rejoiced if he had had a weapon of such lethal force, because he is said to have expressed the wish that the Roman people had only one head so that he might chop it off with one single blow! An atomic bomb, of requisite proportions, would have sufficed to blow the whole city of Rome and its suburbs out of existence. Who of our readers was not reminded of 2 Pet. 3:10, "The Day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." The atomic bomb gave mankind, as it were, a foretaste of Doomsday. Confronted with what happened when on a gigantic scale the atoms were split, mockers, cynics, and skeptics had better revise their quips in which they have poked fun at what they called "Peter's fantastic physics." For all who have eyes to see, it is plain that the end is approaching.

With similar awe one thinks of the cessation of hostilities, officially announced by President Truman on August 14. The worst butchery of the ages, the bloodiest of all wars on record, the saddest attempt ever made by one part of the human race to inflict injury and death on another part, has come to an end. God be praised for it! How humiliating to see mankind in the vaunted strength and wisdom of its civilization endeavoring to commit suicide! But God is granting a respite for repentance. "But this I say, brethren, the time is short," 1 Cor. 9:29. Let all Christians gird their loins and work as they never did before to bring immortal souls into the arms of the Savior. The world, of course, will continue in its service of sin and carnal merrymaking, false prophets will come with increasing regularity, and division makers will go on sowing their destructive seed. Let all disciples of Jesus Christ place themselves firmly on the eternal Word and repeat the great dictum of their heavenly King: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away," Matt. 24:35. A.

"El Luterano" and "Ritual Luterano" of Our Church in Argentina. — The titles here given spell joy and triumphant progress for all who love the Lutheran Church and its grand Confessions. Our brethren in faraway Argentina have bravely begun to publish a church paper in the Spanish language, and as a token of loyalty to the mother church and its ideals, they call it *El Luterano*, *Der Lutheraner*, following in the footsteps of Dr. Walther and his co-workers who began publication of the *Lutheraner* more than one hundred years ago. The editorial committee consists of Pastors A. T. Kramer, E. Jauck, and A. L. Muniz. The member of the committee to whom all *articulos y colaboraciones* are to be addressed is Pastor A. T. Kramer, Güemes 686, Bahía Blanca, Argentina.

The *Administrador* who receives subscriptions and changes of address is Professor R. W. Rippe, Blv. Ballester 553, Villa Ballester, F. C. C. A. (Buenos Aires, Argentina, South America). Residents of the U. S. A. who wish to subscribe may apply to Pastor C. H. Wolf, 353 Chapin St., Chadron, Nebr. The paper is a neat publication of eight pages and appears monthly. It costs \$2.00 a year (Argentina currency). In the opening statement of the editors the reader is informed that the new publication does the work in Spanish which *Der evangelisch-lutherische Kirchenbote* does in German, and that it really is merely a new branch on the journalistic tree planted many years ago when *Der Kirchenbote* began to appear. The first article has a genuinely Lutheran ring, as its caption "What Is Truth?" at once indicates. It is followed by a section entitled "Vineyard of the Lord" (*La viña del Señor*), in which church news of major interest is submitted. Finally one finds a section which takes care of *noticias breves*, its scope being wide enough to accommodate book reviews. We sincerely join the editors in their prayer for the Holy Spirit, wisdom and health that they may accomplish the task which the Head of the Church has entrusted to them.

Of equal, if not of greater importance, is the appearance of the *Ritual Luterano* prepared and compiled by Pastor A. T. Kramer. It is our well-known Agenda, or Book of Worship, done into Spanish and fitted to the special conditions of the Lutheran Church in Argentina. Although our knowledge of Spanish is woefully limited, we are able to testify that the work is genuinely Lutheran and fully adequate to provide Spanish-speaking pastors and congregations with the forms of public worship which they require. Paging through the book, which comprises 142 pages, one first finds our common service, next antiphons, introits, and collects. Then the book brings special prayers and general prayers offered in the church services, among them the prayers for the festivals of the church year. Naturally, the book contains the forms for sacred acts: baptism, confirmation, marriage, the reception of converts, excommunication, restoration of the penitent, confession and absolution, burial, ordination, and dedication of a church. The last pages contain the history of the passion of the Savior.

Pastor Kramer informs us that he has been working at this compilation since 1927. How much a work of this kind is needed is apparent from his own case. For about six years his work has been almost entirely Spanish.

There are three editions of this book to be had, costing respectively, in United States money, \$2.50, \$2.40, \$2.30. The loose-leaf type of book has been used so that additional pages can easily be inserted. To our congratulations extended to Pastor Kramer and his co-workers we add the prayer that this important work may become a source of richest blessings to our dear Church in Argentina and elsewhere where our missionaries preach the Gospel in the Spanish language. A.

The Reality of Christian Unity.—In the *Australasian Theological Review* (January-March, 1945) by Dr. H. Hamann quotes Principal E. S. Kiek, who under the given heading asserts in the *Australian Christian World* (March 30, 1945) that "the unity of which St. Paul is thinking

[Eph. 4:13] is not a dull uniformity, but a unity in diversity. He compares it to the unity manifest in the human body: all the members cooperate for common ends under the direction and control of the common head. This is the kind of unity which should prevail in the Church, which is 'the body of Christ.'" Drawing on his own experiences to describe the sort of unity he has in mind, Principal Kiek then writes, as quoted by Dr. Hamann: "Some years ago I was privileged to attend a great conference in which this unity was impressively manifested. It was a conference of teachers and students from all parts of Australia and New Zealand, representative of many colleges and universities. All denominations and all schools of thought seemed to be represented, except for the Roman Catholics [and, we suppose, the Lutheran.—H.H.]. And we differed to an amazing extent. Nor were these differences concealed or even minimized. We disagreed about many theological issues. We disagreed in our interpretation of many passages of Holy Scripture. We disagreed about the Church, Ministry, and Sacraments. We disagreed about the social applications of Christianity. Some believed that the Kingdom of God could only be realized in a Socialist Commonwealth; others voiced the strongest objections to Socialism. Some doubted whether the Kingdom of God could ever be realized on earth. There were pacifists of many shades of opinion; there were also nonpacifists of many shades of opinion. Yet all the time we were conscious of a real unity in Christ. We all acknowledged Him as Master and Lord, though we disagreed in our interpretation of His Person. We all bowed in reverence before His cross, though we disagreed in our views of the Atonement. We were all anxious to discover and fulfill His will, though we disagreed as to our interpretation of it. We were all seeking the guidance of His Spirit and praying for the power which His Spirit imparts, though we disagreed in our human judgments and opinions. The 'unity of faith' was evident in our public and private discussions; it was even more apparent in our times of silence and devotion. Thus I became convinced that Christian Unity is not something to be created; it already exists. Our disagreements and divisions are serious indeed; it would be 'wishful thinking' to underrate them. No one ought to surrender sacred principles for the sake of outward unanimity. . . . Never was there a time when Christians of every sect and school more needed to get together, pray together, and manifest in every possible way our common allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ. We cannot expect to abolish our differences, but we can and should endeavor to transcend them."

In view of the fact that this is exactly the "Christian unity" which large circles in our own country desire, it is valuable to note what President Hamann writes in reply to Mr. Kiek. He says: "There is of course a Christian unity that transcends minor differences of belief and opinion. It [Christian unity] is the oneness of essential Christian faith; the oneness of all those who by a living faith in the redemptive, atoning life and death of Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the world's Redeemer, have received 'the redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins,' and are joined to Him through such faith and united in the one holy

Christian Church, the communion of saints, the *una sancta*. This is the body of Christ, of which He is the Head. One of the many errors perpetrated by Principal Kiek in his meditation is that of transferring the properties of the *una sancta* to outward Christendom in its sadly divided and corrupted state. His formula for the creation, or at least for the imaginative projection, of 'Christian unity' is simply the old formula of 'agreeing to differ,' though presented in a more attractive garb. In view of the thought dominating the various sections of the present-day Reformed churches, it can occasion no surprise to find in Principal Kiek's explanation a complete disregard of the confessional obligation, a total failure to distinguish truth and error, a tendency to group all doctrinal differences under the heads of 'theological issues' and 'differences of interpretation.' What is surprising, however, is how all these people could be 'conscious of a real unity in Christ.' One fears that this feeling was a mere illusion or self-deception and that the unifying principle that made them one was simply religious and doctrinal indifference. But the case is worse — much worse. When we are told that those who were present at that conference all acknowledged Jesus Christ as Lord and yet disagreed in their interpretation of His person (which means that there were some who denied His true deity); that they bowed in reverence before His cross while disagreeing in their views of the Atonement (which means that there were some who repudiated the justification and salvation of sinners through faith in the vicarious sacrifice of the Son of God); that they were anxious to discover and fulfill His will though they rejected His will as revealed in the Holy Scriptures; that they sought the guidance of God's Spirit and yet refused to be guided by the Word that is spirit and life; that Christians are to manifest their common allegiance to Christ even while some or many think nothing of being disloyal to His Word: then it becomes apparent that what is put forward as proof of the reality of Christian unity is — the expression is not too strong — the devil's own parody of true Christian unity." The point which Professor Hamann makes is well taken. Only the crass unionism which Mr. Kiek and others advocate does not spring into existence all at once. It is rather a development — the result of continued neglect of the principle of confession, the curse that finally settles down upon those who fail to observe the warning *Principiis obsta*.

J. T. M.

In Fairness to the Fathers. — In the *Australasian Theological Review* (January-March, 1945) Dr. Hamann defends the founding fathers of the Lutheran Church in Australia and their immediate successors against the criticism "that our Lutheran Church in Australia, in the hundred years of its existence, has been too inactive in a missionary sense . . . too much satisfied with having the pure Gospel and too little concerned with carrying that treasure to others." (We are quoting the criticism in part only.) He does not assert that the early Lutherans in Australia did not make mistakes in their church policy. Nor does he wish to answer the question "whether our Australian Lutheran Church, especially in the earlier portion of its history, was remiss or delinquent as regards mission work among non-Lutherans and the unchurched." But

he does show that while criticism may be in place, becoming praise should likewise not be forgotten. He writes (in part): "How can one possibly blame these early Lutherans, for instance, in the matter of publicity? The entire publicity movement is a child of recent birth. The American Lutheran Publicity Bureau celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary a few years ago. Go back another twenty-five years, and it is doubtful whether any Church at that time thought of 'publicity' as we now understand it. That the Church of Christ is to proclaim the Gospel everywhere and by all means is an ancient truth that may have been forgotten occasionally; but that the Church is to 'publicize' itself simply did not occur to people fifty years ago. The publicity movement grew directly from the rise of advertising, which especially in the United States of America developed into a business of tremendous magnitude and a useful art, if not always a fine art. To find fault with Australian Lutherans for not doing publicity work at a time when such things 'were not done' is as much an anachronism as to blame people of the last century for not riding in motor cars. . . . That the Lutheran settlers in Australia at an early date interested themselves in mission work among the heathen whom they could well reach, the Australian aborigines, is a matter of history. Whether, and to what extent, they were conscious of a spiritual obligation toward their non-Lutheran surroundings, who shall say? Even the most careful historical investigation cannot hope to show what they did privately and individually in the way of showing reason for the faith and hope that was in them. It is at least possible that, man for man, they did more than we are doing now, considering their limited contacts with outsiders. And if it be asked why they did not engage in organized and systematic endeavors of the kind which we now call home mission work, there are at least two highly important factors which must be taken into consideration by him who ventures upon a reply to this question. The first of these factors concerns these early Lutherans themselves. For decades they were a small, poor, struggling, scattered community. They were compelled to draw their pastors from a foreign people that did not ordinarily speak English, and the supply must at times have been very precarious. And now let the reader picture to himself the labors of these men, at a time when railway construction was proceeding slowly and when there were no telephones, following up settlers and colonists, gathering them into flocks, ministering to scattered congregations. Only the other day a brother in the ministry told the writer something of the labors of one of these pioneer pastors in a vast field. Epic is the only adjective fit to describe such work. To ask these men why they did not do systematic mission work among the non-Lutheran population is almost an impertinence. The other fact is the religious condition of the non-Lutheran environment in which the early Lutherans found themselves, though in very many cases they were probably their own environment. No doubt they met unbelievers and the unchurched. But in the times of which we are now speaking, Modernism had not yet begun to make such fearful inroads into the various Reformed denominations. Pastors and people were still, to a large extent, Fundamentalists. Over against

such people, however, Lutherans have no spiritual duty except to witness to the full truth in Christ as opportunity offers. Deliberately to seek such opportunities and to try to make Lutherans of believing Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, would have been as wrong for Lutherans then as it is wrong for Lutherans now. That is what we call sheep-stealing. The problem whether members of sectarian churches are still to be regarded as Christians under the spiritual care of their pastors, or whether they may be regarded as mission material, has arisen only in the last generation or so with the rise of Modernism. A final word must be said. Whatever the weaknesses or shortcomings of our Lutheran Church in its early days, these our forefathers did, in the days of little things and hardships and struggles, and amidst spiritual trials and conflicts, uphold the banner of sound Lutheranism in this country. In particular, they devoted much labor and care to the Christian training and indoctrination of the young. What we are doing now in the way of Christian education, in the days of prosperity, can not begin to compare—balancing our ability against theirs—with what they did. Let it never be forgotten that, humanly speaking, we owe it to their efforts that we are still an orthodox Church." With but little variation Dr. Hamann's apology may be applied to our own faithful forefathers, who in the fear of God planted our Church in our own country over a century ago. If there is place for criticism, there certainly is much more place for praise and gratitude to the Lord for the sacrificial spirit and the loyalty of the great and pious men who under God made our Church what it is today—a confessing, mission-minded, yes, an orthodox Church.

J. T. M.

The Council of Trent, 1545.— In the *Theologische Quartalschrift* (July, 1945) Dr. P. Peters directs attention to the fact that the year 1945 marks the fourth centenary of the opening of the Council of Trent. He writes: "Undoubtedly this anniversary will be commemorated as a most important anniversary throughout the entire Catholic world, in so far as war conditions will permit. The *National Catholic Almanac, 1945*, informs its readers that 'in early 1943, the Papal Secretary of State, Luigi Cardinal Maglioni, pointed out that the memory of the Council of Trent should be revived in the minds of our contemporaries, absorbed in the present.' In evaluating this Nineteenth Ecumenical (or General) Council of the Roman Catholic Church, the *Almanac* speaks of a 'landmark in the history of the Church . . . for introducing a much-needed discipline, for defining dogmas more precisely, and for restoring a sense of unity and solidarity to the Catholic body throughout Christendom.' The primary purpose of the Council, however, is designated as 'the definite determination of the doctrine of the Church in answer to the heresies of the sixteenth century, and the execution of a thorough reform of the inner life of the Church.' According to the papal secretary of state this purpose was accomplished: 'Numerous fundamental errors were condemned; the truth of faith, which is of prime importance and influence in moral and Christian life as well as in the existence of the Church of Christ itself, was revindicated and placed in a new light; and the discipline of clergy and people was wisely and strongly decreed,

bringing about the true Reformation.' The 'fundamental errors' and the 'heresies of the sixteenth century' were of course, as the *Almanac* takes pains to show, those of Luther, 'who thought out a new doctrine, the fundamental source of all his errors, which asserted the absolute corruption of human nature, and a merely external justification to be obtained by strong faith, that is, trust, in the merits of Christ. This led to erroneous conclusions, viz., the denial of free will, and the uselessness, even sinfulness, of good works.' It is characteristic of this article in the *National Catholic Almanac* that much mention is made of the Church and of Church doctrine, but not once of the Word of God, 'the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief Cornerstone' (Eph. 2:20) as the source of all doctrine. Now, the 'heresy' of Luther and the Lutherans was none other than a close adhering to the 'impregnable rock of Holy Scripture' as found in the Old and the New Testament. It is also well to recall that it is just 400 years ago that Luther edited his Bible translation for the last, i. e., the eleventh time in his life. Had Luther made himself guilty of no other 'heresy' than that of translating the Bible into the vernacular and of giving young and old, learned and unlearned, the opportunity of searching the Scriptures, men and women throughout the world would nonetheless have every reason, in this year of our Lord, to commemorate this one great work of Luther with praise and thanksgiving to God. But Luther's heresy in the eyes of the Roman Catholic Church does not only consist in having translated the Bible, but in having taught the Word of God as it had not been taught in all its truth and purity since the days of the Apostles. . . . It was also this year, 1545, on the 14th day of January, that Luther and his co-workers, including Bugenhagen and Melancthon, submitted a memorial to the Elector John Frederic bearing the title: *Vera et salutaris reformatio seu gubernatio ecclesiae Christi praecipue in his quinque membris consistit*, etc. In this writing Melancthon, who penned it, lists the following five main points as essential to a true and salutary Reformation: (1) the true and pure doctrine which God has revealed and committed to the Church and which is to be taught by the Church; (2) the correct use of the Sacraments; (3) the ministry of the Word and true obedience to this ministry as God, who preserves this ministry until the present day, wills it; (4) the *iurisdictio ecclesiae*, i. e., church discipline; and (5) schools and other means of preserving and furthering theological learning.' Despite this 'gelinde Reformation,' as set forth in this memorial, Luther and his co-workers were fully conscious of the far-reaching errors and false doctrines against which they had to combat in order to preserve the purity of doctrine and true faith. . . . At the evangelical convention in Frankfurt which was called into session at the close of the year 1545, these errors [those of the Roman Church] were not only exposed in a writing setting forth the reason why the Lutheran princes could not attend the Council of Trent, but also a very sincere and stirring confession was made concerning the Scripture truths. . . . As Lutheran Christians we have every reason to commemorate the fourth centenary of that *vera et salutaris reformatio*, which was proposed and clearly set

forth by Lutheran leaders. Since they were not given an opportunity to present it to the Diet at Worms in March of the year 1545 and to make it public, its wording has never become known to the majority of individual Christians. Still it sets forth those Scripture principles, upon which Luther's whole work of reformation was founded and upon which it has firmly rested and has been signally blessed these four hundred years. As Lutherans we can witness with equanimity the celebration of the anniversary of the Council of Trent with its decrees and canons as long as we remain conscious of our Lutheran heritage."

J. T. M.

Religious Liberty and the Roman Catholic Church.—In a report by Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam, president of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America and bishop of the New York Area Methodist Church, on a trip which he recently made to Europe (a report that was delivered at a public meeting in New York on June 22) the following significant paragraph appeared:

"It is a Protestant principle that religious liberty should be maintained. The Protestant will fight for the liberty of the Roman Catholic to worship, to educate, and to serve in accordance with the dictates of his conscience. But the Protestant chaplain who has faced the fact that, in countries in which the Roman Catholic Church has a strong majority, full religious liberty is denied to minority groups, finds himself sorely troubled. He has experienced disabilities in the political field his fellow Protestants face. I have met five hundred chaplains, and no single subject was discussed at greater length. The Protestant asks very simply that the Golden Rule be applied in the realm of religious liberty and that the Roman Catholic Church in every land in which it serves do unto others as it would be done by. No American wishes postwar religious conflict. The surest way, however, to develop religious conflict in the United States is for the Roman Catholic leadership to continue its policy of discrimination against non-Catholics as is now practiced in certain countries." A.

Persecution of Protestants in Mexico Continues.—Our brother Prof. A. W. Reese of Mexico City sent us a translation of an article that appeared in the June 8, 1945, issue of *Tiempo* (Time), published in Mexico. He states that the term "Lutherans" as used in the article probably is not meant to be a designation of Lutherans in our sense of the word, but simply of Protestants. ("So far as I know, there are no Lutheran missionaries in Canlote, Michoacan, Mexico.") In Mexico City, where our emissaries reside, Protestants have not been molested. The translation of the *Tiempo* article now follows:

Love One Another

On the afternoon of May 27, as on every Sunday, the Catholic populace of Santiago, Yecla, a municipality of Ixtlahuaca (State of Mexico), with abandonment devoted itself to drinking pulque. When drunkenness had become general the cries of Encarnación Sanchez and Eleuterio Pineda rose from the multitude. They roused the rabble to dispose of the evangelists once and for all. Men and women armed

themselves with rocks, clubs, knives, and hoes. Enraged and cursing, the mob advanced upon the homes of the protestant pastors Feliciano Juárez and Vicente García, and minutes later the ministers had been lynched and quartered and their homes dynamited.

To judge from the information gathered in the city of Toluca, among the local authorities, it appears that the Catholic parish priest José A. Vivas had not been ignorant of the development and planning of the crime. As to the responsible persons and actual perpetrators, they are being held in the Central del Estado prison.

This is not the first time that some fanatic and irresponsible Catholic uses dynamite as a recourse to propagate the faith. Within the past three months, that is, since the *Pastoral Letter* issued by Monseñor Luis Martínez, archbishop of Mexico, there have occurred the following acts, recorded among the most serious:

The Catholic priest José Angulo, inhabitant of Ojitlán, Oaxaca, placed a bomb in the house of the evangelist Porfirio Martínez, who with five members of his family died in the explosion. As agent of the Publico Ministerio, a sergeant of the army was sent from the capital of the State. Upon arriving at Ojitlán, he let loose a philippic against the Protestants.

In Actipan de Morelos, Puebla, the Catholics took the Protestant minister by surprise at two o'clock in the morning. Among blows and a shower of stones, they took him to the square of the town and there they treacherously killed him with three shots in the chest. When dead, they disfigured his face. For the purpose of placing the blame on the victim, the door of the Catholic church was burned.

In San Andrés Timilpan, Mexico, the parish priest Arnulfo Hurtado, at the command of a group of fanatics, dynamited the evangelical church and the homes of the Protestants. One pregnant woman was killed by Hurtado by blows on the abdomen. The same priest decreed the expulsion of the evangelists and ordered that water should be denied to the survivors and a grave to the seven victims.

In Canlote, Michoacán, the Catholic priest Rafael Martínez set fire to the church and the homes of the Lutherans. Roused by him, the fanatics repeatedly outraged the women. The evangelists who were successful in escaping fled to the mountain. One hundred and five of them arrived in Mexico demanding guarantees [of safety].

David G. Ruesga, governing bishop of the *Church of God*, has applied to the authorities as often as excesses of intolerances have occurred. He always received promises, but until today at least and according to his own affirmation he has not received the guarantees [of safety] requested. At the beginning of last week, he declared:

"It is a reproach and a shame to any church to permit acts such as these which reveal the fanatical ignorance of its members.

"We do not ask for the punishment of the crimes which have been committed, but observance of Article 24 of the Constitution and ample guarantees for the exercise of our faith strictly in accord with the law."

Moreover, he thus rebuked Don Luis María Martínez:

"Mr. Archbishop of Mexico: Before you are the truly criminal fruits

which your *Pastoral Letter* is producing. Not only Christian piety condemns the reprehensible acts which are being committed. We beseech you that you direct to the public another *Pastoral Letter*, in which ex-communication is threatened to any person who lifts a hand against any one who professes a different religion." A.

A Statement on the San Francisco Charter by the Federal Council of Churches.—We owe it to our readers to submit to them the statement which was published by the representative of the Federal Council of Churches when the United Nations' Conference on International Organization held in San Francisco had drawn up the so-called World Charter and concluded its sessions.

"Taking action within 24 hours after the close of the United Nations Conference on International Organization at San Francisco, the executive committee of the Federal Council of Churches today adopted a statement urging prompt ratification by the United States of the charter resulting from that conference. The complete text of the statement is as follows:

"The charter of the United Nations offers mankind an important means for the achievement of a just and durable peace. The new organization, projected after so great suffering and sacrifice of this world war, can help governments to join their moral and material resources in support of a system of world order and justice.

"The churches of Christ in America have long held that nations can better serve God's purpose for the world as they are brought into organic relationship with one another for the common weal. The charter signed at San Francisco marks a genuine advance toward this end. It remains for the people to make the promise of the charter a living and growing reality. We believe the overwhelming majority of the people of our churches desire to see our nation join with other nations in a common effort to develop an international society free from the curse of war. We believe it is the clear duty of our government promptly to ratify the charter and thus to assure co-operation by the United States in the task of making the organization an effective agency for the maintenance of international peace and security.

"At the time when the Dumbarton Oaks proposals were before the country for public discussion the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America expressed the belief that "the proposed organization, with such beneficial modifications as ought to result from further consideration by the prospective members, can be developed into one which will commend itself to the Christian conscience." The charter of the United Nations embodies many of the changes recommended by thoughtful Christians of different communions for the improvement of the Dumbarton Oaks proposals. The humanitarian aims set forth in the preamble, the greater importance and increased functions given to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, the concern manifested for human rights and fundamental freedoms, the moral sanction given to the decisions of the International Court of Justice, and the purposes to be served by the Trusteeship Council, together with the declared policy regarding non-self-governing territories, tend to

bring the organization more nearly into accord with Christian principles of world order.

"We are aware of the need to develop the curative and creative functions of the organization. The best hope for the organization's success lies in building up as quickly as possible, during the period of relative military exhaustion, those methods of economic and social co-operation represented by the Economic and Social Council. Such co-operation over the years can prevent international tensions from becoming threats to the peace.

"In many respects the charter will need continued improvement after it has been ratified and has become operative. To these improvements the churches and all men of good will must dedicate themselves in the coming years.

"However, the greatest obstacle to the charter's potentialities for good lies in the tensions, misunderstandings and still unbridged difficulties between the major powers upon whom the primary responsibility for maintaining peace at present devolves. There will be required of the peoples of the world and of our own nation a very high sense of responsibility and a will to peace to overcome the obstacles which the world still faces in achieving genuinely mutual relationships. There needs to be developed a clearer recognition of the principle that there is a common concern of humanity which takes precedence over the narrow interests of any nation or group of nations. A new will to collaborate must be born in the hearts and minds of men if the organization is to fulfill its purpose. Lacking such a will to make the machinery work, a better organization than that proposed in the charter would fail. There is no substitute for the will to peace and justice.

"Accordingly, we believe that a heavy responsibility rests upon Christians to help create an invincible determination to use fully the procedures provided by the charter. The peoples and governments need to commit themselves to the long and difficult task of attaining the moral goals set forth in the charter. Let the churches of Christ lead in making this commitment wholeheartedly!

"The will to co-operate requires, as its foundation, a new international morality. Without this, the structure of the peace will rest on shifting sand. The building of a better world order under God's providence requires better men and women. Herein is to be found the principal challenge to the churches. To establish a strong core of world-minded Christians at the center of the international life is the inescapable duty of the ecumenical church. To this end we need to intensify our efforts for Christian reconstruction and missions. We must increase our educational programs for training Christian citizens in their obligations in an interdependent world. We ought to help build the World Council of Churches into the living expression of God's will for the Christian community. Let Christian fellowship pioneer in international understanding and reconciliation, so that all of the family of nations may come to work together in harmony!

"The road to a better world order is long. The journey is arduous. Only God can assure its achievement. As we move forward we humbly seek His help."

The ardent desire for peace which pervades this pronouncement everybody will commend. One is irked, however, when one finds that here there is a committee which undertakes to speak for a large number of denominations without having been instructed by these denominations on the nature of the message which they undertake to publish. There is more than a modicum of arrogance in the course taken by men who make themselves the spokesmen of millions of people and still cannot in honesty say that they have been authorized to make the respective statements for their constituents. There is one redeeming note in the pronouncement contained in the words "We believe the overwhelming majority of the people of our churches desire to see our nation join with other nations," etc. Here at least there is the admission that when a statement is issued by the committee for the denominations composing the Federal Council, it is merely an assumption that what the committee says really represents the mind of all the members of the churches. Has the Church the right to make a pronouncement concerning the San Francisco Charter? The Bible does indeed inculcate peace, and to the extent that the pronouncement of the committee endorses efforts to bring about peace, it can be said to rest on a Scriptural foundation. The pronouncement should have stated that it is the Church's function to preach the Gospel, which produces peace-loving citizens. With respect to other points the Federal Council would have done better if it merely had enjoined its members to be earnest and zealous in their efforts to promote the true welfare of our country and of their fellow men. The authority of the Church ceases where the Scriptures cease to speak. A.

Brief Items.—According to one of our exchanges a difference between Southern and Northern Presbyterians consists in this, that the former teach that there is parity between the ruling and the preaching elders, while Northern Presbyterians rather give the teaching elders a higher position than those that merely rule. According to the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, while all Christians are spiritual priests, there is one office that Christ has instituted, the office of the holy ministry. The position of special ruling elders must be regarded as a human feature found in the Apostolic Church but not commanded by God.

The Illinois Conference of the Methodist Church, meeting in Springfield in June, petitioned President Truman and Congress to postpone action on compulsory peacetime military training, to authorize the feeding of civilian populations in European countries where near-starvation exists, to formulate and publish specific peace terms for Japan, and to prevent the United States' becoming a party to any territorial changes after the war which will violate the principle of self-determination for all nations. So reports the *Christian Century*. It will be difficult to show that in all the issues mentioned there is a moral ingredient which justifies a church body in making pronouncements about them.

More than fifty years ago a famous commentary on Romans was written by Sanday and Headlam. Headlam is still living, but now has

resigned the bishop's position which he has held as head of the diocese of Gloucester.

From New Zealand comes the information that the government no longer, as it did heretofore, places severe limitations on the work of Jehovah's Witnesses. They are now given the same freedom for propaganda that other denominations have.

Concerning the most fundamental evil of our day, the Archbishop of Canterbury stated recently that it is "not mere secularism, nor individualism, nor selfishness, nor exploitation, nor rationalism, nor sciolism, nor any militant anti-God movement. It is implicit atheism, against which the only defense is a sound theology."

According to press reports conditions in China are indescribably sad. Attention to conditions in that unhappy country was drawn recently by J. W. Decker, secretary of the International Missionary Council. Not only are crippled soldiers and widows and orphans met with constantly, but certain districts are infested with typhus and the suffering is intense. As to prices, he states that they are fifteen hundred times higher than before the war.

From Shanghai, China, comes the news that on July 2 Bishop Frank Lushington Norris of the Anglican Church passed away. He was born in 1864 and went to China in 1889. He retired from active church work in 1940, but continued to reside in China. He was unmarried.

From Spain it is reported that the Roman Catholic Church is endeavoring to restrict the present law concerning freedom of religion by having itself proclaimed the National Church of Spain. Besides, it is endeavoring to get full control of the education of the children and the youth of the country. Evidently Roman Catholicism in Spain is not willing to accord other churches the protection which it itself eagerly seeks and claims in Protestant countries.

According to a report that has been issued lately the American Bible Society has distributed 6,902,538 copies of the Bible or parts of it to the men and women of our Armed Forces during the four years of war. Besides, 1,018,885 such books or booklets representing forty different languages have been given to prisoners of war in many countries. The total of books or booklets distributed amounts to more than eight million.

The new Secretary of State, Mr. James F. Byrnes, a Roman Catholic in his childhood and youth, is now a member of the Protestant Episcopal Church. His having left Roman Catholicism is said to have been a reason why President Roosevelt did not favor his becoming a candidate for the Vice-Presidency, because a prominent Roman Catholic official had assured him that with Byrnes as candidate the Democratic ticket would lose 75 per cent of the Catholic vote. Let no one think that Rome is not a power to reckon with.

"When rain comes following community prayers for it, that is news. Such an occurrence recently made the headlines in virtually all the papers in the State (Georgia). The citizens of Metter and the sur-

rounding area in South Georgia were disturbed because a prolonged drought threatened to ruin their crops. The ministers of the community suggested that the Mayor of the town designate a special day of prayer for rain. More than five hundred people assembled for the service in the Baptist church. Shortly afterward rain began to fall; it continued for five days out of the next seven days. The crops were saved."—*Christian Century*, August 1, 1945.

Mr. Leslie Bates Moss, Director of the Church Committee on Overseas Relief Reconstruction, announces that half a million Christmas packages containing food and clothing will be sent by Christian people in the United States for distribution through the churches in the areas of Europe and Asia that have been freed from occupation by enemy forces. Are we doing all we can in this line?

Washington, D. C., is said to have the unenviable reputation of being the wettest city in the country "with the possible exception of New Orleans." The drinking population, we are told, is 36 per cent higher than the national average.

Ernest C. Colwell of the University of Chicago has been made president of the university and his position as chairman of the department of New Testament and early Christian literature has been taken by Amos Wilder.

According to the *Watchman-Examiner* the Wisconsin State Assembly tabled a measure that proposed that pupils of parochial or private schools be transported at State expense as well as public school pupils. The bill had reference to suspended school districts. The Senate took the same action concerning a joint resolution calling for a constitutional amendment which would legalize the use of public school busses for transportation of pupils to parochial and private schools. The *Watchman-Examiner* adds: "The legislators wisely decided that to submit such a constitutional amendment to the popular vote in a referendum ballot would open the possibility of a religious dispute in an election campaign."

"I have seen our leading citizens shriek with indignation at what they termed a miscarriage of justice in a trial, and I have seen those same leading citizens use every artifice and excuse to avoid the responsibility of sitting on the jury themselves."—Clayton F. Smith, president of the Cook County (Ill.) Board of Commissioners.

According to press reports the Reformed Episcopal Church has withdrawn from the Federal Council of Churches, of which it had been a member almost from the Council's establishment in 1908. The Reformed Episcopal Church was founded in 1873 when a number of congregations withdrew from the Protestant Episcopal Church. A.

