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Theological Observer. - Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

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Theological Observer

The Eight-Point Program of the Lutheran World Federation. — As the *Lutheran* (July 16, 1947) reports, Dr. S. C. Michelfelder, executive secretary, offered the Lutheran World Federation a five-year plan, in which he outlined the following eight-point program for action until the 1952 assembly of the Federation: "1. A publicity campaign to make the mass of Lutherans throughout the world conscious of the Federation. 2. Formation of national committees and promotion of national and sectional meetings for study and planning. 3. A fellowship of correspondence, including exchange of ideas and publications, to get Lutherans better acquainted. 4. Publication of a "Lutheran World Almanac" to give statistics and to indicate trends in the Church. 5. Group conferences on both national and international scale. 6. Broadening of the service of the *News Bulletin* and the developing of better facilities of collecting and distributing news and pictures. 7. A quarterly magazine to continue the program discussions of the Lund Assembly and to present guides for improving methods of church work. 8. Thorough preparation for the 1952 assembly of the Federation by means of preliminary conferences. The same issue of the *Lutheran* reports that the convention at Lund was begun with a Communion service on June 30, 1947, in which Archbishop Erling Eidem of Sweden preached the Communion sermon. He based his discourse on Col. 3:13-15, which the *Lutheran* quotes in the following [not the Revised Standard] version, which does not adequately give the sense of the Greek original: "You must bear with one another and forgive one another, if anyone has reason to be offended with anyone else. Just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you must forgive. . . . Let the ruling principle in your hearts be Christ's peace. . . ." He is quoted as having said: "We are truly brothers. This is something we must feel toward one another. Of this He reminds us when He today invites us to partake of the Sacrament of His body and His blood." In the congregation were 600 delegates from 30 countries. Americans, Norwegians, Poles, Germans, Indians, Latvians knelt together. Charity forbids Christians to raise unjustified doubts, but in view of the sacredness of the Holy Supper and the differing views expressed on the Lord's Supper also in wider Lutheran circles, it may not be amiss to express the hope that the hundreds who here went to the Lord's Table were in the fullest and truest sense of the term "brothers," united in a common faith. The "ruling principle" found in Christian hearts certainly must be Christ's peace, but that demands absolute loyalty to His Word.

J. T. M.

Making Christians Isn't Easy. — The *Living Church* (July 6, 1947) strikes back very emphatically at those who accuse the Church of failure because it has not made more persons in the world Christians than the record actually shows. Pointing out that neither Christ nor the Apostles made many Christians in the

sense of the accusers, it says in conclusion: "Making Christians was not easy in Christ's earthly lifetime, as His own scars testify. It wasn't easy in Domitian's time, as may be read in the roll of the martyrs. Making Christians is not easy now. The natural man A. D. 1947 is no more likely to repent than the natural man in any other age. He is just as immune to the demands for a righteousness of motive [*sic?*], and he is just as apt to take love for weakness, and crucifixion for defeat. He is just as immune to the claims of the Son of God, and he is just as willing to send Him to the cross. . . . It is high time that we get over our exaggerated feelings of guilt that we have failed to make other people Christian. It is high time that we cease hiding our heads when the liberals of the left chide us for our failure. After we have repented for all our ignorance, sin, and lack of devotion; after we have recognized that we have neither the understanding, courage, nor love so evident in our Savior, the fact still remains: so long as we have His purpose [and let us add: His Word] and use His methods, we are going to achieve the same results. Making Christians is not easy." There is a doctrine in Scripture which enthusiasts who dream of mass conversions and earthly, Ritschlian "kingdoms of God" often forget, and that is the doctrine of God's eternal election of grace unto salvation. As long as the Christian Church proclaims the Word of God in its purity and administers the Sacraments according to Christ's institution, the elect are brought in, no matter how much of a failure the Church seems to be. Of course, this should not be used to excuse the Church's lack of missionary zeal; for it should work with all its might, using every opportunity for winning souls for Christ; but there is much comfort for hard-working Christians in the Scripture doctrine that the Word is never preached in vain.

J. T. M.

Statistics, Their Failings and Cure.—In its June issue the *Christian Herald* again published its annual report on church statistics. There is no doubt that the *Christian Herald* endeavors to be accurate and reliable in the figures which it gives. But it is true, too, that its statistics in many cases are neither accurate nor reliable, for the simple reason that it deals with problems that challenge solution, such as inadequate statements on the part of the various denominations, printers' errors due to the difficulty and monotony of typing numbers, and the like. At any rate, a number of "exchanges" that have come to our desk have taken issue with the *Christian Herald's* latest statistics. The *Living Church*, for example, is greatly annoyed at the figures for the Protestant Episcopal Church. The *Annual* of this Church shows the following: membership in 1946, 2,165,711; in 1947, 2,184,272, a gain of 18,561. The *Christian Herald* has the following: membership in 1946, 2,163,711; in 1947, 2,155,514, or a loss of 8,197. No one can blame the *Living Church* for its chagrin under these circumstances, though very charitably it puts the best construction on the mistake made by its sister periodical. Nor should one take

the matter lightly. Statistics are valuable only if they are accurate and reliable; if they are not so, they are a detriment to the cause they should serve. But let no one in that case charge merely the "higher-ups." Quite commonly it is largely the parish minister who is accountable for the inaccurate and incorrect statistics of his Church. Luther's exhortation applies also to statistics. "Let each his lesson learn with care, and all the household well shall fare." This seems to us a fitting time for a pastor to check up how strong or weak his parish is, what errors should be corrected, and the like. This is a suggestion which an exchange makes to the ministers of its Church, and we think that it is a very good one. J. T. M.

Cremation or Burial?—There is no doubt that confessing Christians will agree with the little item found in the "Spectator's" corner of the *Lutheran Companion* (July 16, 1947). J. H. Olson there writes: "A professor emeritus of a great university died recently—but was not buried. Instead, his body was cremated. Then, some time later, at a very convenient time to his family, a memorial service was held. Instead of the usual committal service, the Baptist minister officiating 'scattered the professor's ashes over the graves of his parents. Red carnations, Mr. X's favorite flower . . . , were used in the ceremony.' Now, what do you think of that, gentle reader? The 'Spectator' agrees with the Roman Church [and the Christian Church, in general] that cremation is contrary to Christian tradition. In the early days of the Church the pagans surrendered their dead to the funeral flames, while the Christians buried their dear ones in the catacombs or in other sacred ground as a testimony to their faith in 'the resurrection of the body.' The authentic incident related above suggests this thought: the famous professor's ashes 'were like chaff which the wind driveth away,' symbolic of the hazy faith of many of the intelligentsia of today. His parents, on the other hand, were buried in the family lot in God's acre, no doubt with monuments enduring for centuries. Which generation, think you, evinced the more substantial faith?"

We like the way the "Spectator" puts it. Cremation need not be a symbol of unbelief. There may be true Christians who for valid reasons may desire that after death their bodies be cremated. In other words, cremation, *caeteris paribus*, is an adiaphoron. But over against pagan cremation the early Christians insisted upon Christian burial, and that involved a confession. So today the Christian burial in general is a confession, and this must be kept in mind when the thought of cremation rather than burial comes up for discussion. But there is another angle to the matter. J. T. M.

Lutheran Church Papers Reach Record Number of Readers.—"Despite paper shortages," writes the *Lutheran Standard*, "official English church papers of the eight National Lutheran Council church bodies more than doubled their circulation during the war years. The total circulations of the eight official papers published

in English rose from 122,069 copies in 1940 to 271,528 copies in 1947, an aggregate gain of 149,459 subscribers, or 122.4 per cent over the seven-year period. If we estimate the confirmed membership of the Council bodies at 2,618,000, the eight publications combined have one subscriber for every 9.6 church members. On the basis of four readers per copy, they reach 1,086,112 members, or about 41 per cent of the total constituency. The *Lutheran Herald*, weekly organ of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Norwegian), added 39,821 subscribers, its present circulation of 78,668 being the highest among the major periodicals. The *Lutheran Standard* of the American Lutheran Church gained 33,000 subscribers for a circulation of 73,500. The *Lutheran* of the United Lutheran Church added 17,000 subscribers to its former 33,000 subscribers for a circulation of 50,000. *Lutheran Tidings*, semimonthly of the Danish Lutheran Church, increased its circulation during 1940—47 from 1,400 to 6,850 subscribers, or 389 per cent. The *Lutheran Messenger*, bi-weekly of the Lutheran Free Church, increased its circulation from 3,121 to 12,314, or 294 per cent. The *Lutheran Companion* of the Augustana Synod rose from 23,051 to 40,696, a gain of 17,645, or 77 per cent. The *Ansgar Lutheran* went up from 3,450 to 7,600 subscribers, a gain of 4,150, or 120 per cent. The *Lutheran Counsellor*, organ of the Finnish Suomi Synod, boosted its circulation from 700 to 1,900 subscribers, a gain of 1,200, or 171 percent. During the same seven years the *Lutheran Witness* of our own church increased its subscribers from 95,000 to 291,000, a gain of 196,000, or 206 per cent. The *Lutheran Tidings* has 1 subscriber for every 2 confirmed members; the *Lutheran Messenger*, 1 for every 3; the *Lutheran Witness*, 1 for every 3.6; the *Ansgar Lutheran*, 1 for every 3.7; the *Lutheran Herald*, 1 for every 6; the *Lutheran Standard*, 1 for every 6; the *Lutheran Companion*, 1 for every 7.4; the *Lutheran Counsellor*, 1 for every 12; the *Lutheran*, 1 for every 23. The *Lutheran Witness*' subscription of 1 for every 3.6 is based upon the Missouri Synod's confirmed membership of 1,056,240." The figures given here are the result of a thorough survey conducted by the News Bureau of the National Lutheran Council. The great gains made in this relatively short time show that church paper subscription certainly yields to the application of modern methods of advertising and of united effort in behalf of the religious periodical.

J. T. M.

Presbyterian Conscience in Action.—The *Christian Century*, under this heading, reports how the Northern Presbyterians, at their convention in Grand Rapids at the end of May, were moved to vote in favor of the new budget of \$17,444,000 "for the work of the denomination outside the local congregations." This budget came on top of a "Restoration Fund drive," which had raised \$22,746,000, but still was \$4,000,000 in arrears. There was considerable dissatisfaction with the new burden, and many were inclined to vote it down. But when in a calm, but persuasive speech the need of this sum for aiding the thousands and tens of

thousands in distress was pointed out, the convention ruled otherwise. The *Christian Century* writes: "That speech decided the issue. Commissioners rose to say that while they had struggled with each other and with their consciences, they were now ready to return to their churches to enlist co-operation in achieving what they frankly considered an impossible task without divine help. When the question was finally put, the new budget was approved without a dissenting vote. Then followed the singing of a hymn of thanksgiving and such a transformation in the whole meeting as can only take place in a Christian assembly." We, too, as a Church are facing new collections and budgets that will tax some of our congregations to the utmost, especially such as find themselves with a heavy building program on hand. But shall not also our conscience be aroused to undertake greater things for God in view of the ever-increasing need of our brethren throughout the world? We are sure that our pastors, as shepherds of their flocks, will think this problem through and in the fear of God plead with their churches for consistent, consecrated giving.

J. T. M.

Church Papers and Free Speech.—The Northern Presbyterians at their convention at Grand Rapids in May voted to launch a new official periodical. Several years ago they had decided to start an official weekly, *Presbyterian Life*, as soon as 100,000 persons had promised to subscribe to it. The names on the list by the middle of May amounted to only 77,401; still the Grand Rapids convention voted not to wait any longer and appropriated \$175,000 for the new periodical. No doubt the new magazine will put out of business the unofficial 117-year-old weekly, *The Presbyterian*. It might be of interest to know that the Presbyterians will annually support the new periodical with the sum of \$100,000. Also the Northern Baptists at their last convention resolved to publish an official denominational paper, which is to appear as soon after January 1, 1948, as possible. The initial cost was estimated at about \$120,000. The Baptist unofficial periodical, the *Watchman-Examiner*, comments on this enterprise: "Are Northern Baptists so united, and theologically and denominationally so homogeneous, that an official organ can be developed which does not create more differences than it seeks to cure?" And it adds: "[To make the various kinds of Baptists] eat at one ideological official table will create more indigestion than it is possible to cure." An interesting sidelight was shed upon the denominational church-periodical problem when the American Unitarian Association dismissed as editor of the 126-year-old *Christian Register*, official Unitarian monthly, Stephen H. Fritchman, upon the charge that the paper was "replete with Communist propaganda." The case became all the more serious since "Mr. Fritchman is the second editor of the *Christian Register* in succession to be let go because of dissatisfaction on the part of the A. U. A. directors," as the *Christian Century* points out. The *Christian Century* comments on the

dismissal of Mr. Fritchman as follows: "The real trouble grows out of the effort to make a journal at one and the same time the voice of a denomination and its official organizations and the voice of a vigorous and independent journalistic commentator. The two purposes are incompatible, and until that is recognized the Unitarians, or any other church attempting the same impossibility, will find themselves in recurring trouble." We are fully aware of the difficulty which arises from the effort to make an official church paper the *vox publica* of its denomination and therefore to place its editorial staff under censorship. But the difficulty is not insurmountable, and, besides, those churches which fail to do this find themselves in yet greater "recurring trouble." The Unitarian Association certainly has a right not to be identified with radicals spreading pro-Russian views, and it should emphatically assert this right if its editors go counter to Unitarian public opinion. Catholics certainly have the right to protest in case America would publish anti-Romanist sentiments, and so would we Missourians were the *Lutheran Witness*, or any other of our periodicals, to come out with teachings, subversive of the *sola fide* or other Lutheran doctrines. There is something downright dishonest and detrimental in having church papers indiscriminately air views or set forth doctrines with which the denomination is not agreed. To say that the Church is not responsible for what the editors write is grossly perplexing to the readers in general and absolutely unfair to the Church that sponsors the paper. The only decent thing for a denomination to do is to maintain official censorship and to make its paper voice the official sentiments of the Church. In the end, the average reader will interpret the views of the editors as those of his denomination anyway; so why not let the reading public know that the Church fully stands behind its periodical? We write this especially in view of the fact that in recent years Lutheran periodicals have published things which, we know, were not the convictions of the churches as such and which have greatly harmed the cause of Lutheran church union. There may be, of course, exceptions when the editor will print items with the express declaration that only the writer is responsible for what he says. But such articles should be the exception and not the rule. A church paper should be more than an "open forum," disseminating all manner of opinions and doctrines without proper criticism and caution to the reader. For such a thing its mission is too important and also too sacred. The plea for appropriate censorship of a church paper in the interest of honesty, decency, and order is certainly well taken. J. T. M.

Another Centennial Celebration. — The Centennial Committee of the Christian Reformed Church (in doctrine identical with the Reformed Church in America) at Holland, Mich., was somewhat dubious about the church attendance when it arranged a centennial service to be held exclusively in the Dutch language on March 9, 1947, to commemorate the coming of Albertus C. Van

Raalte (1811—1876) with his small band of faithful followers to Michigan in 1847. But they were thoroughly gratified, for the large Hope Memorial Church was filled with worshipers, though the preaching, praying, and singing were entirely in the Holland language. The denomination was the result of a secession movement which had taken place in Holland in 1835. A group of these seceders, eager to retain the faith of the fathers, immigrated into Michigan, where in 1857, after much struggle, an organization was effected. In 1882 the small body was augmented by the accession of a number of churches from the Reformed Church in America, which had become dissatisfied with the parent body on account of its lax attitude toward Freemasonry. Today it numbers about 52,000 members. The *Calvin Forum*, quoting the centennial sermon, writes of them: "The pioneers who originated the many settlements in Western Michigan were, very largely, Christians who knew God as their highest Good. They were, specifically, Reformed people who had separated themselves from the State Church for conscience' sake only a few years before. They were considered outcasts by many of their fellow-citizens who did not understand their loyalty to the truth and ridiculed them. Outstanding among the leaders was the Rev. A. C. Van Raalte, short of stature, but powerful in word and deed. A born leader was he, as is evident from all the information that has come down to us. He was the heart and soul of the colony, understanding, patient, willing to suffer, courageous, broadminded—an unusual man and a great leader. The sufferings which the pioneers experienced in those early years were tremendous. Transplanting cultured people to a wilderness of forest and swamp was bound to bring grave problems. Death stalked about and soon garnered a rich harvest, while those still living looked on aghast, scarcely having the strength to bury the dead. In despair they cried to God, who heard their prayer and sent relief. Phenomenal have been His blessings upon that little colony. The colonists founded towns and villages, and covered the countryside with beautiful farms. They lived carefully, frugally, and were blessed abundantly in a material way. Today the emigrants and their children constitute a group of close to a third of a million scattered throughout the country. Last year, in so far as they are found in the Reformed and Christian Reformed Churches, they contributed over two million dollars for 'outside' causes, such as missions, philanthropy, and higher education, in addition to providing for their local ecclesiastical and educational needs." These were some of the facts from the history of the church which Dominee Bastiaan Kruithof, pastor of the First Reformed Church of Holland, Mich., emphasized in his Dutch centennial sermon on March 9 of this year. We record them here because that small Michigan band had many things in common with the small Perry County band that settled in Missouri in 1839 and which, later, with other Lutherans, founded our Church a century ago.

J. T. M.

"Our Calling."—When, on March 9, 1947, Dominee Bastian Kruithof preached his Dutch centennial sermon in Holland, Mich., he, as the *Calvin Forum* reports, told the large Dutch congregation, in addition to what we quoted above, something that we, too, may heed in our Centennial year. He said: "Our material prosperity is to be placed upon the altar of thanksgiving and must be employed in the interests of God's Kingdom. We stand in danger of becoming so engrossed in the matter of making a living that we forget the deeper needs of the soul. Many indeed have become worshipers of Mammon, having drifted along with the stream of materialism. Let us recognize the danger and do all in our power to keep the proper balance. We have made rapid progress materially, are we doing the same spiritually? We have beautiful homes and churches, but in matters religious we tend to traditionalism and superficiality. Beware! Remember that God must have the place of preeminence in our lives. The Christian training of youth was referred to as an absolute essential for the maintenance of our distinctiveness. Van Raalte was eager to have the colonists live together in villages, having their farms round about, so that the children might be able to attend the Christian schools that would be established in the center of each settlement. The ideal was not at once realized. Circumstances retarded the founding of independent Christian schools. The situation has changed. To be true to the high ideals of the pioneers we now, if ever, need schools which provide a specifically Christian training. In higher education everything must be viewed in the light of God's revelation. Much depends upon our colleges whether this insistence shall be maintained. What sort of picture will our people present when another hundred years has passed? We do not know. But we do know that God has His promises for the faithful, but also His threat for the unfaithful. Let us heed the lesson of history." We need not add anything to clarify what has been said. But may also our Synod heed the admonition here given; for the words represent fundamentals which all Christian denominations must keep in mind if they wish to prosper as churches that are accounted faithful before God.

J. T. M.

Three Pillars.—Commenting on the Van Raalte Centennial of March 9, 1947, Dr. Clarence Bouma, editor in chief of the *Calvin Forum*, has written a very readable editorial, which we quote (in part) for our own special consideration in this Centennial year. We read: "These are the three pillars upon which a strong Reformed Church can be built. The foundation, of course, is the Word of God. Everyone of these three pillars, and consequently the entire structure, rests upon this solid foundation laid by God Himself. But we may truly say that these three pillars are absolutely essential for the raising of a strong Reformed Church. Pillar number one is a *strong pulpit*. No church can be strong without strong preaching. That preaching must be biblical, solid,

doctrinal. There should be no catering to the superficial tastes of those who want a little moralistic, sentimental talk of fifteen minutes. The people of God should be grounded in Scripture, in the truths of the Christian Year, in the great doctrines of the Reformed faith. There is no excuse for abstract, heavy, uninteresting preaching, but there is even less excuse for superficial preaching that does not deal with the deeper needs of the human soul. The institution of catechetical preaching—whatever improvements it may be capable of—is a sound institution. Those churches which believe and practice this with all their heart are reaping blessed fruits. Pillar number two is a comprehensive program of Christian education in home, church, and day school. The rising generation should be nurtured in the truth of Reformed doctrine and Reformed ethics every day of the week. Such training should have its foundations in the home, even though that home training is, from the nature of the case, less systematic and less organized than that given in the church and in the school. Sound catechetical instruction by the church is of the greatest value, both with a view to training youth for spiritual maturity and responsibility and for laying a good foundation for the appreciation of doctrinal preaching from the pulpit. But such Christian training in the home and the church (yes, also including the Sunday school) will be of little benefit unless it is reinforced by a consistently Christian education in the schoolroom throughout the week. A Christian home and a Christian church require as their counterpart a Christian school. The blessed fruits of this conviction and practice have become apparent in recent years wherever this program has been put into operation. The public school cannot be the agency for the training of the youth from Christian homes, and a church which is not deeply convinced of this fact or compromises on this score, is only undermining its own foundations. And pillar number three is church discipline. The church is the fellowship of believers. It is also the temple of God. Through preaching, pastoral care, and personal work each member should be built up in the faith. The Spirit of God will use these means to initiate and to nurture the spiritual life in the individual members. But when members of the church fail to honor God and His Word and trample upon His commandments, they should be admonished. This admonition must be marked by love, by sympathy, by a deep sense of weakness of the human flesh, but also of the all-sufficiency of the grace of God to heal, to save, to redeem. However, when those who have made profession of their faith fail to walk in the ways of God's commandments and will not heed the admonition of the shepherd and office bearers, they must be disciplined and, if necessary, ultimately placed outside the pale of the organized church. Only a church that believes in and practices discipline maintains the sanctity of the body of Christ. A church in decay is a church without discipline. Lodges have enough self-respect to apply excommuni-

cation to dead or discreditable members, and the Church of Christ should show that respect for its honored Head, the Lord Jesus Christ. Without these three pillars no Reformed Church can flourish or maintain itself in the welter of modern life."

J. T. M.

Brief Items.—Dr. William B. Riley, the well known Fundamentalist of the Northern Baptist Convention, has withdrawn his membership of sixty years' standing in the Northern Baptist Convention. His long years of fighting Modernism in the Baptist Church is now climaxed by his withdrawal from the Church in which he had been active so long.

The Minaret is a courageous, zealous little periodical, edited by Dr. H. Nau of Greensboro, N. C., in the interest of promoting Mohammedan Missions, which should be read by all members of our Church. Vol. 3, No. 1 (June, 1947) offers three absorbing articles, among them the story of "Zahora," related by Rev. E. H. Bertermann, who met this fine Christian Turkish girl when he was laid up in a Protestant hospital in Damascus. For particulars concerning the paper write Rev. R. L. Landeck, 310 South Tremont Drive, Greensboro, N. C.

Notes and Quotes is a most valuable publication, published monthly from September to June by the Student Service Commission of our Church, the Rev. R. W. Hahn, executive secretary, being the editor. It contains gratifying mission news from our various service pastors at colleges and universities, study outlines, book reviews, and other interesting and instructive reading matter that should be brought to the attention of our people.

On February 23, 1947, there died at the age of nearly 82 *Grace Livingston Hill*, author of 117 Christian books and pamphlets. A penniless pastor's widow, with two children to support, she took to professional writing until this became her life's foremost calling, dedicated to the Lord. Her point of view at first was: "I must write for me and mine," but later: "I am allowed to write for Him, whom having not seen, I love." Her memory and ministry are perpetuated by the Grace Livingston Hill Memorial Library at the Bible Institute of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia.—*The Sunday School Times*.

America, commenting on the influence which Mrs. Truman has had on President Truman and on the nation's interest in following Mr. Truman's vigil at the bed of his ailing ninety-four-year-old mother, cannot help bringing in the Roman Catholic Mariolatry. The editor concludes his editorial by stating: "We hope Mr. Truman will gather the sincerity of our interest when we say that if it be God's will that he lose his mother soon, a mother's long and fruitful life can come to a close no more fittingly than in the month

of May, the month of the Mother of us all." The Jesuits have consistently advocated the worship of Mary and have attempted to make "Mary's month" (May) set aside for Marian devotions.

F. E. M.

Brief Items from Religious News Service.—A proposal to change the name of the Augustana Synod to the Augustana Evangelical Lutheran Church received the approval of the 88th annual convention in Kansas City, Missouri, when a new constitution for that body was adopted on first reading. The Synod also gave unanimous endorsement to a move to establish a joint Lutheran theological seminary in Saskatoon, Sask. Co-operating in the new venture are the United Lutheran Church in America, The American Lutheran Church, and the Augustana Synod. The new institution, which will train pastors for the Canadian ministry, will be erected on the campus of the University of Saskatchewan at a cost of \$250,000.

Members of the Lutheran Augustana Synod will hereafter contribute one-tenth of their income to the Church if they follow a recommendation adopted in Kansas City, Missouri, at the group's 88th annual convention. "We call the attention of our membership," a synodical resolution declared, "to the opportunities for Christian growth found in the practice of tithing. We recommend tithing as an evangelical starting point for proportionate giving."

Lutheran Bishop Axel Malmstrom of Viborg, Denmark, arrived in New York City June 30 for a short stay. After a few days in New York he continued to Toronto, Canada, to attend sessions of the International Missionary Council as a representative of the Church of Denmark.

Charges that the Rev. Ernest L. Wiedenmann, pastor of St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Miami, Florida, used church property for "improper and anti-Christian purposes" by conducting services for the Ku Klux Klan were made in circuit court in Miami by members of the St. Paul Congregation. The suit seeks an injunction requiring Mr. Wiedenmann to turn over the church and the chapel to the congregation and enjoining him from continuing as pastor. Earlier, the Florida Lutheran Synod in St. Petersburg rejected an application filed by Mr. Wiedenmann for membership in the body. The Synod said the clergyman's practices and policies are out of harmony with the spirit of the Church and disavowed any connection with him.

Homes and families must shoulder the responsibility for the future supply of ministers, the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church of America was told in Racine, Wisconsin, at its 70th annual convention. Discussing the acute shortage of clergymen in his message, the Rev. Alfred Jensen of Des Moines, Iowa, urged that

"each father and mother, each home, assume part of the responsibility for the failure" to meet the demand for pastors.

The United Lutheran Synod of New York voted at Syracuse, New York, to ask the executive committee of the Church, through its Board of Social Missions, to institute a study of the Christian position on Communism.

For the first time since the Reformation, Mass is being said regularly in Old Windsor for a group of one hundred Catholics living in the Berkshire village.

Eighteen cardinals, numerous archbishops and bishops, and thousands of pilgrims from all parts of Italy and the Portuguese empire crowded into St. Peter's Basilica to witness the canonization of three new saints by Pope Pius XII. The saints are John de Britto, 17th century Portuguese missionary to the East Indies; and Bernardino Realini and Giuseppe Cafasso, Italians.

The Most Rev. John F. D'Alton, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, in the opening sermon of the Marian Congress at Ottawa, sharply criticized the "self-styled progressive thinkers" who attack Catholic teaching on birth control, divorce, and family life.

The Most Rev. Bernard J. Sheil, auxiliary bishop of the Roman Catholic archdiocese of Chicago, and Dr. Preston Bradley, pastor of the People's Church of Chicago, were elected co-chairmen of the Chicago Council Against Racial and Religious Discrimination at the organization's annual meeting in Chicago.

In the remote village of Soskut, Hungary, located in the predominantly Roman Catholic county of Feher, a Catholic priest has undertaken to use Protestant textbooks to teach religion to the only Protestant family in the community.

A new Catholic daily newspaper, *Slowo Pow Szechne* (The Word), has made its appearance in Warsaw, Poland. It is the first Catholic daily permitted to be published in Poland since the inception of the present regime.

A group of prominent Protestant and Roman Catholic leaders met at Wiesbaden, Germany, at the invitation of Dr. James R. Newman, a director of the United States Office of Military Government, to discuss a program of interfaith co-operation designed to help meet mutual relations and social problems. Dr. Otto Fricke, director of foreign relations for the Evangelical Church in Germany, and the Most Rev. Albert Stohr, Roman Catholic bishop of Mainz, reported there is a serious lack of Bibles and religious literature in Germany as a result of book-burnings and printing restrictions during the Hitler regime. They also deplored "the poor presentation of Christian viewpoints in the German press today."

Opposition to Federal aid for parochial schools, "both Catholic and Protestant," was expressed by the annual meeting of the United Lutheran Synod of New York meeting at Syracuse, New York.

American and British soldiers have helped in the rebuilding of two Protestant churches used jointly by occupation troops and Austrians. In Vienna, American soldiers contributed over \$200,000 for roofing a Lutheran church and providing material for stained glass windows, while in Klagenfurt, British troops aided in restoring and decorating the local parish church.

Nine American church leaders will leave shortly for Japan and Korea to represent United States Protestantism at two major church conferences in the Far East, it was announced in New York by the Foreign Missions Conference of North America. The Foreign Missions Conference, which represents 124 mission boards and agencies, said the clergymen would attend a meeting at Seoul, Korea, in mid-July and one at Gotemba, Japan, August 1—9. The meetings will cover relief problems, evangelistic programs, and establishment of a unified educational program for Christian schools. Members of the deputation are Dr. Thoburn T. Brumbaugh of New York, secretary of the committee for a Christian university in Japan; Dr. Herrick B. Young, chairman of the personnel and training committee of the Foreign Missions Conference, New York; Dr. John L. Yost, president, Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, Columbia, South Carolina; Dr. Elmer A. Fridell, secretary, American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, New York; Dr. Peter K. Emmons, pastor of the Westminster Presbyterian Church, Scranton, Pennsylvania.

Leading Polish and foreign churchmen attended a ceremony in Warsaw at which President Boleslaw Bierut of Poland was formally presented with a Bible by the Polish ecumenical committee. The presentation, part of a Bible Week sponsored by thirteen Protestant and Eastern Orthodox denominations, was made by Lutheran pastor Zygmunt Michelis, head of the Polish Council of Churches. Religious groups which participated in the Bible Week were the Lutheran, Methodist, Baptist, Reformed, Mariaviten, Old Catholic, Anglican, Christian Free, Christian Evangelical, Reformed National, Polish Adventist, Church of Christ, and the Russian Orthodox denominations. Most of the meetings held during the observance took place in the Reformed Church in Warsaw. The week opened with a Sunday service in a roofless and windowless Trinity Lutheran Church, once one of the most beautiful Protestant churches in eastern Europe.

Forty-nine young people from twenty-one States were commissioned as missionaries or deaconesses by the Board of Missions and Church Extension of the Methodist Church in Christ

Church in New York City. This is the largest group commissioned by the Board since before the war. Thirty-five will serve as missionaries in China, India, Africa, Japan, Korea, Brazil, and Chile; three will be home missionaries in Puerto Rico and New Mexico; and 11 will be deaconesses in the United States.

Bethany Collegiate Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, which once reportedly housed the world's largest Protestant Sunday school with an active membership of 5,000 persons, is today virtually abandoned and is for sale to the highest bidder. Erected seventy-seven years ago, "Old Bethany" is a church without a congregation, nearly all of its members having moved to the suburbs. The church's latest pastor resigned recently.

First Eskimo ever ordained in Alaska to the Presbyterian ministry, the Rev. Roy Ahmaogak, of Barrow, was given orders in Barrow by the Yukon committee of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. Mr. Ahmaogak has translated the Gospel of Mark and the Epistle to the Romans into Eskimo, and is now working on translations of other New Testament books. He has also compiled the first primer ever printed for Arctic Eskimos.

The Minnesota Synod of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. at its annual session in St. Paul, Minnesota, set out to gain 25,000 new members by 1950.

Dr. D. A. Holmes, 68-year-old pastor of the Paseo Baptist Church, has been elected president of the Ministerial Alliance in Kansas City, Missouri. He is the first Negro to hold the post.

A group of fifty native Christians in New Guinea, whose individual incomes seldom reach as much as \$5.00 monthly, have sent a check for \$41.86 to Seventh Day Adventist headquarters in Washington, D. C., to help needy Christians in Europe.

After heated debate which lasted for over two hours, the 23d annual Montreal-Ottawa conference of the United Church of Canada meeting in Montreal approved the ordination of married women to the ministry and passed by an overwhelming majority the request for ordination presented by Mrs. A. M. Butler of Montreal.

Twelve of the twenty-four members of the Coptic Orthodox Lay Council have resigned in Cairo, Egypt, in protest against the appointment of an Anglican professor of Greek at the Church's Cairo seminary. The group also retired because of differences of Coptic-Abyssinian relations.

An organized campaign to keep indecency and the "caricaturing of religion" out of motion pictures was urged at Los Angeles, California, by Charles P. Taft, Cincinnati, president of the Federal

Council of Churches, in an address at the annual meeting of the Los Angeles Church Federation.

A total of 60,118 Virginia school children were enrolled in the weekday religious education program during the past school year, an increase of about 10,000 over two years ago, according to a report from the Virginia Council of Churches.

24,000,000 Bibles annually are needed to catch up with world shortages of the Holy Book, it was reported in Birkhoven, Holland, at the first conference of the International Bible Societies. According to a compilation of reports submitted by delegates, Europe needs 7,000,000 Bibles, with Germany, the leading shortage area, accounting for 5,000,000 of the deficit. In the East, India requires 15,000,000 copies. In India, only 13,000 complete Bibles are available compared with estimated requirements of 15,000,000, reported the Rev. P. Mahanty, rector of the Calcutta Faculty of Theology.

Chief Rabbi Dr. Moise Ventura officiated at ceremonies inaugurating a Jewish community center in Alexandria, Egypt. Among those attending was His Holiness Christopher II, Greek Orthodox patriarch of Alexandria.

The War Department announced in Washington, D. C., that Judge Louis Leventhal of Philadelphia has been selected by General Lucius D. Clay to be adviser of Jewish affairs to the military government of Germany (U. S. Zone).

The Christian Church now exists in every capital city on earth with the exception of three: Lhasa, Tibet; Mecca, Arabia; and Kabul, Afghanistan, the Rev. A. E. Armstrong, secretary to the Board of Over-Seas Missions, told the delegates to the 23d annual meeting of the Manitoba Conference of the United Church of Canada in session in Winnipeg.

Grisly reminder of Nazi mass murders, a case containing the ashes of Jews who perished in Polish crematories and death camps was solemnly interred in Jerusalem in the cemetery of the Mount of Olives. The interment was accompanied by full Jewish burial rites.

A membership campaign of a scope and nature rarely before attempted by any religious body in this country will be launched next November by the National Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in an effort to reach the 60,000,000 persons in the United States who do not belong to any church. The drive will take the form of a full-scale advertising campaign using all available publicity media: nation-wide radio programs, magazine and direct mail advertising, and other outlets successfully used by commercial enterprises.