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Theological Observer. – Kirchlich Zeitgeschichtliches

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Theological Observer

Luther versus Brunner.—Recently Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, has published a book by Dr. C. F. H. Henry, professor of Philosophy of Religion, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, Calif., entitled *The Protestant Dilemma. An Analysis of the Current Impasse in Theology*, in which in its first part, "The Mid-Twentieth Century Impasse," he shows that Brunner's presentation of Luther's doctrine of Holy Scripture, in particular, of its verbal inspiration and authority, is not true to fact. The book will be reviewed later, but we here wish to express our appreciation of the fact that Professor Henry, though perhaps not always normative on this or that point, on the whole correctly presents and defends Luther's position on Holy Scripture against modern Liberals. He writes, for example: "But is Luther's position clearly one of opposition to verbal inspiration? Brunner concedes that Luther 'on the one hand expressed himself with amazing freedom about certain books in the Old Testament, and in the New Testament; then suddenly when engaged in controversy, he would appeal to the letter of the Scripture as infallible because it was wholly and literally inspired by God' (p. 275)." [The quotation is from Brunner's *The Mediator*. Philadelphia. The Westminster Press.] In a special note on the matter in the Appendix, Dr. Henry adds: "Whatever Luther's questions may have been about the canonicity of certain books . . . he had no question whatever about the authority and inerrancy of the books he considered as canonical. 'I have learned to ascribe this honor (namely, infallibility) only to books which are termed canonical,' declares Luther, 'so that I confidently believe that not one of their authors erred' (M. Reu, *Luther and the Scriptures*, p. 24)." The whole matter certainly deserves careful study.

J. T. M.

Walther's View of "Open Questions" Described.—In the *Northwestern Lutheran* Prof. J. P. Meyer of Thiensville, Wis., has published a translation of Walther's theses on "Open Questions," which appeared in *Lehre und Wehre*, 1868, and is now discussing these theses in a series of articles. Our C. T. M. submitted a translation of Walther's propositions in the issue of April, 1940. From Professor Meyer's article of November 21 we reprint the section that in part deals with Thesis 4 and with Thesis 5.

"From the fact that we are to be patient with weak brethren though they may err even in some very important point of doctrine some people infer that, because we do not break off fellowship relations immediately but tolerate the weak brethren in our community, therefore we must subscribe to the theory of Open Questions. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Toleration of weak brethren does not mean toleration of their error. It simply means that we consider them as one with us in accepting Christ the crucified as their only Savior and in submitting to the Word of God without reservation, while we realize that they have not

as yet progressed far enough in Christian knowledge and understanding to grasp fully every point that God proposes in His Word.

"If we consider the error of weak brethren as an Open Question, it would be presumptuous on our part to call them weak brethren. The theory of Open Questions presupposes that in such matters each one's opinion has as much right as the other's. Hence to pose as a strong brother, and to dub some one else a weak brother, just because he does not share our views on some Open Question, would be intolerable overbearance.

"To call any one a weak brother presupposes that he errs in some point, be it important or seemingly unimportant, on which the Scriptures have clearly spoken. The weak brother may be tolerated, but his error must be rejected, and is rejected by the very fact that we call him who holds it a *weak* brother.

"This ideal is set forth in Prof. Walther's fifth thesis.

"Thesis 5.—The Church militant must indeed aim at and strive for complete unity of faith and doctrine, but it never will attain a higher degree of unity than a fundamental one.

"When Prof. Walther here calls the Church on earth the *Church militant*, the battling Church, he pictures it as being on a very dangerous spot, as being surrounded by enemies who attack it from all sides, against whom it can hold its own only with great difficulty. Jesus Himself spoke of the Church in the same way on the two occasions in which He used the word church (Matt. 16 and Matt. 18). The first time He said, 'The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' He thus presents the forces of darkness, the gates of hell, as trying to destroy His Church. He promises that they shall not succeed. The battling Church will hold its ground and come out victorious. In the second passage He gives us a close-up view of a portion of the battlefield, showing what strenuous efforts the Church and every member of the Church will make to beat back the forces of hell who have temporarily inflicted a wound that may be deadly on one of its members.

"The battles which the Church is waging are not 'against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wickedness in high places' (Eph. 6, 12). Hence the weapons of our warfare must not be 'carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ' (2 Cor. 10, 4, 5).

"If that aim could be achieved that every thought and design of men were made a prisoner of war to the obedience of Christ, then there would be no weak brethren any more, then 'complete unity of faith and doctrine' would have been reached. But until on the very last day the Church will be carried triumphantly into heaven, it will remain the 'Church militant,' always striving for complete agreement, but never able to attain it because of the conditions of the battlefield. Paul himself admitted that he had

not yet attained, or were already perfect, but he pressed toward the mark (Phil. 3, 12, 14), progressing from glory to glory (2 Cor. 3, 18).

"A fundamental unity is all that is possible. But that is not to be a static thing. Individually and collectively we strive to overcome the forces of darkness and to progress in the light and in the knowledge of the truth."

The comments of Professor Meyer correctly set forth the position of Dr. Walther. If any one doubts this, let him read the articles of Walther which appeared in the same year as the theses in *Lehre und Wehre* as well as a number of his subsequent pronouncements. What is more important, the position outlined is Scriptural. It does justice to the teaching of St. Paul on the treatment to be accorded weak brethren and at the same time it upholds the majesty of the Word. Let no one think that the teaching sponsored in the quoted paragraphs approves of latitudinarian views. There is here nothing of the false liberalism which shouts: "Peace, peace," when there is no peace. The two ditches between which the theological path leads upward are avoided: that of fanaticism and that of doctrinal laxity. The bigot will not be satisfied with such a course nor will the person who is indifferent in matters of doctrine. Our concern these days must be not to become victims of either the one or the other of these errorists.

A.

Is Lodge Membership Innocuous? In reply to a question the editor of the Personal Problem Clinic section in the *Lutheran* (U. L. C. A.), in the issue of November 24, has this to say: "Some Lutheran bodies take a strong position against lodges—a matter of deep regret to numerous other Lutherans. The writer has never been a member of any lodge, but not on any conviction—simply because life has been filled to overflowing with many other worthy interests and activities. Every one deserves to be free to join or not to join, as he may determine, not according to dictation from any official body or pastor. But all Lutherans do not agree on this point."

In view of the anti-Christian character of the most prominent lodges it is a pity that a Lutheran writes of the lodge as if membership in it were an innocent matter. But probably since the U. L. C. A. is said to have among its clergy not a few members of the Freemasons, one should not be surprised at sentiments of the kind uttered in the section quoted.

A.

Parish Schools Favored.—From Richmond, Va., a correspondent of the *Christian Century* sent interesting information on the meeting of Episcopalians held in Southern Virginia. He writes: "Episcopal laymen of Southern Virginia are seeking a formula which will change the 'sex ratio' of church participation in America—now 65 to 35 in favor of women. At a meeting of 125 representatives from 30 counties, held in Williamsburg September 18, a program of action was set up. The group voted to ask the

diocese of Southern Virginia to canvass every member of every parish for support of the Church, to set aside three per cent of parish budgets for support of the National Episcopal Radio Hour, to establish parish schools of religion, to appoint a parish Public Relations representative, and to hold corporate communion services for men on Advent Sunday." Whatever a person may think of the objectives which these Episcopalians had in mind at their meeting, there is one of them which particularly attracts our attention, that to establish parish schools of religion. With deep interest one observes that in circles which hitherto had but few, if any, Christian day schools, the idea is now expressed with vigor that the chaos prevailing in elementary education in our country can best be removed through the Christian day school. We conservative Lutherans are often congratulated on our possession of this institution.

A.

Another Plan for Religious Instruction. — Last spring the press reported that the public schools in St. Louis had ceased permitting their pupils to leave the schools for one hour a week to receive religious instruction in some denominational church or school. The Circuit Court had ruled that the weekday religious program which was followed in St. Louis was unconstitutional. Now the attempt is made to take care of the religious instruction of children *after* school hours. The authorities of the State naturally cannot keep parents from sending their children to a church school in the afternoon when classes in the public schools have been dismissed. The Metropolitan Church Federation in St. Louis has resolved to try this method of giving religious training to the children of parents who belong to churches constituting the Metropolitan Church Federation. It was reported that up to this time 46 churches in the city are following the plan and that 2,100 pupils have been registered. In some of the churches the instruction is given Saturdays. It will have to be seen whether these efforts can win widespread favor. Of course, even at best, they cannot approach in effectiveness the work done in the Christian day school.

A.

Association of Bible Institutes Formed. — Officials of 28 Bible Institutes in the United States and Canada recently organized the American Association of Bible Institutes in Chicago. According to the newly elected president of the association, Dr. Samuel H. Sutherland, dean of the Los Angeles Bible Institute, the schools will be bound by the following doctrinal statement:

"We believe that there is one God, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God. We believe in the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, in His Virgin Birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His victorious death and atonement through His blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father and His personal and visible return in power and glory. We believe that man was

created in the image of God, tempted by Satan and fell, and that because of the exceeding sinfulness of human nature, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely necessary for salvation. We believe in the bodily resurrection of both the saved and the lost; those who are saved unto the resurrection of life and those who are lost unto the resurrection of damnation."

A committee of educators will be appointed to create the specific educational standards of the association, which has schools in two groups: those which are four-year schools equivalent to the collegiate level and those of an intermediate nature but, like the four-year schools, requiring a high school diploma for entrance. The schools in the four-year category are: The Los Angeles Bible Institute, Central Bible Institute, Chicago Evangelistic Institute, Cleveland Bible College, Columbia Bible College, Denver Bible Institute, Fort Wayne Bible Institute, Grace Bible Institute, Messiah Bible College, Mission Training Institute (Nyack, N. Y.), Pacific Bible College, Pacific Bible Institute, Providence Bible Institute, Rockmont College, Simpson Bible Institute, Southern California Bible College, and Southwest Bible Institute. Schools in the intermediate groups are the Atlanta Bible Institute, the Buffalo Bible Institute, Emmaus Bible Institute, Glad Tidings Bible Institute, Kansas City Bible College, Kentucky Mountain Bible Institute, Metropolitan Bible Institute, Multnomah School of Bible, North Carolina Bible Institute, the Open Bible Institute, and Southwestern Bible Institute. — RNS.

The World Council Continues Its Work. — At Amsterdam a group of ninety men was elected to form a central committee which is to deal with general issues of policy until the next assembly, 1953. Tentatively it has been resolved to hold the next meeting of the World Council in the United States. The city has not yet been selected. The central committee has elected officers and an executive committee. The Anglican bishop of Chichester, England, Right Reverend George K. A. Bell, was made the chairman of the central committee. Its vice-president is Dr. Franklin Clarke Fry, president of the U. L. C. A. The general secretary of the World Council, with offices at Geneva, is, as in the past, Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft. The following were chosen as associate general secretaries: Dr. Henry Smith Leiper and Dr. O. Frederick Nolde, with headquarters in New York; the Rev. Oliver S. Tompkins, with headquarters in London, England, and Bishop Stephen C. Neill and the Rev. Robert C. Mackie, with headquarters in Geneva. The executive committee plans to hold its meeting in Geneva next February. A.

The Church's Chief Function. — With much pleasure we read this item in the *Christian Century*, submitted by a correspondent from West Virginia. "Darby Fulton of Nashville, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, U. S., warned the Annual Convention of the West Virginia Synod, meeting in Huntington, that the Church must turn from excessive preoccupa-

tion with outside concerns to its paramount function of mediating spiritual salvation." What a refreshing note! A large number of churches seem to think that it is their duty to tell the United Nations, the President of the United States, and the Congress how they must solve the grave political problems with which the world and our nation are confronted. It is true that when these problems involve moral questions, the Church, taking its stand on the Word of God, can make pronouncements as to right and wrong. But in purely political and economic matters it possesses no competency. A.

Sermons in the Press.—It is not usual for the press to preach sermons, but Billy Rose in his column "Pitching Horshoes with Billy Rose" reports the following, which might be used by pastors who are faced with the problem of gathering greater funds for our new and greater mission work. We read in the *Globe-Democrat*, of November 11, 1948, under the heading "Food for Thought": "In 1923 a group of the world's most successful financiers met at the Edgewater Beach Hotel in Chicago. Present were: The president of the largest independent steel company; the president of the largest utility company; the greatest wheat speculator; the president of the New York Stock Exchange; a member of the President's cabinet; the greatest 'bear' in Wall Street; the president of the Bank of International Settlements; the head of the world's greatest monopoly. Collectively, these tycoons controlled more wealth than there was in the United States Treasury, and for years newspapers and magazines had been printing their success stories and urging the youth of the nation to follow their examples. Twenty-five years later, let's see what happened to these men. The president of the largest independent steel company—Charles Schwab—lived on borrowed money the last five years of his life and died broke. The greatest wheat speculator—Arthur Cutten—died abroad, insolvent. The president of the New York Stock Exchange—Richard Whitney—was recently released from Sing Sing. The member of the President's Cabinet—Albert Fall—was pardoned from prison so that he could die at home. The greatest 'bear' in Wall Street—Jesse Livermore—committed suicide. The president of the Bank of International Settlements—Leon Fraser—committed suicide. The head of the world's greatest monopoly—Ivar Kreuger—committed suicide. All of these men had learned how to make money, but not one of them had learned how to live." About the same time the members of the L. L. L. consecrated their substance to the Lord's service, in the endowment for the Veterans of the Cross, the Lutheran Hour, KFUEO, and other beneficiary efforts, and learned to bless the day when they discovered the greater blessedness of giving.
J. T. M.

Why We Are Protestants.—Under this heading the *Moody Monthly* (October, 1948) discusses briefly, but very much to the point, the principal reason why Protestants are protestants against

Romanism. Selecting the salient points of the thesis, we quote the following: "Our reason is not that the Roman Catholic Church engages in politics. To be sure she does, but if she is what she claims to be—the only true Church—she has a right to play politics. Our reason is not that Catholics are intolerant. In the countries where Rome is ascendant she has compiled a shameful record of suppression which has resulted in almost unbelievable ignorance and degradation. Yet, after all, if the Roman Church is the only true Church, she has a right to be intolerant of all other pretenders. Our reason is that the Roman Catholic Church is in error. Holding the Bible to be the inerrant Word of God, we find that at many points the Roman Church denies or perverts its clear teaching. We will name only one, but it is the central one, the key to all the others, and with it stand or fall most of the other errors in the Catholic system. The principal teaching of the Bible is that through Christ's finished work of atonement, in His death and resurrection, a man may be justified by faith (see, in particular, Gal. 2:16). But the Roman Catholic Church by its system of human works denies this great fundamental of the Gospel. If she were ever once to declare that a man can be justified by faith, it would mean her doom. There would be no longer any justification for the powers of the priesthood. The confessional as a means of forgiveness would have to go. The mass, with its perpetual offering of the flesh and blood of Christ, would be a useless sacrilege. The performance of works of supererogation, the observance of Lent, and the other practices that are supposed to heap up merit toward salvation, would lose all meaning. Extreme unction, baptismal regeneration [sic?], and prayers for the dead would be completely out of order. Papal power would become a farce; the canonizing of saints a hollow mockery. Purgatory would vanish into the thin air whence it came. If a man can be justified by faith in Christ, the whole Roman system is wrong, and is seen in its true light as a horrible perversion of the 'simplicity which is in Christ' (R. V.). It was this fact that made Martin Luther a Protestant. The Spirit of God enabled him to see through the Roman encrustations of superstition and paganism and to glimpse the glorious truth of the Gospel. And having seen that, everything else appeared in the new light. Having discovered the Gospel, Luther became bold to stand up against the pope and for all the truth of the Gospel for many years buried by Rome under a mass of error. We are Protestants today for the same reason that Luther was. This is the truth Rome fears. She cannot permit men to discover it, or the power of the pope and the priests over the souls of men will be forever broken." These are simple, well-known truths, but such as require emphasis over and over. As Protestantism yields the *sola fide*, its fight against Rome loses its objective and validity, for the things for which it contends lie on the periphery and do not touch the core of the great controversy of the Reformation.

J. T. M.

Rome Still Persecutes Protestants. In spite of the frequent statements of Roman Catholic journalists that their Church stands for religious liberty the press continues to report instances in which adherents of Roman Catholicism launch attacks on people who proclaim the Protestant faith. In the past this journal has reported on happenings in Spain which formed evidence of what has just been stated. Before us lies *Protestant Life*, in which H. Edwin Rosser, who serves in Yucatan, Mexico, under the Board of Foreign Missions, Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., describes experiences that he has had in Mexico. He begins his article by stating that the Open Letter to the Archbishop of Mexico which was signed by evangelical pastors and workers in 1946 and which formed a protest against priest-inspired fanaticism has not had the desired result. He reports that last August in Rio Verde the Catholic congregation was told by its priest that in the evening Evangelicals were intending to hold a meeting, and that the priest urged his members to see to it that the heretics would be dispersed. A crowd of Roman Catholic men and women set out for the Protestant church and demanded that the speaker, an ex-Catholic priest who had become a Protestant, be turned over to them. Then came a shower of stones that brought hurt to some of the Protestants and did damage to their chapel. In Yucatan the writer of the article, Mr. Rosser, was brought before the magistrate for "violation of the law of worship." It was only through the intervention of the evangelical Christians of the community that he was spared the humiliation of spending twenty-four hours in jail—the sentence which the fanatical mayor had decided to inflict. It is very evident that the pronouncement of Roman Catholic spokesmen insisting that their Church has written religious liberty on its flag must be taken with more than one grain of salt. A.

Pope Issues Rescript on Marriage Laws.—Pope Pius XII has recently issued a *motu proprio* which makes Roman Catholic marriage laws binding on persons who, although baptized as Catholics, have been brought up as non-Catholics. The ruling becomes effective in January. The *motu proprio*—which means a rescript drawn up and issued by the Pope on his own initiative—suppresses Section B of Paragraph 2 of Canon Law No. 1099, which reads:

"Canonical marriage celebrations do not concern:

"(a) Non-Catholics, whether baptized or not baptized, if they marry among themselves.

"(b) The children of non-Catholics, who, although baptized Roman Catholics, were brought up in heresy or schism, or without any religion, if they marry non-Catholics."

Suppression of Section B means that all those who were born of a mixed marriage and, although baptized Catholics, were brought up in the Protestant faith, will have to observe the Roman Catholic ritual when marrying. They will have to do so even if they marry another non-Catholic. The modification is seen

aimed at strengthening the importance of Baptism as an act of determining allegiance to the Catholic Church. **RNS**

Ministers Ask Improvement of Funeral Services.—Deploing the idea that funerals should be "bigger and better," the Tulsa Ministerial Alliance has issued a number of suggestions for improving the average funeral service. They proposed: that funeral services for church members be conducted in the church; that the favorite song of the deceased not be sung, but only hymns of faith, comfort, and hope; that Scriptures be chosen for their value in strengthening the faith of the bereaved, for comfort and consolation, and hope of immortality; that ministers keep their funeral sermons brief—"thirty minutes is long enough for the whole service"; that the sermon for a Christian carry the note of victory and immortality; that the sermon for a non-member should be in terms of comfort for the bereaved, and challenge to those who remain; that police escorts for funeral processions be encouraged as a public service; that the practice of avoiding Sunday funerals should be encouraged; that ministers make every effort to destroy the "common illusion that a funeral service is a performance and that one must be bigger and better than another."

RNS

Millennialism Properly Evaluated.—The upheavals of the past decade have the result that Millennialism is flourishing in a remarkable degree. Whenever catastrophes and disasters come, people turn to the Scriptures, and, sad to say, many of them, instead of comforting themselves with the clear passages of God's Word, go to the sections which are somewhat obscure, either through the metaphorical language that is used or the fact that the events spoken of are still lying in the future. A good article against these unhealthy tendencies is found in the *Lutheran Outlook* for November, 1948, written by the Rev. E. Gomann. The article stresses the Scriptural aspects of the subject that our generation needs. We take pleasure in reprinting the final paragraphs with their exhortations.

"Millennialism is an error contrary to the analogy of our faith. But it is also true that wherever error is spread some truth of faith and some phase of the Christian life has been neglected in the Church. The Anabaptists could never have propagated their error of adult baptism if many of those who had been received into the Church through infant baptism had not failed to show forth the fruits of their new life. Nor would the Adventists and Russellites succeed in turning many away from the revealed truth if there were not those among us today who, being *Diesseits-Menschen*, have in their pride and selfishness practically abandoned the thought of, if not even the belief in, the return of Christ and the life after death; yea, if there were not found in our day as well as in the days of St. Peter 'scoffers walking after their own lusts and saying, Where is the promise of His coming?' (2 Pet. 3:3). If all believers were Maranatha-Christians (1 Cor.

16:22) and lived their life *sub specie aeternitatis*, practicing the faith and life which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, particularly in these days of world-wide suffering and tribulation, the thought of a millennium on earth would soon vanish from the hearts and minds of the people. Instead of seeking heaven on earth, Christians would look to heaven above, watching and praying, that when the Lord returns in His glory according to His promise, they may receive Him with joy and enter with Him into His everlasting kingdom." Our re-action to this is a hearty Amen! A.

A Mammoth Interdenominational Agency.—The *Lutheran* (November 3, 1948) reports: "There is a plan, now well on its way to completion, which may bring into existence on May 2, 1950, a mammoth interdenominational agency to be called 'The National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.' It would merge: The Federal Council of Churches, the Foreign Missions Conference, the Missionary Education Movement, the Home Missions Council, the International Council of Religious Education, the Council of Church Boards of Education, the United Council of Church Women, the United Stewardship Council. In most of these the United Lutheran Church or some of its boards or agencies now has a place. U. L. C. officials do not think the United Lutheran Church would have a proper place in the combined council as it is now planned. At the Philadelphia convention they expressed their objections. The new agency would not be a *council of the churches*, directly responsive to their wishes, as the World Council of Churches definitely is. The constitution of the new agency would permit membership of churches whose evangelical character is not clearly established. Objection to scores of points in the proposed constitution were reported to the U. L. C. Executive Board. On some points the difficulties involve 'obscurity of vocabulary or interpretation.' On others there is clear-cut 'conflict with our church's basic principles for inter-church co-operation." Dr. Ernest Gordon recently wrote up the history of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America and allied organizations under the title "An Ecclesiastical Octopus." The title is indeed significant and fits also the newly planned mammoth interdenominational agency. Everybody knows what an octopus does to its victims. J. T. M.

Missions Conference Loses Nine, Gains Three Members.—Three applications for membership in the Foreign Missions Conference of North America were approved and nine withdrawals reported at the agency's 55th annual meeting in Buck Hill Falls, Pa.

Those accepted for membership were China Children's Fund, Inc., with headquarters at Richmond, Va.; Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, Akron, Pa., affiliated with the Lancaster Conference of the Mennonite Church; and the World Mission Prayer League, an independent non-synodical Lutheran mission with headquarters at Minneapolis, Minn.

Withdrawing bodies were the Friends Foreign Mission Society of Ohio Yearly Meeting; National Council of Young Women's

Christian Associations of Canada; Scandinavian Alliance Mission of North America; General Council of Cooperating Baptist Missions of North America, Inc.; Missionary Bands of the World; National Holiness Missionary Society; Oberlin-Shansi Memorial Association; Mission Board of the Church of God (Holiness); and Hephzibah Faith Missionary Society, which has ceased to exist.

Membership of the Foreign Missions Conference now comprises 102 Protestant missionary boards. **RNS**

Mohammedans in Pittsburgh.—Pittsburgh has some Mohammedans in its large population. As is well known, the holy day of the Mohammedans is Friday. Naturally the schools of Pittsburgh do not recognize Friday as a holiday, and the children of Mohammedan parents are expected to attend school on that day. A Mohammedan couple has asked a court in Pittsburgh for an injunction against the school board with a view to having the board compelled to excuse their children from school on Friday. The matter is being considered by a judge. The father in question has to work on Friday. **A.**

Lutherans *Brief Items from Religious News Service*

On January 6, 1949, thirty-four representatives of the eight member bodies of the National Lutheran Council gave unanimous endorsement to organic union and approved appointment of a fifteen member committee to prepare a structural plan for a united Lutheran organization. The fifteen member committee was instructed to report on a plan for organization at a meeting of the eight bodies to be held in Chicago next September. The plan drafted at the Chicago conference will be submitted to the eight bodies at their respective conventions in 1949. Exactly what type of organization the churches should form was not agreed upon. Delegates, however, expressed the opinion that it may be a federation and possibly go beyond, approaching organic union. On the fifteen member committee are: Dr. Julius Bodensieck, Dubuque, Iowa, and Dr. William L. Young, Columbus, Ohio, representing the American Lutheran Church; Dr. H. H. Bagger, Lancaster, Pa., Dr. R. E. Tulloss, Springfield, Ohio, Judge James F. Henninger, Allentown, Pa., Edward Rinderknecht, Toledo, Ohio, and Dr. Paul H. Kraus, Fort Wayne, Ind., United Lutheran Church; Dr. Oscar A. Benson, Chicago, and Dr. Ryden, Augustana Lutheran Church; Dr. N. C. Carlsen, Blair, Nebr., United Evangelical Lutheran Church; the Rev. Holger Nielsen, Cedar Falls, Iowa, Danish Lutheran Church; and Dr. John Wargelin, Negaunne, Mich., Finnish Suomi Synod.

The National Lutheran Council has undertaken to resettle 250 European refugee orphans who will be brought to the United States from Germany by the International Refugee Organization. Ranging in age from six to twelve years, the refugees are all from the Baltic states and include sick and handicapped as well as healthy children.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Saxony, Russian Occupation Zone, announced it has joined the Lutheran World Federation. Officials of the church in Saxony said it has also agreed to accept the newly adopted constitutions of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKiD) and the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany (VELKD).

The Rev. Bo Giertz, of the Linköping diocese, has been elected to succeed the late Dr. Carl E. D. Black as Lutheran bishop of Gothenberg. His election is expected to be ratified by the Swedish government. Gothenberg, located on the west coast, has been a stronghold of conservative Lutheranism. The question now being asked by Swedish churchmen is whether the new bishop will reflect the same attitude or lean toward "liberal" Lutheranism.

A bill giving laymen a greater voice in church affairs was adopted by a 41 to 11 vote at closing sessions in Stockholm of the month-long General Synod of the Swedish Lutheran Church. Regarded as the most important measure to come before the synod, which meets every five years, the bill increased the number of synodical delegates from 60 to 100. Of the 100 delegates, 57 will be laymen and 43 clergymen.

The Evangelical Church in Württemberg has voted to increase the activities of women theologians. Under the terms of a newly adopted bill they may preach at weekly services for girls and women, officiate in Sunday school, hold religious classes in women's hospitals and penitentiaries, and occupy church administrative posts. After three years of such practice and following an examination the women may become permanent vicars. Their term will end when they contract marriage.

The ninth biennial convention of the American Lutheran Conference proposed a joint publication of Sunday school papers by all Lutheran bodies in America. A "master plan" to cover Lutheran co-operation in the publication of all parish education periodicals has been submitted to all boards of parish education and the publishing house boards of the various Lutheran bodies.

Other Protestants

Dr. Wynn C. Fairfield, secretary of the Foreign Missions Conference, outlined a four point advance program for nine world areas — Europe, Africa, China, India, Japan, Korea, Latin America, the Near East, and southeast Asia. He urged: 1) increased use of radio, movies, and audio-visual aids to further Christian evangelism; 2) stepped up literacy programs modeled along the lines developed by Dr. Frank C. Laubach, pioneer missionary educator; 3) rural rehabilitation programs, based on a comprehensive approach to the economic, social, and family problems of rural people; 4) extensive educational programs, with special emphasis on higher education.

Dr. Ralph E. Diffendorfer told the 55th annual meeting of the Foreign Missions Conference meeting in Buck Hill Falls, Pa., that Asia, Africa, and the "islands of the sea" are the "new frontier" of the churches.

The Rev. Albert C. Hoover, Evanston, Ill., statistical director of the Methodist Church of the U. S., issued these figures for 1948: total membership of the Methodist Church 8,567,722; total enrollment in 37,908 church schools of 5,655,806; total church benevolences for the 1947—48 period \$28,125,305; the estimated value of churches' buildings, equipment, and land \$887,727,761.

A total of \$10,335,326 for its work overseas and in the United States was appropriated by the Board of Missions and Church Extension of the Methodist Church at its annual meeting in Buck Hill Falls, Pa.

Forty-four leading laymen of the United Church of Canada from all parts of the dominion met in Toronto to plan a campaign for raising the level of ministerial salaries. The aim of the campaign is to assure every minister an annual salary of \$2,100 by 1949 and \$2,500 by 1951, with a manse provided.

An ecumenical service, first of its kind in Rome, was held in the American Episcopal Church. Churches represented at the service were: The Church of England, the Protestant Episcopal Church (American), the Evangelical Church in Germany, the Baptist Church, the Italian Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, the Reformed Church of Hungary, the Waldensian Church, and representatives of the Salvation Army.

Observances will be held in 1949 to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the first Book of Common Prayer used in services of the Church of England. Plans for the commemoration are being made by a special committee appointed by the archbishops of Canterbury and York. The celebrations are expected to reach a climax during the months of May and June.

Thirty-one new foreign missionaries and 4 deaconesses were commissioned by the Board of Missions and Church Extension of the Methodist Church at its annual meeting in Buck Hill Falls, Pa. They are part of 1,000 new missionaries the Methodist Church is seeking during the next four years. All have taken post-graduate studies in the evangelistic, medical, educational, or social welfare services in which they are to be engaged.

Construction will soon begin on the projected Mary Reed Memorial Hospital and Clinic in India. The hospital, named after the famous Methodist missionary who spent over fifty years caring for lepers, will go up in the Himalaya mountain mission at Chandag Heights. The cornerstone of the institution was laid on January 28, 1948, by Dr. Eugene R. Kellersberger, general secretary of the American mission.

Work has begun in Prague on the restoration and rebuilding of historic Bethlehem Chapel, where John Hus preached his first sermons from 1402 to 1413. The Gothic-style chapel, with a standing capacity of 3,000, was built in 1391 for the express purpose of preaching the Gospel in the Czech language.

The American Theological Committee has been re-established by the American section of the World Council of Churches Commission on Faith and Order. It will be headed by Dr. Clarence T. Craig, professor of Yale Divinity School. Members will include Dr. Henry B. Van Dusen, president of Union Theological Seminary, and Dr. Kenneth Scott Latourette of Yale. Committee meetings in the near future will concentrate on isolating the essential agreements and disagreements between the churches which are relevant to their union and co-operation.

The Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States set new records in 1948 in baptisms, confirmations, membership gains, and income. According to the 1949 *Living Church Annual*, there were 93,251 infant baptisms and 17,367 adult baptisms; 79,751 confirmations, a 5.93% increase over the previous year; a total church membership of 2,436,589, a 3.7% gain over 1947; and contributions for all purposes amounted to \$61,097,062.

At the Ecumenical Conference of the United Student Christian Council which met at Kansas University in Lawrence, Kans., Dr. J. S. Bixler, president of Colby College, Maine, insisted that chapel services ought to be compulsory at all church colleges. Dr. Bixler stressed the optional chapel services carry with them the admission that worship is not essential.

The Radio Committee of the Northern Baptist Convention has determined to investigate give-away radio programs. The committee said: "The current craze of radio give-away programs tends to create personal antagonisms, family discord, mental disturbances, and is an encouragement to the practice of gambling and of expecting something for nothing."

The 26,823 churches affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention reported 312,246 additions through baptism in 1948. Southern Baptists, however, do not accept infants for baptism or membership.

Development of a strong curriculum in the field of radio was announced in San Anselmo, Calif., by the San Francisco Seminary of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. The radio course offers a class in interviewing which stresses the opportunity for witness via the air waves, a phase of evangelism becoming increasingly important to clergymen. A class in radio script-writing introduces student ministers to the art of preparing religious drama scripts for broadcasting. Another class offers a workshop for students who are especially talented in the radio field.

Dr. Duke K. McCall, executive secretary of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee, reported that Southern Baptist churches had contributed \$8,865,790.80 for mission work in 1948. Of this figure, the foreign mission board at Richmond, Virginia, received \$4,209,915.25 for Baptist mission work overseas.

Membership in the Evangelical United Brethren Church now totals 786,892 persons. The denomination has 4,454 Sunday schools, with an enrollment of 630,195. Total giving for all purposes was \$22,928,722, a gain of 7% over the preceding year.

A faculty of divinity operated on a co-operative basis by Canadian Protestant bodies has been established at McGill University in Montreal. It will be sponsored chiefly by the United Church of Canada and the Church of England in Canada.

The Rev. William Goudbert and 100 Navajo Indians are working assiduously to translate the Bible into Navajo. The task is extremely difficult because the 60,000 members of the Navajos have no written language. So far translations of Mark and John have been printed, and a third book, First Corinthians, now is ready for the American Bible Society to publish. In explaining the difficulty of translation Mr. Goudbert said: "Sometimes one verse takes a whole day for us to work out. Take the word baptist for instance. The Navajos have no word for that. They have one that means water on the head, which might suit my Methodist and Presbyterian friends all right. But how about the denominations that believe in immersion? We studied and studied and finally decided on the Navajo word 'Na'aelaago,' which means ceremonially washed."

Representatives of 51 of Oregon's 90 Baptist churches were ousted from the Oregon Baptist State Convention at Portland by a 212 to 171 vote. The ousted representatives are members of the conservative element among Baptist churches. They have long evinced dissatisfaction with the "modernistic" and "liberal" activities of their parent organization, the Northern Baptist Convention.

Armed with a \$10,000,000 budget, the centennial meeting of the Baptist General Convention of Texas closed in Houston with a promise to fight "nine outstanding evils." During the next year the Baptists will fight against liquor, gambling, indecent and immoral movies, bad literature, divorce, desecration of womanhood, juvenile and adult delinquency, Sabbath desecration, and war.

Roman Catholics

A decree of excommunication against Roman Catholics involved in the arrest of Joseph Cardinal Mindszenty, primate of Hungary, has been issued by the Sacred Consistorial Congregation in Rome. The text of the excommunication decree according to a Vatican informant was as follows: "Since it has been dared recently to lay hands sacrilegiously upon the most eminent Cardinal of the

Holy Roman Church, Joseph Mindszenty, and to prevent his exercising his ecclesiastical jurisdiction, the Sacred Consistorial Congregation declares that all those who have committed the before-mentioned crimes have incurred, under canons 2343 and 2334 of the codes of the canon law, the excommunication specially reserved to the Apostolic See, and fallen under 'infamia juris.'"

A total of 718 new books were published in 1948 for Roman Catholic readers. This figure represents an increase of 194 volumes over 1947. *Bruce Bookman*, a publishers' journal in Milwaukee, said the 718 books include 124 volumes dealing with spirituality; 75 with biographical subjects; 59 with history; 56 with poetry, drama, and criticism; and 52 works of fiction.

Bishop Thomas J. McDonnell, national director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, reported that the Roman Catholic Church has 261,895 full-time missionaries in 560 mission dioceses, vicariates, and prefectures throughout the world.

St. Louis University, operated by the Society of Jesus, has appointed three negro doctors to the instructors' staff of its School of Medicine. They are the first members of their race to be named to the university staff.

Others

Cathedrals, churches, and chapels belonging to the Greek Catholic Church of Romania will be turned over to the Romanian Orthodox Church according to an announcement in Bucharest in the government's official gazette. Under a recent State decree the Greek Catholic Church was dissolved and all its properties confiscated. Distribution of the Greek Catholic properties will be made by a special inter-departmental commission set up by the Ministries of Cults, Finance, Foreign Affairs, and Agriculture.

America's Jewish religious bodies through the Synagogue Council of America extended Christmas greetings "to their Christian brethren." The greetings were sent in a message to Christian religious leaders by Dr. Robert Gordis, New York, president of the Synagogue Council, who stressed "the sense of solidarity and brotherhood binding all God's children together." Recipients of the message were Bishop John S. Stamm of Harrisburg, Pa., president of the Federal Council of Churches; Archbishop John T. McNicholas of Cincinnati, chairman of the Administrative Board of the National Catholic Welfare Conference; Dr. William G. Sodt of Milwaukee, Wis., president of the National Lutheran Council; Francis Cardinal Spellmann, archbishop of New York, and Dr. Everett R. Clinchy of New York, president of the National Conference of Christians and Jews.

The United Nations General Assembly unanimously approved an international convention outlawing genocide — mass murder of national, racial, or religious groups.

One hundred years of missionary effort has established the Mormon Church in the southeast on a firm foundation. At present there are 17,000 Mormons in Georgia, South Carolina, Florida, Alabama, and Mississippi under the jurisdiction of the southern states mission, with headquarters in Atlanta, Ga.

More than 5,000 men and women are now serving the Latter Day Saints Church (Mormon) as missionaries.

Dr. Maurice N. Eisendrath, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, declared before the 75th anniversary convention of the Union that Reformed Judaism had increased 40 per cent in membership and 20 per cent in the number of its congregations in the past five years. He said, "During 1947 thirty new liberal Jewish congregations were founded throughout the country. . . . Had we the professional staff and money required, we could start a new liberal congregation virtually every month within the environs of Greater New York alone. Seventy-five years ago the Union numbered 28 congregations and less than 500 families. Today it has grown to about 400 congregations and 100,000 families.

Lutherans and Roman Catholics in Germany are planning joint sponsorship of a project, patterned after the famed "Boys Town" in the United States, to provide a home for 3,000 wayward boys and orphans. Details of the co-operative effort were revealed in Chicago when the U. S. A. Committee for the Lutheran World Federation authorized a grant of \$10,000 to support the venture. Bishop Hanns Lilje of the Church of Hanover will supervise Lutheran participation in the undertaking. The property acquired for the project is located south of Bremen and includes several assembly halls, dining rooms, a swimming pool, and land for agricultural work. Much of the schooling, sports, instruction in trades, and other activities will be carried on in common by the two faiths. But certain functions peculiar to each confession will be left to each one individually.

Plans for a special five-year effort to bring the Scriptures to at least 20,000,000 men, women, and children in all corners of the world were outlined to the advisory council of the American Bible Society at its annual two-day meeting in New York. Dr. Eric M. North, general secretary of the Bible Society, told representatives of 48 Protestant denominations affiliated with the agency that the "program of advance" from 1949 to 1953 will require 59,712,081 Scriptures at an estimated cost of \$11,888,484. Of these 37,140,000 will be circulated in the United States and 22,572,081 abroad. They will consist of 4,199,087 Bibles, 10,407,706 Testaments, and 45,115,288 Gospels. In the five-year period ending June 30 last, according to Dr. North, the Bible Society distributed 54,614,325 Scriptures, including 3,690,329 Bibles, 11,945,024 Testaments, and 38,978,972 Gospels at a cost of \$7,051,525 through its regular budget and emergency programs.