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## Theological Observer. - Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

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## Theological Observer

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**The Lutheran Hour and Germany.** — Since the middle of May the Lutheran Hour has been broadcast in the German language from Station Luxembourg in Central Europe. The *Protestant Voice* of June 9 comments as follows: "A radio invasion of Germany by means of weekly Christian broadcasts was announced by Dr. Walter A. Maier of St. Louis, Mo., in an international broadcast over the Lutheran Hour. Declaring that the new German-language broadcasts started today (May 15) 'will counteract the atheist propaganda which is flooding the defeated lands of Western Europe,' Dr. Maier asserted: 'Germany is the last powerful barrier in the Old World which can restrain the onrush of Red ruin; if this bulwark breaks, all of Europe, and soon all Africa, and all of Asia, where the Communist armies swept on almost without opposition, will be under the crimson banner of the hammer and sickle.' The Lutheran Hour's program for Germany, the radio speaker announced, includes the use of short wave and long wave stations, broadcasts from without Germany and from within. It is hoped that soon every station in all zones, except the Russian, will broadcast 'Bringing Christ to the Nations.' The German language brings to a total of twenty-five the various languages now employed by the Lutheran Hour. Commenting further on the nature of these German broadcasts, Dr. Maier said: "Throughout vast, devastated areas where thousands of churches have been reduced to rubble and large numbers of pastors have been killed on the fields of battle, we must proclaim the sustaining comfort of God's love in Christ. The millions of displaced persons who have lost their earthly possessions, the sorrow-swept masses of war's crippled and invalids, its widows and orphans, its grief-gripped, spiritless multitudes, must hear the divine truth that God still loves them. Germany must be kept with Christ." The Lutheran Hour is broadcast from Luxembourg in nine languages. In Austria there are stations that broadcast it in German, but they are of smaller size.

**Albert Schweitzer.** — Instead of submitting impersonal comments, I shall here give a personal account of what I saw and heard in Aspen, Colo., when I attended the Schweitzer lecture delivered in connection with the Goethe bicentennial celebration. It was my good fortune to pass through Colorado early in July, and I felt it would be a good investment of my time to make the required side trip and to hear this famous man. Schweitzer spoke twice, delivering his lecture on July 6 in French and on July 8 in German. An interpreter was at his elbow, who very skillfully translated every sentence after it had been uttered. I heard the lecture on July 8. A huge tent had been erected in which the many hundred visitors could gather to hear discussions and concerts. It must be remembered that Aspen is a little mountain

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village which once upon a time had been a somewhat prosperous mining town and then fallen into total neglect, but which gradually had taken on new life as a winter resort and now all of a sudden found itself famous as the center of a great cultural endeavor.

The weather on July 8 was perfect, the sky was deep blue, the mountains all about the village looked enormously impressive in their majestic height and their summer verdure, and the whole atmosphere was one of poetic beauty. When Schweitzer entered the tent, the whole audience arose in a tremendous ovation. He is a man of commanding presence, strongly built, his large head covered with bushy hair, and a strong mustache giving him almost a martial air. One was reminded of the current pictures of Mark Twain. Schweitzer's voice was a little disappointing. It did not possess that deep resonance which one expected; but it must not be forgotten that he is 74 years old and that he cannot be expected to speak with juvenile vigor. The speech, or paper, he presented was a masterpiece. Schweitzer has these many decades, ever since he began to write, been known as one of the best stylists in the German language, combining in a marvelous synthesis elegance, strength, and simplicity.

His subject, of course, was Goethe. I shall here transcribe some of the things I jotted down. Schweitzer endeavored to depict Goethe as poet, scientist, philosopher, religious thinker, and man. Contrary to views that may be entertained, Goethe was not popular during his lifetime. He was misunderstood. The beloved German poet was Schiller, not Goethe. In 1848 and 1849 his birth one hundred years before was not celebrated. Goethe himself observed that he would never achieve popularity. In that he was mistaken. More and more he is becoming recognized as one of the great men of our race. We realize that Goethe was immensely versatile. As poet it was his language, for one thing, that fascinated. His poems have a peculiar rhythm. He writes always in impersonal, objective fashion, expressing the profoundest sentiments of the human soul.

As scientist he was truly great. What cast him into his scientific studies was the necessity of the moment. His anatomical researches have become famous, likewise those that have to do with botany and agriculture. His theory of colors has received wide acclaim. Goethe always favored direct observation far more than abstract thinking. With respect to his philosophical endeavors, he did not belong to the school that begins with *a priori* principles in doctrinaire fashion. He began with nature. He might be called a philosopher of nature. He followed Giordano de Bruno and Spinoza. The philosophy of Fichte, Hegel, and Schelling remained foreign to him. His point of view was that of common sense. To find the right way you have to observe nature. His object always was to cling to reality. With the eyes of the spirit we look upon nature about us and thus find what is true. This philosophy is modest in its claims, it recognizes that as we pene-



trate into the secrets of nature, we apprehend truth, and this truth is the highest wisdom. The truths thus grasped are sufficient to lead us on in grappling with the problems of life. As far as nature itself is concerned, we must say that secret forces are at work which we cannot understand. They might be called demonical. We see them personified in the Mephistopheles of *Faust*. In history we find these forces taking on flesh and blood in demonical human beings. These people, who impress us as extremely powerful, are not always the greatest people in the field of truth and love, but the multitudes are attracted by them. What they accomplish is not necessarily always bad. There is such a thing as fate in the existence of man, and we cannot entirely escape it. There is a struggle between freedom and determinism. Compare Goethe's *Wahlverwandschaften*. Men are really helpless, confronted with the forces that subdue them. Often, however, we succeed in conquering fate. The fundamental virtues are purity and goodness (kindness). Purity consists in avoiding deceit, hypocrisy, insincerity, dishonesty. The sister of purity is a loving spirit. A man who does some thinking about his own destiny cannot avoid trying to be led by love. Love is that in man which is truly divine. The utilitarianism of Bentham does not attract Goethe. Every man has his own disposition and inclinations toward that which is good, and these inclinations he must cultivate. God we must think of as the fullness of love. Goethe stated that he looked upon the faith in God's love as the only basis of salvation. This love must become an active force in us. Mere contemplation is an aberration. Goethe translated John 1:1: "In the beginning was action." He believed in action. Of course, meditation must be joined to it. What is duty? The demand of the day. Bearing that in mind, we shall see what still has to be done. One thing that especially has to be avoided is hatred; judgment must be left to God.

Inquiring into the nature of Goethe's religion, we have to say that it agreed with his whole view of life. What Jesus reveals to us about God is precisely the ideas to which we are led through our own thinking. The religion of Jesus is not dogma, but the proclamation of the love of God. When Goethe at times calls himself a pagan, he does not mean to say that he is not a Christian, but that he does not accept the dogmas of Christian theology. It was his aim to see these dogmas eliminated more and more. He does not reject the pantheism of Spinoza, believing that this conception of reality makes us pious and truthful. He does not grant that this denies that God is a personal Being. He accepts the immortality of the soul. As to the ultimate questions of existence, he thinks a man can talk with no one but God alone. Explore what you can, revere what you cannot explore. The Pauline statement that all human wisdom is foolishness in the sight of God, he does not accept. His religion was not widely accepted by his contemporaries, but the tree he planted grows and flourishes, while philosophies come and go.



Goethe's personality was remarkable; his dynamic force forms the background of his works. It is true that he often fell into errors; it is easy to criticize him. Various things in his conduct strike us as offensive and unintelligible. His relations with Christine Vulpius belong to this category. Often he appeared cold and uninterested. He admitted that he contained in himself all the contradictions which can be joined together in any human being. Still it must be said that generally speaking, according to a report of his contemporaries, he was an amiable companion. His appearance was such that he was called "the Olympian," while in reality he was not of such a nature. He actually took an interest in the sufferings of people and tried to alleviate them. His honesty and truthfulness are a prominent trait. He did not lack humility. There is no duty which he tries to escape. He constantly tries to reach higher ground, both intellectually and spiritually. Many people in these days will not only think of Goethe, but likewise thank him for what he has done and what he was. Schweitzer closed with the remark that he gladly confesses that he belongs to this group of people. Immediately after the lecture, Schweitzer left to return to Africa.

What shall we say about the picture of Goethe which he drew? As far as I can see, his characterizations are correct. It seems that he actually has penetrated to the very heart of the ideas of the great German poet and has evaluated properly his personality. The believing Christian, of course, is shocked. We here have an implied profanation of what is most holy in the universe, a trampling under foot of the precious Gospel of the redemption through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ our Lord. Schweitzer evidently shares the views of Goethe to a great extent.

It is true that we have to admire this man, who, one of the most brilliantly gifted persons of our generation, a bright career as professor, author, and artist beckoning him, turns his back on all these prospects and comforts and honors and goes into the jungles of Africa to lead the life of a medical missionary among lowly people, far away from the centers of civilization and all the joys that come from companionship with one's equals. But, sad to say, Schweitzer does not accept what the Bible says about the greatest need of man. We think here of the Apostle Paul, who was even more self-sacrificing and who recognized that what we need most of all is the Cross of Jesus Christ and the life and the power that come from it.

Schweitzer is best known for his work in which he describes the various Lives of Jesus that have been written since about 1775. The German title is *Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung*, which has been translated *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*. Another famous work of his has the title *Paul and His Interpreters*. At present he is engaged in issuing a series of volumes called *The Philosophy of Civilization*, of which two volumes have appeared, having the titles *The Decay and Restoration of Civilization* and *Civilization and Ethics*.

A.



**The Augustana Synod's Action on Lutheran Unity.**—When the Augustana Synod met at Minneapolis June 7—12, it was asked to look at a question pertaining to the subject of Lutheran unity. We take over a paragraph from the report of Dr. E. E. Ryden in the *Lutheran Companion* of June 29 in which this matter is dealt with.

"In his annual message President Bersell had revealed the progress being made by the eight bodies in the National Lutheran Council to bring about closer organizational affiliation. He also made known the fact that he had been approached by Dr. J. W. Behnken, president of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, to secure his co-operation in a plan to bring about unity among all Lutheran groups through free conferences of pastors and laymen. This proposal had been rejected by the Augustana president on the grounds that the eight bodies which have been working together for so long a time in the National Lutheran Council should be given an opportunity 'to find their common denominator as far as union is concerned without any outside interference.' In response to Dr. Bersell's plea that his position in this matter be endorsed, the Synod declared: 'We approve the efforts being made to achieve eventual organic unity of all Lutheran church bodies; we endorse the endeavors to attain a closer affiliation among the participating bodies in the National Lutheran Council; and we support and commend the position of our president and his associates on our Lutheran Unity Committee that the eight bodies of the National Lutheran Council should be given an opportunity to attain closer affiliation in order thereby to hasten the eventual organic unity of the Lutheran Church.'"

The action of other Lutheran church bodies and their presidents will be awaited with interest. A.

**Bishop Dibelius and the Russians.**—It is only with difficulty that news from the zone of Germany occupied by the Russians can be obtained. Our readers, hence, will welcome an item reporting on a clash between the Russian masters and Bishop Dibelius, whose diocese embraces Berlin and all of Brandenburg and who in addition is president of the so-called Evangelical Church in Germany. We take over the account as given in *Religious News Service*:

The Eastern Zone of Germany can now be added to the mounting number of countries behind the Iron Curtain in which tensions between the communist-dominated state and the church is growing. The troublemaker, according to the Soviets, is Dr. Otto Dibelius, Lutheran bishop of the Church of Berlin-Brandenburg and president of the Evangelical Church in Germany.

Bishop Dibelius issued a strongly worded pastoral letter to his congregations on Pentecost in which he compared eastern Germany under communism in 1949 to Germany under nazism in 1934.

In retaliation the Soviet-controlled Berlin radio announced



that "a man with such an unsteady character as Dr. Dibelius can no longer be a head of the church."

Bishop Dibelius said that church leaders had remained silent previously because "our public life was under the complete domination and sole responsibility of the occupation forces." This silence, unbroken except in individual cases, was maintained despite the disappearance of "tens of thousands" of Germans in the East since the end of the war, he said.

"From now on," he continued, "the responsibility for what happens to Germany will fall more and more on German shoulders. A German government is in the making. With this the hour has come to speak where I had to keep silent before. For it is to the German people themselves the assignment is given. There is much to say, to ask, and to admonish on every side toward the West and the East."

The bishop freely admitted that religious activities were not forbidden in the Eastern zone. He admitted that the leaders of the church found understanding and good will on the part of leading political forces in the East for some of their requests and expressed the hope that that feeling would continue. The church even made an effort to stop rumors that the Eastern zone conducted an organized persecution of Christians.

Bishop Dibelius explained, however, that while the practice of religion is not forbidden, it is often made practically impossible. Able-bodied inhabitants in the villages and factory workers in towns are commanded to work on Sundays. Youth must take part in work or demonstrations which are held on Sunday morning when they could just as well be held on a weekday. The religious instruction in the schools "continually meets difficulties, so that in spite of all assurances, in many places the children baptized by the church grow up without any religious instruction. At the same time, at school they are constantly under antichristian influence."

The letter continues: "Here the church must raise its warning voice without bringing charges. For contribution to the state of affairs in which we find ourselves, each of us must take blame whether he lives in the West or East zone.

"We have all bowed to God's judgment as we should have bowed. We do not accuse, but we are warning and pleading. We ask all concerned, Do not fall into the illusion as if a government of violence and dishonesty were a necessary channel for a scientific view of the world to which the future supposedly belongs! Such a future could be only a future in which man can no longer be man!

"We ask everyone in whose breast a conscience is awake not to yield himself to anything that breathes the spirit of violence and dishonesty. A courageous 'No' to that which is against the commandment of God makes one free, even if the consequence brings danger and distress."

A.



**Mergers Discussed in 1949 Conventions.**—The *Presbyterian Guardian* (June issue) reports on a number of proposed denominational mergers. The Northern Presbyterians proposed a plan for a general church union of "groups more or less holding to Presbyterianism. Such groups include the United Presbyterians and the Reformed Church of America, currently uniting between themselves, and the Evangelical and Reformed and the Congregational Christian Churches, also currently completing a merger. So the proposal is that in due course the Northern and Southern Presbyterians and these four other denominations shall become one church."—"The Southern Assembly also approved a report of its committee concerning greater co-operation with the Northern Presbyterians. Last year's Assembly imposed a moratorium on church union proceedings with the Northern body for five years. The Southern Church's Committee on Interchurch Relations, however, submitted and publicized this year a report which practically involved union with the Northern church in all but name. Opponents of the union program charged that this report was a clear violation of the intent of the moratorium adopted last year. However, the Assembly approved the report, and apparently the two denominations are going to have the makings of a trial marriage, without any official ceremony."—"With the ecumenical movement in full swing, the Northern Baptists have proposed for consideration by their member churches a change in their name and a union of all Baptists in America. The proposed name, not yet officially adopted, is the American Baptist Convention. It is suggested that invitations be sent to other Baptist groups, including the Southern Convention, two Negro Baptist denominations, and other minor groups. Since the Northern Convention is already talking union with the Disciples of Christ, the new organization, if it ever gets established, would have a total of some 15 million members, the largest unified Protestant group in the country."

F. E. M.

**Rome and Nullification of Marriages.**—The Sacred Roman Rota, the Church's supreme marriage tribunal, decided 124 cases during 1948 concerning the nullity of marriages. In 76 cases the marriage was declared valid; in 48 it was found to be invalid, and a declaration of nullity was issued. More than one-third of the cases were handled gratuitously, neither the court nor the counsel receiving any fee. (*America*, July 2, 1949, p. 393.)

**China Once More.**—At the risk of wearying our readers, presenting conjectures which may prove to be ill-founded, we once more submit a few items on the situation in that unhappy country, passing on some reports circulated by *Religious News Service*. Of interest is what Rev. Harold B. Rattenbury, the general secretary of the Methodist Missionary Society, England, stated at a meeting in London. "There is nowhere a certainty as to what the changes in China mean, but they are a matter of significance for the whole world. The Christian Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek has lost his



hold on the country, and his opponents have now to face the hard task of governing. Meanwhile, the Church in China has grown unbelievably in numbers and strength. The Chinese Church lives on, and as long as they are able, missionaries of all churches intend to stay. There are those who dream of a new pattern of the Church in a Communist nation which may be a help to the Christian Churches in other lands." The news dispatch reporting this speech bears the date of May 3.

Of somewhat different tenor are the remarks of a Methodist bishop who attended the meeting of the Methodist Council of Bishops which was held in Atlantic City, N. J. The ecclesiastic in question is Bishop Carlston Lacy, of Foochow, China. He declared "that fundamental differences between the Church and Communism will have to be more closely defined before the place of the Church in Communistic China can be determined." He reported "that some Christian missionaries in Northern China have fled, some have been killed, some churches closed, and some congregations scattered by the Communist army. 'We are not alarmed because we have been expecting Communists for more than six months. We can only guess what will happen to us. In Fukien, our Chinese leaders have said, we have six months to adjust ourselves to the situation. No missionary and no one employed by the Church is to risk his life to protect church property. Fundamentally, we feel the Church has a mission to the Communists as well as anyone else.'" He stated "that he did not believe that China will fall behind the iron curtain. 'It will be more like a bamboo curtain with slits that allow some light. But meanwhile the country will be under a very real Communist domination.'" According to Bishop Lacy, the downfall of the regime of Chiang Kai-shek was due chiefly to his inability to solve China's economic problem. It is a problem, of course, that the Communists will have to face. Whether they will be more successful will have to be seen.

A dispatch from Shanghai, dated April 18 and reporting on a meeting of Christian leaders in Shanghai, China, states: "The Communist movement in China is fired by such fanatical zeal as has seldom been seen in the four thousand years of Chinese history. Christians must seek to maintain an honest, unprejudiced, and open mind towards it, to separate the gold from the dross. In the same objective spirit, the accomplishments of the Christian movement must be weighed against its failures. If it has relied too much on outside help, it now must build up its indigenous strength. Christians must forget differences and unite their efforts. [Is the difference between truth and error to be disregarded? A.] . . . Communist leaders Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai, questioned about religious freedom, have replied that there will be freedom of belief, but also freedom of non-belief. There is need for Christian 'apologists,' such as those of the early centuries of Christianity. In the discussion of church administration it was recognized that the use of the laity had been comparatively neglected. In the future



more effective lay leadership must be developed. Also, too many persons still think of the Church as a foreign institution. Administrative responsibility must continue to be shifted from missionaries to Chinese. New programs must be mapped out to show that Christianity is a practical, working religion, closely related to the welfare of the common people, whether spiritual, social, or economic. Overlapping organizations, dead wood, must be cut out." Let the reader in his search for information on conditions in China read these paragraphs and see whether they probably tell him a thing or two that he has not read elsewhere. A.

**Calvinism and Capitalism.**—The current literature on capitalism is being amplified by much discussion of its religious origins. New editions of R. H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, lend new weight to the assumption that Calvinism fostered its rise. Whereas this thesis was originally maintained in criticism of Calvinism, it is now quoted even in defense of capitalism. A useful article providing some sober judgments and valuable quotations from sources is Winthrop S. Hudson, "Puritanism and the Spirit of Capitalism," the presidential address to The American Society of Church History, Dec. 30, 1948, and published in *Church History* of March, 1949. Professor Hudson steers his reader between two oversimplifications. The one is the equating of Puritanism and Calvinism; the other is the interpreting of Puritanism as wildcat materialism. He points out that Tawney has to dismiss Richard Baxter as a conservative and find other examples of the Puritanism which fostered capitalism. Professor Hudson, however, emphasizes that Richard Steele and others of his mind actually forsook Puritanism in throwing religious emphasis behind capitalism. "The victory of the spirit of capitalism in a very real sense meant the defeat of Puritanism" (p. 14). R. R. C.

**The Case of Professor Lohmeyer.**—Prof. Oscar Cullmann, New Testament scholar at Basel, according to the *Christian Century*, June 29, 1949, reports the disappearance of Prof. Ernst Lohmeyer, a leading New Testament scholar. He had been so strongly anti-Nazi that the Russians made him the rector of the University of Greifswald. But apparently difficulties arose between him and the Russians; he has disappeared and no one knows whether he is still living. Prof. Cullmann in his article asks whether the German Church can pass by in silence the fate of Lohmeyer. It certainly requires a great deal of courage to speak out uncompromisingly against the totalitarian form of government. Bishop Dibelius has done it recently in his pastoral letter and his position is now definitely in danger. F. E. M.

#### Brief Items from *Religious News Service*

Control of German mission properties in Tanganyika will be assumed by the National Lutheran Council in New York as a result of negotiations with the British Colonial Office and the provincial government of Tanganyika. A report to the Council by



Dr. Frederick A. Schiotz, executive secretary of the National Lutheran Council's Commission on Younger Churches and Orphaned Missions, said a law will be drafted to transfer all German mission properties to the governor of Tanganyika. The governor, in turn, will transfer them to the National Lutheran Council, with the exception of such pieces as the government wants to appropriate for the Africans or its own purposes. All such properties will be paid for.

Completion of its third film in a series on stewardship has been announced in New York by the United Lutheran Church in America. Entitled "Like A Mighty Army," it is a four-reeler in black and white which drives home the point that a church congregation is not a social club, but a fellowship of Christians who must practice their religion. The film will be shown this fall exclusively in the ULCA's 4,000 congregations, when it is expected that it will be seen by a million persons. It will be released for use by other denominations through Cathedral Films on January 1. Other stewardship films produced by the United Lutheran Church are "And Now I See," and "Salt of the Earth," both of which are being widely used by other denominations in stewardship and evangelism programs.

Beginning next September, sixteen young men will give a year of their lives to help carry out a money-saving mission building project of the American Lutheran Church. They will work, without pay, in scattered sections of the nation as carpenters, masons, electricians, plumbers, painters, and mechanics. Church leaders in Columbus, Ohio, estimate the services of sixteen will save the church about fifty per cent of the labor costs of the mission construction program. The group will construct missions in such places as Winter Set, Iowa; Wayne, Michigan; and Phoenix, Arizona. The youthful mission builders will get \$25 monthly for incidentals. They will also have meals, housing, and transportation from their homes to their assignments. An allowance of \$100 will be given to each for work clothes. According to officials of the American Lutheran Church, the project is an outgrowth of an undertaking in which ten Luther League youngsters went to New Guinea to help rebuild war-destroyed mission stations.

Merger of the two publications of the Augustana Lutheran Church—the *Lutheran Companion* and the Swedish-language *Augustana*—was voted in Minneapolis by the Church's annual synod. The new publication will be known as the *Augustana Lutheran*. The Swedish language will continue to be used in a smaller edition of the larger English edition, but both editions will be known as the *Augustana Lutheran*. Staffs of the present two publications will be merged.

Forty-two new foreign missionaries and thirteen new home missionaries and deaconesses were commissioned in New York by



the Methodist Board of Missions and Church Extension. They form part of a total of 1,000 new missionaries the Board expects to add by 1953. Of the forty-two new foreign missionaries—who will sail shortly—twelve will go to South America, eleven to Africa, ten to China, six to India, two to Korea, and one to Cuba.

Dr. Mary Eli Lyman, dean of Sweetbriar College, Vermont, was elected professor of English Bible at Union Theological Seminary, New York City. She is the first woman ever to hold a faculty post at Union and one of the first women to hold a full professorship in an American theological school. Dr. Lyman will take up her new post at the beginning of the 1950—51 academic year.

Fred W. Ramsey, executive vice-president of Church World Service, New York, thinks nothing of traveling 1,000 miles each week end to serve as a Sunday school superintendent. Every Friday night Ramsey closes his desk in New York and boards a plane for Cleveland. He spends part of Saturday in going over the current lesson leaflet. On Sunday he takes over his duties as superintendent of the church school in Calvary Evangelical United Brethren Church in Cleveland—a job he's held for the past thirty-seven years. Shrugging off the suggestion that commuting back and forth is "quite a chore," Ramsey said his work in the church offers "a pleasant interlude in the week's occupation."

Three far-reaching studies in this country in the implication of Christianity in modern life were approved in New York by the Executive Committee of the U.S.A. Conference of Member Churches of the World Council. Dr. Henry Pitney Van Dusen, president of Union Theological Seminary, New York, was elected to head up a group of theologians and laymen assigned to the studies for a three-year period. The investigations, which are to be conducted simultaneously throughout the world by members of the Council's study commission, will deal with the role of evangelism in modern society, the place of Christian social action, and the meaning of the Bible.

Steps to preserve the Bible in the event of atomic warfare have been taken by the American Bible Society, it was disclosed in New York at the fourth annual meeting of the United Bible Societies, an organization of national Bible societies in twenty-one countries. Dr. Gilbert Darlington, treasurer of the American Society, said that copies of all the important publications of Scriptures issued by the Bible Society had been deposited at places far from points of military strategy, to safeguard them from being destroyed by concentrated bombing. Copies have been segregated at the University of Colorado at Boulder, Colorado; Dartmouth College at Hanover, New Hampshire; and in New York City. Dr. Darlington also revealed that the American Bible Society has prepared a third shipment of Scriptures for Russia, consisting



of 225,000 Testaments, 100,000 Bibles, and 500,000 Scripture portions, but that it had not yet been possible to arrange shipment.

America's post-war divorce wave has passed its crest, according to Dr. Leland F. Wood, secretary of the Commission on Marriage and the Home of the Federal Council of Churches in New York. He said the rate has dropped to one divorce in every four and a half marriages, as compared with the 1945 rate of one divorce in every three marriages. Dr. Wood told the spring meeting of the Commission that the improved family life picture was due in part to the help currently being given to those contemplating marriage. He cited the courses on marriage and family life being offered by 800 American colleges and universities and the thousands of church-sponsored short courses dealing with personal, social, and religious factors affecting wedded success.

Toshio Shiratori, Japanese statesman who was converted to Christianity during his trial last year as a war criminal, died in a United States Army hospital in Tokyo. He was condemned to life imprisonment on November 1, after the International Military Tribunal found him guilty of conspiracy to wage aggressive war in violation of international treaties. Shiratori was baptized in the Lutheran faith at the Army hospital last February 18, and became a member *in absentia* of the Lutheran Church in Tokyo. He was said to have strongly advocated that Emperor Hirohito become a Christian.

Administrative unity of the Lutheran and Reformed Churches has been achieved with the formation of "The Evangelical Church of the Augsburg and Helvetic Confessions in Austria," it was reported in Vienna by Lutheran Bishop Gerhard May. Involved in the move, according to Bishop May, are 131 Lutheran congregations with 398,000 members and six Reformed congregations with 18,000 members.

The *New World*, official weekly paper of the Chicago archdiocese, was named the best Roman Catholic newspaper in the United States during the past year at the annual convention of the Catholic Press Association in Denver. Designated as the outstanding magazine was *The Sign*, published monthly in Union City, New Jersey, by the Passionist Fathers.

