

8-1-1951

Theological Observer. - Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

Paul M. Bretscher

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

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



Part of the [Practical Theology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Bretscher, Paul M. (1951) "Theological Observer. - Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches," *Concordia Theological Monthly*. Vol. 22, Article 50.

Available at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm/vol22/iss1/50>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Print Publications at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Concordia Theological Monthly by an authorized editor of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact seitzw@csl.edu.

THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER

ERNST LOHMEYER (1890—1946)

In *Theologische Zeitschrift* (March—April, 1951) Oscar Cullmann of the University of Basel pays a touching tribute to Ernst Lohmeyer, one of the truly great New Testament exegetes of our generation. Professor Lohmeyer disappeared in 1946, and only within recent months the family was notified that he had been shot by Russian Communists. We quote from Professor Cullman's article:

"What we had feared for a long time, has now turned out to be a fact. Ernst Lohmeyer . . . is no longer among the living. His family informs me that already in the fall of 1946 he was called out of the terrors of this time into God's eternal peace and rest. . . . We know, unfortunately, only the immediate circumstances surrounding his death. After his many years of service in the German army, the Russians appointed Ernst Lohmeyer rector of the University of Greifswald in 1945 in view of his widely known anti-Nazi sentiments. On the day before his installation he was arrested by the Russians, who gave no reason for their action though it is believed that a German Communist brought false charges against him, and since that time all efforts both by the Germans and the Allies to trace his whereabouts have been utterly fruitless. We are now informed that the Russians shot him soon after they arrested him. . . .

"Ernst Lohmeyer produced a number of masterful exegetical works, among them commentaries on *Revelation* (1926), *Philippians, Colossians*, and *Philemon* (1930), and the *Gospel of Mark* (1937). In the last decade of his life he contributed such scientifically grounded works as *Galiläa und Jerusalem* (1936), *Kultus und Evangelium* (1942), *Gottesknecht und Davidssohn* (1945), and *Das Vater-Unser* (1946)."

The editors of this Journal take this opportunity to express to the family of Ernst Lohmeyer their sympathy. May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the God of all love and mercy, sustain them in their deep sorrow.

P. M. B.

FREEMASONRY AND THE CONVOCATION OF CANTERBURY

The May issue of this Journal reported briefly on the controversy in the Church of England regarding Freemasonry (cf. pp. 353—56). We also quoted the motion which was to be submitted to the Convocation of Canterbury in its May meeting. This motion read: "That a Committee of the Lower House be appointed to inquire whether

the theological implications of Freemasonry, as distinct from its benevolent activities, are compatible with the Christian faith as held by the Church of England, and to report."

In order to remain informed regarding developments, we established direct contact with Rev. Walton Hannah, author of the article on Freemasonry which occasioned the controversy. Rev. Hannah sent us a reprint of his article to which is appended part of the correspondence provoked by his article. He also enclosed two excellent critiques of Freemasonry by Hubert S. Box, Ph. D., B. D., which carry the titles "The Masonic Death and Resurrection Rite" and "Freemasonry and the Christian Faith" (published by the author, Scaynes Hill Vicarage, Haywards Heath, Sussex, 1951. Price: 1s. 1d.). Finally, Rev. Hannah reviewed for us the action *re* Freemasonry taken by the Convocation of Canterbury in its May meeting. With the solicited permission granted us by Rev. Walton Hannah, we are publishing the chief paragraphs of his review:

"Convocation of Canterbury has now completed its May Session, and I think we have achieved as much as could possibly be expected on a first attempt. Perhaps the most surprising aspect was the way in which the Press completely dropped the normal Fleet-Street taboo on the subject; every paper from the *Times* to the tabloid *Daily Mirror* reported it, the London evening papers giving the subject banner headlines across the front page on two evenings in succession. Even the B. B. C. gave the matter a headline significance on their news bulletins.

"This in itself is all to the good. It has angered English Grand Lodge beyond measure. It has stirred up public opinion to the fact that there *is* an issue between Freemasonry and Christianity. It will make many Christians think twice before seeking initiation. And within the Church the opinion is growing that heads cannot be buried in the sand indefinitely, that it is no answer to rule motions out of order arbitrarily on technicalities, that sooner or later the issue must be faced fairly and squarely, however embarrassing the results.

"In itself, Convocation provided no conclusive results. The original motion (as given in *Concordia* [i. e., CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY, May, 1951, p. 354]) was ruled out of order by the Prolocutor (Chairman) but another motion calling for a Joint Committee of both houses of Convocation (Upper House consisting of Diocesan Bishops only, lower of the Clergy) to ascertain what guidance should be given to the Clergy on the subject of Freemasonry was eventually accepted for debate, and placed at the end of the agenda.

"As the last day of Convocation drew on, however, the house tended

to thin out, and little time was left for debate. Accordingly the Bishop of Reading (who as Suffragan and Archdeacon sits in the Lower House), a Mason of the 18th degree, tried to squash the whole question by moving the adjournment. Mr. Bentley, in whose name the revised motion stood, knowing more about Convocation procedure, seconded this. When it was passed, he obtained a ruling from the Chair that the question was *not* quashed (as the Bishop of Reading thought) but could come up again the next Session in the autumn. Which, of course, it will.

"In the circumstances of a thinning house and limited time the anti-Masons realized that a postponement would be all to the good. There is more time for further articles and publications, and generally to influence public opinion."

So far Rev. Hannah, except for a passing note in his letter of June 15 which reads: "*Concordia* [the C. T. M.] . . . is an absolutely first-class magazine" (thanks sincerely, Rev. Hannah!).

How did the American Protestant press react to the controversy in the Church of England? On the whole, with gravelike silence. *The Living Church* (Episcopalian, June 3) ran the following two brief paragraphs, the very last sentence being of singular significance:

"Freemasonry does not need to be investigated, according to the Church of England. The lower house of the Convocation of Canterbury (which, with the Convocation of York, composes the governing body of the English Church) has rejected a proposal to set up a committee 'to inquire whether the theological implications of Freemasonry are compatible with the Christian Faith.'

"A lively debate on the subject has been going on in the pages of *Theology*, a British monthly, with the Rev. Walton Hannah as the principal attacker of the craft. So many highly respected bishops, priests, and laymen, both in England and America, are Masons that Mr. Hannah's brilliant, scholarly, and logical arguments seem to fail to make contact with common sense."

What the final outcome of the controversy in England will be, no one dares to predict. Yet one thing is certain. God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is at work in the Church of England. He is telling Christians over there: "Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 10:32-33). American Christians, regardless of their church affiliation, will do well to listen to that voice.

P. M. B.

THE "PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN" ON THE PRACTICAL SIDE
OF THE LODGE QUESTION

In its March issue of this year the *Presbyterian Guardian*, the official paper of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, carried an article by Mr. Edward Wybenga in which the anti-Christian features of Freemasonry were pointed out. The CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY reported on the article in its June number. In the May issue of the *Presbyterian Guardian* a second article has appeared which answers the important question: "How should the church deal with members of the lodge?" What the author says is so interesting and thought-provoking that it would be worth while to reprint the whole article. Considerations of space forbidding this course, I shall summarize the thoughts of Mr. Wybenga, quoting verbatim merely certain paragraphs or sentences.

Having stated that what he submits are the positions set forth by the Committee of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church on Secret Societies, the author avers that his former article has brought convincing evidence to the effect that "Freemasonry is a religious institution whose teachings are not those of our historic Christian faith." The Christian who becomes convinced of this fact naturally cannot, if he is loyal to the Savior, continue in his lodge connection. One Scripture passage is quoted, and that a clear one, 2 Cor. 6:14-18.

If the church is faithful in her testimony and sufficiently dwells on the unique character of the Christian religion and the unbiblical features of Freemasonry, there will probably be little need of church discipline, says our author. "Instruction and persuasion are mighty weapons which will go a long way to insure the purity of the church and to reclaim her erring members."

Mr. Wybenga rightly holds that most Masons have joined the lodge without knowledge of its religious features or the implications of these features. When a Mason becomes fully informed he will, if he loves the Christian religion and desires to adhere to it, leave the lodge. But what is the church to do when a person continues in what he considers a double allegiance, adherence to his church and adherence to Freemasonry? The answer is that in such a case the church has to resort to discipline. As to the precise course to be followed, the Committee stated in its report that two ways suggest themselves. One is to let the constitution of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church declare that Masons cannot be members and that such church members as have Freemason affiliations either have to leave the lodge or be disciplined and finally excommunicated. The other is not to write such

a paragraph into the constitution, but to trust that the "judicatories of the church," that is, the responsible leaders of the congregations, including the pastors, will take the proper action.

While the former course might appear to be the more effective one, the Committee held that some objections can be offered to it. I shall have to quote. "If our constitution were changed to state definitely that membership in the Masonic lodge is a sin; and that all Masons seeking membership in our churches must therefore be barred from such membership; and that all Masons already members of our churches must be removed from such membership if they fail to sever their connection with Masonry—if that were written into the constitution of our church, we would have begun the dubious and dangerous practice of cataloguing sins. Once that practice is begun, where shall we end? And will there not be the temptation to extend the list of sins to include those things not expressly forbidden in the Bible, but which certain groups have come to look upon as sins? And will there not arise a new evil: 'The substitution of the conscience of the church for the conscience of the individual Christian' and a removal of all sense of personal responsibility? That these are not imaginary evils the history of the church can abundantly prove. A strong church must consist of strong members who as individuals believe, think, and act according to an enlightened conscience directed and governed by the Word of God. Not the church, but Christ is the Lord of the conscience."

Here a few comments are in place. That the Committee points to a real danger cannot be denied. Too often opposition to lodge membership is based on attitude and policy of the church or synod, just as if the church had authority to legislate on what is right and wrong! It is true, too, that the outsider may get the impression that the only sin on the part of its members a certain church body worries about is that of lodge connection. Those of us who have spoken on this subject in inter-synodical gatherings can testify that such views have been expressed by people not belonging to our Synod. But whoever knows the constitutions of our congregations is aware that they do not merely declare lodge membership to be sinful, but that they state the members are in general to lead a life in keeping with the principles of God's Word. It is evident that lodge membership is given special mention on account of the prevalence of the evil and the lack of understanding obtaining in the widest circles on this subject.

In the case of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church the constitution has not yet been changed to include a paragraph saying that nobody be-

longing to that church body can be a Freemason. If I understand Mr. Wybenga, the Committee whose sentiments he submits is not proposing that such a change be made. He admits that there ought to be uniformity in the way the various congregations of a church body approach the lodge problem. He adds quite properly: "To obtain an enforced uniformity by means of a written law in the constitution is one thing; to realize the uniformity on the basis of intelligent understanding and conviction on the part of Sessions and Presbyteries is quite another thing. The latter kind of uniformity is far better, for it is vital, vigorous, spontaneous." It is the latter uniformity which we in our Church seek to achieve. The pronouncements of Synod against lodge membership are not laws which the Church issues, but they are expressions of a common conviction, based on the Holy Scriptures and flowing from a genuine concern for the spiritual well-being of our own members and of others whom our testimony reaches. The difference between the Presbyterian and the Lutheran Church polity here becomes visible.

In conclusion, Mr. Wybenga asks the question how vital uniformity in practice can be arrived at. And he answers: "The thought of the church must be directed to see the unbiblical character of Freemasonry and therefore also the unconstitutional character of it; and the conscience of the church must be awakened to take seriously its God-given responsibility to preserve the purity of the church." All in all, we can be grateful for this vigorous blast against the lodge evil.

W. F. ARNDT

THE MYSTERY OF THE REAL PRESENCE

In the *Lutheran Quarterly* (May, 1951), Dr. Regin Prenter, professor of theology, University of Aarhus, Denmark, under the heading "The Doctrine of the Real Presence," has published an article in which, among others, he discusses the question: "How does the real presence of our Lord differ from His presence in Holy Baptism and in the spoken Word?" In the Word, he correctly says, Christ is really present both as the Author and the Fulfiller of His promise, but to the Gospel proclamation there are attached no special signs. The difference between Christ's presence in Baptism and the Eucharist, he next argues, is suggested by the different signs of the two Sacraments. The sign of Baptism points to our death and resurrection, accomplished in this Sacrament by God's sanctifying work, as the real and effective beginning of our new creation. The sign in the Holy Supper, the meal which we partake, however, points out the real and effective beginning of our eternal life in the world to come.

In the Sacraments, therefore, there is more than is in the spoken Word. In Baptism there is the sign of death and resurrection, indicating what takes place in regeneration. In the Eucharist there is the sign of the Bread of Life, nourishing us unto eternal life. The water of Baptism and the bread of the Lord's Supper accordingly have significant, distinctive meanings, for they suggest different sanctifying modes of operation by the truly present Lord: we are born unto the redeemed life through real water; we are nourished unto the redeemed life through real bread and wine. Baptism sanctifies our grave in the cemetery; the Holy Supper sanctifies our whole life on earth, together with our daily bread and the work through which we earn it. In this very fact he finds the doctrine of the Real Presence anchored over against the Roman Catholic dogma of transubstantiation, which, as he shows, goes counter to the central teaching of the Sacraments—the effective working of the living Christ, present with His promise, by external signs.

While the thoughtful study of Professor Prenter, in part, sets forth truths that require constant emphasis, it shows also the danger of distinguishing too greatly the divine operation in the various forms of the application of the divine Word. Here limits and distinctions are easily fixed which Scripture does not countenance. While our Lutheran dogmaticians discriminate between Baptism and the Eucharist in this way that for obvious reasons they call the one the *sacramentum initiationis* and the other the *sacramentum confirmationis*, they also declare that the Gospel and the Sacraments really effect and bestow the same blessings of pardon, life, and salvation, since the same divine promise is operative in these different forms of applying the Gospel, though it is peculiar to the Sacrament that as a *verbum visibile* it confirms the promise of divine grace by an outward sign. So far as the Real Presence is concerned, Luther, the Lutheran Confessions and dogmaticians, have understood by this term the Scripture teaching that with the *materia terrestris*, the bread and the wine of the Eucharist, there is offered and imparted to the communicants, both worthy and unworthy, the *materia coelestis*, the body and blood of our Lord, and this as a pledge of the gracious assurance of pardon, offered in the Eucharistic Gospel proclamation: "Given and shed for you for the remission of sins." We may truly speak of a real presence of the exalted Christ in all creatures (*unio generalis*). We may also speak of a real presence of the living Christ in the Word, and, in particular, in believers (*unio mystica*). But only in the Eucharist there is the real presence of Christ in the form of a *unio sacramentalis*, by which the

communicants receive the Savior's body and blood in, with, and under the bread and wine. Since the Real Presence in the Lord's Supper is a mystery, we dare not go beyond the *dicta probantia*, in which the *praesentia realis* is clearly set forth; otherwise we may lose ourselves in speculations which are as unscriptural as are the errors of the Romanists and enthusiasts on the essence and purpose of the Holy Supper.

J. T. MUELLER

CONDITIONS AND MISSIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA

The Frankfurt *Lutheraner* (May, 1951), official organ of our brethren in Germany, in a somewhat extended report on the mission fields of our German Free Churches in South Africa, speaks also of the social and political conditions prevailing there. It says (quoted in part):

Over against the two and a half million Europeans (whites) there are [in South Africa] seven and one half million Bantu, or Kaffirs, and one million colored, or mulattoes. The distribution of land, however, is by no means in proportion to this numerical relation. The numerically stronger Bantu possess only 14 per cent of the land, while the remaining 86 per cent are in the hands of the whites. Civil and political rights are exclusively the prerogatives of the Europeans. The black race is despised and suppressed by the whites. In towns the natives have their own departments; so also they live in segregated districts in the cities.

This disparity, as also the consistent contemptuous treatment of the natives, has aroused in the latter a deep hatred. They regard the Europeans as their enemy. In the same way they regard the European missionaries until these have won their confidence; for the whites have deprived the natives of both their citizenship rights and their property. The resentment of the Negroes against the Europeans was typically expressed in a statement made by a native to a European missionary: "We used to own the land, but you the Bible. Now we own the Bible, but you the land." This one sentence reveals the difficulties which our missionaries face in South Africa, who first must overcome the native distrust before they can preach to the Bantu and Zulus the glad tidings that in Christ all men are brethren without distinction, no matter whether they are white or black.

There can be no doubt about the social and political problem which now confronts the Europeans in South Africa. Our correspondence with missionaries of various Lutheran groups, however, assures us that the political situation is frequently misrepresented and the problem often exaggerated. Be that as it may! At any rate, it is most gratifying that Lutheran missionaries without fail defend the rights of the natives,

while at the same time they inculcate upon them lawful obedience to the powers that be. Viewed from this point, there should be more Lutheran mission work in South Africa, and for this the door has been providentially thrown wide open.

As the *Lutheraner* of our brethren in Germany and their special *Missionsblatt*, published in the interest of South African mission work, have recently reported, the three Federated Free Churches in Germany, the Ev.-Luth. Church in Old Prussia (Breslau Free Church), the Ev.-Luth. Free Church (Saxon Free Church), and the Independent Ev.-Luth. Church (*Die Selbstaeudige Ev.-Luth. Kirche*) have now jointly taken over the foreign mission work of the former Hanoverian Ev.-Luth. Free Church ("*Hannoversche Ev.-Luth. Freikirche*"), since the latter is now a diocese of the Independent Ev.-Luth. Church.

The work is carried on among the Bechuana in Transvaal and the Zulus in Natal. In these extended mission areas there are now engaged seven European missionaries, of whom two have served fifty years and two almost forty, while one has been active for more than forty years and one about twenty. Only one of the missionaries is a fairly young and able man. There are, of course, many native evangelists and teachers, as also some ordained pastors, but the Lutheran Free Churches have been asked to send at once seven new workers to relieve the burdened veterans, whose fields are extremely large. They minister to at least 12,000 baptized Lutherans and many more pagan persons who are willing to listen to the Gospel.

In passing, we may add that the Mission is known also as the *Bleckmar Mission*, so named after the town of Bleckmar in the *Lueneburger Heide*, Hanover, where the European Mission School is located. During and after the Second World War the Mission was supported almost exclusively by the four parishes of the Free Ev.-Luth. Synod in South Africa ("*Die Freie Ev.-Luth. Synode in Suedafrika*"), which enjoys pulpit and altar fellowship with the Free churches in Germany.

To show the urgent need of immediate help, the *Missionsblatt* (January, 1951) reports that the very large parishes, *Roodepoort* and *Botsabele*, in Transvaal, together with their affiliate stations, and, in addition, with two mission congregations in the suburbs of Johannesburg, are taken care of by Missionary Henning, who, however, must superintend his own huge mission parish, with 5,700 souls, grouped in 12 different mission stations that lie far apart. Botsabele itself has 1,300 souls, whose pastor is a native worker. The two congregations in Johannesburg are inadequately provided for by the aged Missionary Schnell (German reports do not seem to bother about initials),

who for many years has been able to preach to his parishioners only by being seated in a chair. Many native Lutherans from Transvaal and Natal who flock to Johannesburg for the sake of making a living are in danger of being lost for the Lutheran Church unless better mission facilities are provided.

Among the Zulus in Natal one missionary at present must take care of three large mission parishes: Salem, Esthondo, and Mabola, numbering about 1,200 souls. Superintendent Johannes of this field has visited Germany this spring to urge upon our brethren in Germany the great need and opportunity for Lutheran mission work in South Africa.

In the meanwhile the field has been canvassed by the *Missionsdirektor* of the Berlin Missions, who in April of this year convened representatives of all Lutheran churches and missions at Pretoria to confer with them on founding a "United Lutheran Church of South Africa." What has become of this endeavor we do not know. However, also the NLC has canvassed the field, working in conjunction with the LWF, to unify the various Lutheran groups in South Africa.

The Lutheran church setup, as reported by the *Afrikanischer Heimatskalender* for 1951, is as follows: The various church groups in South Africa are more or less closely connected with the *Deutscher Kirchenbund Sued- und Suedwestafrikas*. In this *Kirchenbund* the following synods hold membership: *Die Deutsche Ev.-Luth. Synode Suedafrikas* (organized, 1895; ca. fourteen parishes); *Die Deutsche Ev.-Luth. Synode Transvaals* (organized, 1926; ca. eleven parishes); *Die Deutsche Ev.-Luth. Synode Suedwestafrikas* (organized, 1926; ca. sixteen parishes). Conditions in these synods are similar to those in the German *Landeskirchen*.

Very loosely, or also not at all, connected with the *Kirchenbund* are the following: *Deutsche Gemeinden in Verbindung mit der Berliner Mission*; ca. ten parishes (it is with this group that we have corresponded for a number of years); *Freie Ev.-Luth. Synode in Suedafrika* (ca. four parishes; this group enjoys pulpit and altar fellowship with our Free Churches in Germany); *Hermannsburger Deutsche Ev.-Luth. Synode Suedafrikas* (ca. twenty parishes; this is a pronounced Lutheran group, strongly confessional, but connected with the *Landeskirche* of Hanover).

For a number of years, pastors of the *Berliner Mission* have read our church periodicals as also our Sunday school literature and books, and there have been definite expressions of essential agreement with our doctrinal position. Is South Africa calling us? J. T. MUELLER

ITEMS FROM "RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE"

Drew University in Madison, N. J., recently bought the 10,000-volume private book collection owned by the late Professor Walther Koehler, church history professor of the University of Heidelberg. The collection is strong in works on the Reformation, including more than 1,000 volumes on Martin Luther.

Dr. Solomon B. Freehof of Pittsburgh tried to show Protestant ministers of various denominations in Cleveland how they might gain help from the Talmud in preparing their sermons. Dr. Freehof compared the Talmud's interpretation of the Old Testament to the United States Supreme Court's interpretation of the Constitution. "In the Talmud," he explained, "we have a legal elaboration of the Old Testament rich in philosophic and spiritual material. There is no question but that ministers would find it a real help in preparing their sermons."

Manuscripts of the first four books of a Revised Standard Version of the Old Testament authorized by the National Council of Churches were delivered to the publishers in New York. Delivery of the remaining manuscripts is scheduled to insure publication of the Revised Old Testament in September, 1952.

The Jewish day school movement is spreading through the country. Dr. Joseph Kaminetsky of New York reported there are now 136 Jewish day schools in 17 States, with a total enrollment of some 25,000 students.

Leaders of the Congregational Union of England and Wales and the Presbyterian Church of England made a covenant in London pledging mutual consultation in "all matters of common interest." The covenant contained pledges "to take counsel with one another in all matters of common concern, to learn from one another as the Spirit may direct, and to seek opportunities of mutual co-operation." Ratification of the covenant was marked by a Communion service in which the Congregational and Presbyterian delegates joined in worship.

Distribution of the Scriptures in 1950 by the American Bible Society totaled 11,056,584 volumes. Since its founding in 1816 the Society has issued 406,422,010 volumes of Scriptures in more than 200 languages and dialects.

The National Council of Churches will launch a country-wide evangelistic campaign on World Communion Sunday, October 7. The campaign, built around the theme "The Churches United in Christ

to Evangelize America," will last fifteen months. Major targets in the evangelistic campaign will be the Armed Forces; the country's million migrant farm laborers; high school, college, and university students, together with their faculty members; and inmates of penal institutions. In local communities the campaign will include religious censuses, visitation evangelism, Gospel singing and preaching missions, and church attendance crusades. Denominations participating in the campaign will stress these aspects in their own programs: deepening of spiritual life in the churches; use of laymen and women in evangelism; and evangelistic emphasis in Christian teaching at home and in school, and missions to ministers.

Officials of the Methodist publishing house in Nashville, Tenn., said an all-time high was set for religious publications with the mailing of more than 2,250,000 copies of the May-June issue of the *Upper Room*, a Methodist devotional periodical.

Roger Noble Burnham, a Los Angeles sculptor, outlined a plan before his city's religious leaders in which he proposed to place a 150-ft. statue of the smiling Jesus upon a mountain towering over Hollywood. The Christ statue would be finished in fused gold. Including a 60-ft. base, its total height would be 210 feet. Mr. Burnham asked the city's top clergymen to assist him in forming a non-profit organization that would collect the \$250,000 necessary to erect the huge statue.

Dr. George Alden Cole, pastor of the largest Baptist church in Portland, Me., refused a church wedding to a couple who met through a "want ad" and decided to marry after a week-end courtship. Dr. Cole said he had received numerous calls from Protestants and Roman Catholics telling him that "they were glad to see someone is taking a stand on this thing."

The Massachusetts Council of Knights of Columbus asked the State to pass legislation which would make Good Friday a State holiday.

The New Jersey Legislature passed a bill providing that any public school pupil absent because of religious observance must not be counted as absent on the attendance record.

The Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, according to a report in Cairo, has approved a plan for establishing an Islamic mission in the United States. This mission will probably be located in a new Moslem mosque, an Islamic institution, which is being erected in Washington, D. C. Plans for the Islamic mission originated with the

Council of Sheikhs of Al Azhar, 1,000-year-old Moslem theological university in Cairo. The object of the Moslem mission will be to "inform the people of the new world on the true principles and aims of Islam and to refute widespread misconceptions."

Dr. James D. Smart, pastor of Rosedale Presbyterian Church, Toronto, told a number of Presbyterian clergymen attending a retreat in Montreal that too many ministers are "playing with psychiatry." He said the minister who dabbled in psychiatry was inclined to look upon his parishioners as so many cases to be fitted neatly into types. Under such treatment, Dr. Smart warned, church members become very uncomfortable, and he added that a minister who "plays" with psychiatry can destroy a congregation. The real weakness of ministers today, he said, is not in the pulpit, but in pastoral relations.

Church membership in the nation's capital is lagging far behind the national average. John Halko, director of the department of church planning of the Washington Federation of Churches, described Washington as "a city of religious escapist." During the last twenty-five years, increase in church membership in the greater Washington area has been only 38% of the national trend. In the nation as a whole church membership has increased 51.5% since 1926, while the population has increased only 30%. Thus church membership has gained nationally at a rate of 71% greater than population growth. In Washington church membership has fallen considerably below the general rate of growth. The true nature of the church membership in Washington has been hidden by the fact that Washington churches have had an 82% increase in membership, while during this same period the Washington area has had a population gain of 126%. If church membership in the capital followed the national trend, the gain would have been 216% in this period. Instead it is only a little more than a third of that.

The Board of Education of the Methodist Church recommended at its annual meeting that a "research laboratory" be set up to probe into religious and moral problems of our day. Speaking for the Board, Bishop J. Ralph Magee urged "three emphases in the future development of our work: 1. We need to project a more understandable interpretation of God in His practical relation with humans. People try and some do believe in God in a hazy and mystical way. Too few work out in their thinking a relation with God which fits into the daily tests which come to each of us in our practical living. 2. We must make a clearer approach as to the origin of the Scriptures and as

to why and how we believe them to be the inspired Word of God. This is essential if this book is to take its proper authoritative place with the people. 3. We must bring to clearer focus the moral and ethical foundations of one's personal living today. We must help people to have some criteria as to how to judge what is moral and ethical in daily living."

A 100-member State commission of Illinois brought in a report stating that general courses in religion should be included in public school curricula. The commission endorsed the view of a subcommittee that public school religion courses need not violate the principle of separation of Church and State. It has recommended an investigation on the possibility of introducing "cultural courses" in the history of great religions and felt that these courses could be given without indoctrinating children in denominational beliefs.

The Pious Society of St. Paul met with partial success in establishing a Roman Catholic radio station in Japan. The Catholic order had planned to set up its own independent station, but, because of the large number of applications for private stations, it was obliged to amalgamate with two other broadcasting groups.

Production of Bibles in Great Britain reached a record total during the past year. The report of the British and Foreign Bible Society disclosed that 1,500,000 complete Bibles and nearly 2,000,000 New Testaments and Scripture portions were published during the year. Eight new languages were added to the Society's list of translations, increasing the total to 800.

The delegates to the annual New England conference of the Augustana Evangelical Lutheran Church adopted a resolution in which they urged member churches to abandon all forms of gambling, including chances and raffles. Some 300 delegates heard conference leaders declare: "It is the duty of parents to stamp out the desire to gamble by young people."

A new charter of the Netherlands Church was put into effect with ceremonies in Amsterdam's New Church, attended by representatives of Queen Juliana and the Dutch government, the World Council of Churches, and Protestant churches of other countries. Under the charter the General Synod is authorized to act as spokesman for the Church in its relations with the State and is empowered to speak out on all public issues in which religious or moral considerations are involved. This new charter replaces a constitution which had been in effect since 1618.