

# Concordia Theological Monthly



OCTOBER

1951

## THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER

### THE VIRGIN BIRTH, A NECESSARY PART OF THE CHRISTIAN CREED

The *Watchman-Examiner* (August 2, 1951) editorially reminds its readers that religious liberalism regards the doctrine of the virgin birth of Christ as "the creation of the formative period of theology in the Christian Church." It quotes Dr. Craig as stating in *The Beginning of Christianity*: "Belief in the virgin birth of Jesus is found in no other books [than Matthew and Luke] of the New Testament. Clearly, it did not belong to the early preaching. It was not a belief which was shared by Paul, for in his eyes Jesus was a pre-existing being. . . . We are not in a position to trace just how in certain circles of Hellenistic Judaism a belief in the virgin birth of the Messiah originated."

"Such criticism," the *Watchman-Examiner* goes on to say, "is answered by Dr. John McNaugher in his book *Jesus Christ, the Same Yesterday, Today, and Forever*, when he says: "The fact of the virgin birth . . . was disclosed when the fulness of the time was come. Since then centuries of reflection and criticism have elapsed. As soon as news of it was published, the virgin birth was recognized, formally and officially recognized, as a befitting and convincing sign of the entrance of the Son of God into our humanity. It was seen that it stood related to the incarnation just as a key to its lock. Thereafter, as Dr. Robert E. Speer has said, it became 'essential to the fulness of the Gospel.' To which we can add the statement of Karl Barth, who said that it became 'a necessary part of the creed of the Christian Church,' and of Bishop Gore, who said that its acceptance stood 'in vital connection with the whole of Christian belief.' In accord with this, Dr. Charles A. Briggs said still more specifically: 'Historically and logically, the divinity of Christ and the incarnation are bound up with the virgin birth, and no man can successfully maintain any one of them without maintaining all.' This testimony is true. It follows, therefore, that any within the Christian circle who doubt or deny the virginity of our Lord's conception, however they may profess a full-statured faith in the deity and incarnation of Jesus Christ, are deceiving themselves. . . . The virgin birth is so obviously congruous with and woven together with the whole New Testament presentation of Christ that its denial is fundamentally unsettling, carrying with it in the long run serious doctrinal weakening."

The Virgin Birth is, as Karl Barth says, "a necessary part of the creed of the Christian Church," because it is clearly taught not only by

Matthew and Luke, but also by Paul (e. g., Gal. 4:4), and this in agreement with God's express prophecy (Is. 7:14), whose eternal counsel of salvation embraced also this amazing miracle of grace. So Matthew, by divine inspiration, treats the doctrine (cp. Matt. 1: 22-23), and so we are to regard it. Dr. Craig's argumentation very strikingly illustrates the unfair method of liberals: they ignore the clear *sedes doctrinae* and deny the Christian faith on the specious ground of sheer sophistry.

J. T. MUELLER

#### IS DENOMINATIONALISM A DELUSION?

The *Christian Century* (August 15, 1951) propounds this question to its readers, suggesting to the churches at the close of the article the alternatives, either to cultivate among their people a new loyalty to their peculiar creeds and polities, or to move out officially to the position their people have already assumed practically. In motivating this suggestion the writer points out the fact "that the average church member sees no appreciable difference between churches. . . . The church member can go into any regular Protestant church and be surrounded by enough that is familiar to make him feel at home. He can identify the unfamiliar only vaguely along denominational lines. The sermons will be the same or will differ only according to the personal theology and ability of the preacher. There are fundamentalists, liberals, modernists, and Niebuhrians scattered indiscriminately among the denominations. He may attend Episcopal, Baptist, Presbyterian, or any other regular Protestant churches and find that the ministers studied at the same seminary. . . . He hears about the National Council and the World Council from the pulpits and reads about them in the press, and he correctly assumes that the churches are officially moving closer and closer to one another. This opinion is confirmed by co-operative programs on the level of his local community."

Speaking of the factors which have contributed "to this grass-roots interdenominationalism," the article says: "From the standpoint of the churches themselves, differences have been wiped out by force of circumstance. With the rise of secularism and widespread religious indifference, churches have largely ceased to compete with one another and have turned together to face the common enemy [*sic?*]. The leaven of humanism with its emphasis upon ethical conduct has also had its effect upon the churches. As Christian living, a common denominator of the faith, has been emphasized, theology, the great divider, has been minimized. As to polity, the average church member knows little about it."

Here the causes wiping out denominationalism are well summed up.

Secularism, widespread religious indifference, humanism with its emphasis on ethical conduct, the minimizing of theology, "the great divider," the effort of huge church associations to "face the common enemy," these certainly are main factors that lie at the bottom of modern anti-denominationalism. The writer mentions as weighty a cause of the present-day disappearance of denominational distinctions also "the mobility of our population," that is, the restless moving about of thousands of our people, "leveling out dialects, thought patterns, folkways, and denominations." But, after all, this is only a minor consideration. The great tragedy of modern American Christendom is its lack of Christian knowledge, its surrender of religious convictions, indifference to the Gospel of Christ as the only means of salvation, the spread of Mosaic ideas and ideals in churches, in short, the unfortunate dechristianization of Christendom. Apart from the fact that all this leads to the eternal damnation of souls, it works havoc in Protestantism, for on this abominable apostasy feed Romanism, Fundamentalism (though not everything is to be condemned that Fundamentalists say and do), emotional enthusiasm manifested in hordes of mushroom sects, unchristian cults, and the like. There is a wrong kind of denominationalism which every true believer in Christ has reason to regret, namely, the sort which has its roots in schismatic separatism; and there is a right kind of ecumenicity—the one seeking after unity in faith, which all confessing Christians should foster. But unless Christian churches fearlessly and faithfully proclaim the divine truth of Law and Gospel and stand on convictions rooted in God's Word, they are a salt that has lost its savor and will be cast out and trodden under foot of men (Matt. 5:13). Today Lutheranism, with its ingrained awareness of the confessional principle, is faced with a special challenge to witness the truth that is set forth in Scripture and the great creeds which are its priceless heritage from the Reformation.

J. T. MUELLER

#### THE UNITED EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF GERMANY

The *Informationen der Vereinigten Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche Deutschlands* (July 1, 1951), ably edited by Oberkirchenrat Dr. Huebner, offer under four larger heads important news concerning the VELKD and its activities. There is first of all the stirring address of Vice-President Zimmermann, delivered at the General Synod of the United Church held in Rostock, with its deep-felt manifestation of joy at the ever-growing expression of Lutheranism in the various groups forming the federation. At Leipzig it considered the new hymnal; at Ansbach it concerned itself with the doctrine of Baptism and a proper

declaration of the Sacrament over against antitheses; at Rostock it took up the order of confirmation and a common Catechism text. In future it intends to study questions of the Christian life, of divine worship, of the Christian ministry, and the like.

In the report of the acting bishop we find the names of the ten churches that make up the federation, namely, those of Bavaria, Brunswick, Hamburg, Hanover, Luebeck, Mecklenburg, Saxony, Schaumburg-Lippe, Schleswig-Holstein, and Thuringia.

The relation of the VELKD to the EKD continues as heretofore. There have been no heated discussions by the various confessing groups as there were prior to 1950. Still, the relation of the churches toward one another (Lutherans, Reformed, United) is being considered and studied, for the decisive question "Must We Today Be Either Lutheran or Reformed?" has not been settled. The relation of the VELKD to the EKD has been rendered difficult especially by the political pronouncements of Dr. Niemoeller, which are now being scrutinized by a special commission of theologians.

The commission on "Questions Concerning Congregational Life" met three times, once in 1950 and twice in 1951, and has submitted papers on the following subjects: "Confession and Absolution"; "The Lord's Supper"; "Christian Burial"; "The Office and the Offices in the Congregation"; "The Ministry of Church Members"; "The Reception and Dismissal of Adults from the Church"; "Church Discipline." Two practical subjects to be considered are "The Duty of the Congregation Toward Its Youth" and "The Life of Its Youth in the Congregation." If the VELKD will find the Scriptural solutions to these problems, it will have done much to foster the success and stability of the federation.

There are Lutheran groups that have not yet joined the VELKD, as in Wuertemberg, Oldenburg, Pomerania, and Lippe; but negotiations are being carried on to bring about a better understanding and to draw these groups into the federation. Thus Bishop Staehlin of Oldenburg is a member of the EKD's liturgical commission, and Wuertemberg just now is considering the introduction of the new hymnal.

Through its connection with the Lutheran World Federation the VELKD regards itself responsible in a special sense for the spread of sound Lutheranism throughout Europe and beyond, stressing in its ecumenical endeavors the fundamental principles of Lutheran teaching.

The new spiritual life and the greater awareness of the glory of sound Lutheranism, which the report evinces, has no doubt been due in part to the Bad Boll theological conferences of German pastors with our commissioners.

J. T. MUELLER

## MODERN ARGUMENTS OF BAPTISTS AGAINST THE MEANS OF GRACE

In the "Watchman-Examiner" (July 5, 1951), a Baptist writer argues the question: "Are Christian Ordinances Symbols or Sacraments?" Baptists are perhaps the most aggressive missionary denomination in our country, and our pastors and people find them almost inescapable neighbors, with whom they must discuss, above all, the doctrine of the means of grace, especially of Baptism and Holy Communion as Sacraments. In his article the writer admits that "it has been the experience of many of our pastors that candidates have applied for baptism solely because of a sacramental conception as to its saving efficacy. Likewise, many evidently come to the communion table with a similar understanding." Quite manifestly Baptists have a hard time in convincing some of their converts that the Sacraments are not means of grace. And, certainly, their arguments are not very convincing, since they are neither Scriptural nor reasonable. By way of illustration we quote a few statements of the writer, Dr. C. I. Johnson, a noted Baptist evangelist and Bible teacher. He argues: "If our spiritual regeneration can be imparted on the basis of baptism and the communion service, there would then surely be no necessity whatsoever for the atoning death of Christ on Calvary. But if our spiritual regeneration cannot be imparted on the basis of these instituted Christian ordinances, then the atoning death of Christ becomes an absolute necessity." Against this very old fallacy Luther used to argue that while the enthusiasts allow the redeeming Christ to stand, they take away the bridge and the way by which Christ comes to man.

Here is another Evangelist Johnson argument: "Is it possible that this soul-transforming experience [regeneration] can be realized on the basis of Baptism? If so, then, aside from all that otherwise may be noted as to this ordinance, we must conclude that Jesus Christ also must have had such a soul-transforming experience when he was baptized. But such an understanding would of necessity imply that he was not sinless, pure, and holy previous to His baptism. Such a teaching concerning the very person of Jesus Christ, as well as a true understanding of His baptism, would be absolutely contrary to the evidence of Scripture." This argument leaves out of question the fact, which Christ Himself stressed, that He was baptized to fulfill all righteousness. It was therefore one of His redemptive acts performed for us.

The writer offers the same argument concerning Holy Communion and adds to this the following: "If such a gift of salvation be granted in the communion service, then of a necessity our salvation is repeated

in every such observance. This would then mean that we become children of God 'anew' at every such service in which we participate. Such an understanding can surely not be in harmony with the Scriptures." Behind this argument may be traced among other errors, the figment of enthusiasts: "once a believer, always a believer."

Pastors can easily meet the arguments of enthusiasts against the means of grace by simply explaining to their parishioners the clear Scripture passages which in unmistakable language set forth the doctrine of the means of grace. Usually the mere quotation of such passages suffices to convince people that enthusiasm in its rejection of the means of grace is unscriptural.

J. T. MUELLER

#### DUE EMPHASIS ON THE MEANS OF GRACE IN GERMANY

In the *Ev.-Luth. Kirchenzeitung* (May 31, 1951), Eduard Ellwein offers a very instructive article on the "Johannean Kerygma in the Light of the Exegesis of the Reformer." Dr. Ellwein, who repeatedly has taken an active part in the Bad Boll Conferences, discusses, in particular, Luther's interpretation of John 3:1-16 in his sermons. The article closes with a paragraph in which the Gospel as the saving means of grace is very nicely stressed. We read:

"The new birth occurs through this, that the exalted work of redemption is being proclaimed to me. He who listens to this Word and trusts in it is born again. Regeneration therefore presupposes the kerygma of the crucified Christ. There is no new birth without the "rushing noise" (*Sausen*) of the Holy Ghost, though of course never without the published Word; for by this the Holy Spirit is being perceived. As the Word is being preached to us, we are being breathed upon by the Holy Ghost. . . . The Holy Ghost therefore confronts me in the Word that is being proclaimed. This comes to me *ab extra*, from without, as a 'foreign' Word; at the same time He works the true, believing hearing of the Word, which occurs inwardly in the heart. We can thus say by way of synopsis: the new birth is something which totally occurs within me. But it occurs in me in such a way that I am totally turned away from myself to the foreign Word and work of God, to the foreign power, to that which in a most radical way is outside myself and which [also] presents itself to my spiritual view as something altogether outside myself. Nevertheless, in this my spiritual view [faith] that which is *extra me*, becomes my own whole personal possession: with my eyes [of faith] I see Christ my Savior, Lord, and Redeemer. And just that is the new birth."

The paragraph shows how clearly and without all synergistic implications a German theologian, on the basis of the study of Luther,

recognizes the essence of regeneration against all manner of enthusiasm. We may express ourselves more simply than do the Germans, but we cannot express ourselves more correctly than does Dr. Ellwein. Our pastoral conferences would certainly do well if in this crisis, when we are confronted by the question: "What is true Lutheranism?" they would study and analyze individual books of Luther and discuss them in group seminars. We cannot draw our Lutheran theology from Barth, Brunner, and Kierkegaard, for they go counter to the Lutheran Confessions, not to speak of Scripture; but we must follow Barth's suggestion and go back to Luther and the Reformation. There we shall find the true directives for our present *Wendezeit*. As Dr. Ellwein's article proves, also the sermons of Luther offer rich theological fare, since they are so thoroughly doctrinal in scope and execution.

J. T. MUELLER

#### MORE ON "ENTMYTHOLOGISIERUNG"

Dr. Rudolph Bultmann of Marburg has long been noteworthy for his concept of *Entmythologisierung* (cf. "Entmythologisierung" by W. Arndt, C. T. M., March, 1951, p. 186 ff.). In *Evangelische Welt* (Bielefeld, June 16, 1951, p. 337 ff.) the editor publishes under an explanatory remark an article by Dr. Guenther Bornkamm on the subject of "Evangelium und Mythos" and subsequently (p. 343 f.) reports on discussions agitating German theologians at the moment. The bishop of Wuerttemberg, Dr. Haug, recently expressed himself negatively toward the concept, while Dr. Bultmann's own synod of Hessen-Nassau is retaining him in his clerical offices. Dr. Bornkamm first describes Bultmann's thinking: He sees the discrepancy between the conceptual world of the New Testament and modern thought which has been shaped by science. Hence he terms "mythical" the three-level cosmology of the New Testament, its picture of man under the forces of heavenly and demonic agencies, its concept of history as the battlefield of these forces, and the idea of the two aeons, the old under forces opposing God and rushing to its conclusion, the new dawning in a new creation. Hence Bultmann terms as mythological also the concept of a plan of salvation sketched into this framework. The question is whether the proclamation of the New Testament is necessarily bound up in these concepts and if not, the Christian message must be "de-mythed." Bornkamm describes Bultmann as concerned with the nature of "myth" which is not concerned with presenting an objective world picture as science does, but which is merely a mode of expression. The interpretation of myth "must distinguish what it says and what it means." That interpretation which asks not, How is



the world here described? but asks, What concept of human existence is here set forth? Bultmann terms "existential." Bornkamm asserts that Bultmann views the problem of appropriating the primitive Christian message differently from liberal theology, such as Harnack's. He does *not* propose to "eliminate the 'myth' but to interpret it." Bultmann agrees with such modern philosophers as Dilthey, Heidegger, and Jaspers, that man is incapable of redemption and alone God's love can free him. Bultmann refuses to consider the event of the Cross as objective merely and asks to interpret it eschatologically, namely, an event which concerns self and thereby the history of the world of self. Similarly Bultmann views the resurrection of Christ as a message of the significance of the Cross.

Critics of Bultmann seek to align him with Harnack and attack his method as a faulty interpretation of the New Testament. Defenders of Bultmann point out that no method of interpretation is mandatory for the Church and that discussion of the subject is useful. Dr. Nie-moeller among others defended Bultmann's work as fruitful.

RICHARD R. CAEMMERER

#### THE GOSPEL NO PROGRAM OF SOCIAL REFORM

In the *Christian Century* (July 11), Dr. Emil Brunner offers an interesting article on "A Great 'Time for the Preacher.'" It is the 8th of a series of articles by the "new world leaders" of the Churches on "What Shall I Preach to a Fear-Stricken Age?" as the editor explains. Now, we know that Brunner's theology is not that of the Lutheran Confessions, nor does his semantics agree with that of orthodox Lutheran dogmatics, that is to say, Brunner, as also other representatives of the Neo-orthodox and the Liberal school, often uses terms in a meaning foreign to their traditional theological sense without going to the trouble of explaining what he means. But the following paragraph, rightly understood, emphasizes a truth which is of great significance to every pastor in his parish ministry. Dr. Brunner says:

"We today have come to understand again that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is not a program of world betterment and social reform. Modern times have coined the phrase 'social salvation.' There is immense confusion in that phrase. Salvation in the New Testament is something altogether individual and personal, like forgiveness of sins and 'peace with God.' Even though this message of salvation concerns all humanity and is directed to every human being, it is never 'social,' for 'society' is impersonal, abstract [we shall not argue on this point, though the word "society" is used also in a concrete

sense and so denotes an aggregate of acting, living, redeemable human beings]. There is no forgiveness of sins for a society, and no society can believe in forgiveness of sins. This message is addressed to the individual. And so with everything that the Gospel proclaims. It is personal, nonabstract. It concerns the individual person and not some collectivity or other. A society, a state, a civilization cannot 'be in Christ'; only persons as individuals can 'be in Christ.'" Dr. Brunner does not deny that the Church has also social obligations, a subject that, too, deserves discussion for right and wrong implications, but which we shall leave out of consideration. The important truth for us to heed today is that the Gospel of Christ is a divine message of spiritual salvation, which no society, no people, no nation, will wholly and fully accept, but which by God's grace only the elect hear and accept. From the group of the regenerated and sanctified elect, the salt of the earth, then comes every improvement of social morals; this too is effected by the divine Word as the agent of the Spirit's operation.

J. T. MUELLER

ITEMS FROM "RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE"

An interracial congregation of Negro and white members is being established in Brooklyn, N. Y., by the Augustana Lutheran Church, it was reported to its 92d annual synod meeting in Galesburg, Ill. The experiment is being tried in 62-year-old St. Paul's Lutheran Church, which once was composed almost exclusively of members of Swedish extraction, but now finds itself located in a district which is predominantly Negro. Early this year Harbor Homes Lutheran Church was organized in Oakland, Calif., as the first Negro congregation in the history of the Augustana Church. The church, which is served by a Negro pastor, was officially received into the denomination by the synod.

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In a precedent-shattering move, the synod of the Augustana Lutheran Church in session at Galesburg, Ill., in June, voted to make women eligible to serve on congregational boards of trustees. A woman's plea for recognition of her sex in the administration of church affairs was responsible for the synod's action. Mrs. Elvira Furn, a member of Pilgrim Lutheran Church, Bronx, N. Y., made the appeal. "If our pastors will only be honest about it," she told the 450 delegates, "they would have to admit that they have a lot of dead timber on their local boards. It is the women who are really doing the work in our congregations and raising the money, and then they turn it over to the men to spend it."

"Instead of dead timber," suggested Dr. P. O. Bersell, retiring presi-

dent of the Church, "you might refer to some of them as petrified wood." Thus encouraged, Mrs. Furn continued to enlarge on her ideas of church management. "I would not want to see women in the pulpits of our Church," she said, "but I definitely believe they would help a lot as members of the local board of trustees. And I also believe they should occupy a larger place in our Sunday schools as superintendents and teachers, especially married women. A great many of them are mothers, and they understand a lot more child psychology than unmarried young women, even if the latter have college degrees." By this time the male delegates were completely cowed; only two delegates—both of them members of the Executive Council—voted against the proposal. \* \* \*

A warning was given to Louisiana school people by Dr. Rodney Cline, professor of education, at Louisiana State University, that public schools must find a practical way to impart a strong spiritual tone; otherwise the nation faces paganism. . . . Writing in the *Boardman*, the official journal of the Louisiana School Boards Association, Dr. Cline declared that "if knowledge is increased without an accompanying increase in moral and spiritual responsibility, tragedy results. . . . In attempting to see that the religious beliefs and practices of no church might hold sway in the public school, modern society finds itself burdened with an educational situation in which, while the teaching of religion is prohibited, the teaching of things antireligious is condoned. To teach that Almighty God is the Creator and the Ruler of the universe is now deemed to be no business of the school. . . . On the other hand, to teach a so-called naturalistic philosophy in which God is not mentioned, and where the learner is supposed to believe that nothing is higher than the materialistic laws of nature, is approvable." . . . In suggesting a solution to the problem, Dr. Cline proposed that the released-time religious education program be re-inaugurated or a better plan devised. \* \* \*

A bill permitting religious, charitable, and non-profit civic organizations to operate games of chance for fund-raising purposes was passed by the Connecticut Legislature. The bill was vigorously opposed by councils of churches as well as by individual Protestant church leaders. The Connecticut Council of Churches, in a final effort to prevent the measure from becoming law, telegraphed Governor Lodge, urging him to veto the bill. . . . Governor Lodge did veto it. He said: "I believe that its enactment into law would not be in the public interest." . . . The governor said he recognized that "many citizens of our State favored this bill in order that by means of games of chance and raffles

money could be raised for entirely worth-while objectives." He added, however that "other States which have passed similar laws licensing gambling for non-profit organizations have, after unfortunate experience with such laws, repealed them." . . . Meantime a jury in the Allen Circuit Court in Fort Wayne, Ind., held that bingo sponsored by church groups is not gambling. A Spiritualist minister and four of her parishioners had admitted playing bingo to raise money for a new church building; they, together with 29 others, mostly elderly women, had been arrested and brought to the police station in patrol wagons. . . . Judge William H. Shannon ordered the return of the confiscated bingo equipment after the jury announced its verdict. . . . An interesting sidelight on this matter is furnished by a news item from Springfield, Ohio: Reversing an earlier policy, the city commission announced that hereafter it will not enforce a municipal ordinance prohibiting so-called charitable lotteries. . . . The commission voted to allow games of chance so long as they are sponsored and operated by "bona fide, recognized, and established charitable, benevolent, and other similar non-profit organizations." . . . Its move came after half a dozen Protestant ministers arose and told the lawmakers they thought games of chance should not be allowed to operate again. The Rev. Harold L. Myers, president of the Clark County Ministerial Association, presented 4,000 signatures on a resolution passed by the association's executive board which set forth its stand against gambling games sponsored by non-profit groups. . . . Commissioner Norman W. Saum asked to see the signatures. After leafing through them for a long time, he said: "I see names on here of those with whom I have personally played poker. I see others who belong to the same bridge club as does my wife. I am not going to be one who says people cannot play bingo, then go ahead myself and indulge in any form of gambling I choose." . . . As regards bingo, the commission said: "We have no hesitancy in stating, as a factual matter, that our observation is that bingo generally not only lacks the attributes of professional gambling, but is also in thousands of instances the sole occasion of amusement to many thousands of our citizens." . . . Meanwhile the commission's move left the way open for local Roman Catholics to hold their annual fair for the benefit of Mercy Hospital, operated by the Sisters of Mercy.

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Auxiliary Bishop Basil Hopkov of Presov, Slovakia, will shortly be tried by a Communist court, the Vatican radio reported. (The same report was released by the Austrian Catholic press agency in Vienna, which said that Bishop Hopkov was under official indictment by the

Prague State Court.) The station said that Bishop Hopkov has been held in the Prague Pankrac prison for some time. He was arrested at the same time as Bishop Peter Paul Godjic of Presov, spiritual head of all Ruthenian Rite Catholics in Czechoslovakia, who was sentenced to life imprisonment by a Communist court last January. Subsequently it was reported that Bishop Godjic had died in prison. The Vatican radio attributed Bishop Hopkov's long detention to the physical resistance the young bishop had offered to treatment by Communists attempting to get his "confession." The broadcast also stated that Czech Catholic bishops had been asked by Communist authorities to sign important documents and had been given to understand that the life of Archbishop Josef Beran depended on their signatures. Archbishop Beran, Primate of the Roman Catholic Church, recently was banished from Prague and is under house arrest in a remote part of the country.

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Hungary's Communist government is systematically confiscating Catholic churches for "economic and cultural purposes," the Austrian Catholic press agency declared in a report datelined Budapest. The agency stated that the Castle Church in Budapest, which housed the relics of St. Stephen, Hungary's first Christian king, had been turned into a dance hall. Among other Budapest churches which have been seized, the agency reported, are the Chapel of Notre Dame de Sion, which has been turned into a cinema, and St. Gellert Church, which has been made into an air-raid shelter.

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At the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention the members of that Church were warned by Dr. Edward A. McDowell, Jr., of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., that unless they make a concerted effort to improve the training and education of Negro ministers, many Negroes may be lost to the denomination. . . . Dr. McDowell, chairman of the committee on interconvention ministerial education, called improvement in the training of Negro ministers "the most challenging task that has ever come to our hands to accomplish. . . . There are not more than 500 Negro men training for the Baptist ministry in the entire United States, and of these less than 260 are college graduates. Among four million Southern Negro Baptists there is only one ministerial student for every 8,000 members and one college graduate in training for every 20,000 members. . . . Among white Southern Baptists there is one ministerial student among every 1,000 members. . . . This is a deplorable oversight; we have failed in a vast missionary obligation in our own Southern territory; and it is

even more deplorable when we consider that in the last 100 years the Negro has made one of the mightiest advances in history. From 100-per-cent illiteracy a century ago, Negroes have become as literate as their white neighbors. Unless the Negro minister is educated, he is in danger of losing his position among his race. There is grave danger that the Southern Baptists will lose Negroes to other churches or to secularism." . . . Dr. McDowell noted, however, that the first steps for improvement had been taken. During the spring all Southern Baptist seminaries were opened to Negro students. . . . But he warned that no program for Negro education can "be passed on to our Negro brethren ready-made; it requires their wholehearted co-operation for its effective formulation." \* \* \*

Announcement of a new television program was made by the Rev. O. C. J. Hoffmann, Public Relations Director of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, at the 25th annual convention of the South Wisconsin District of Synod, meeting in Milwaukee. . . . The program is to include 26 half-hour shows of a dramatic nature, "totally new" among religious television shows, combining "fictional and documentary techniques." In its philosophy, the program will seek to answer for viewers the question "How do I stand with God?" "We don't want just to sell ethics," Mr. Hoffmann said, "but we want to point to the Christian faith and the Bible as the solution to man's problems." . . . \$750,000 has been set aside for the program, "by far the largest expenditure for television by any Protestant denomination." A non-profit organization, Lutheran Television Productions, Inc., will be formed to direct the production. It is expected that funds will be raised through a special drive during the next year.

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To us who are well acquainted with the Family Worship Hour and the man who was in charge of it, the late Rev. Theodore D. Martens, this news item, sent out by the Religious News Service, should be of special interest:

A group of Chicago judges, meeting in Chicago, urged the nation's radio stations to devote more free time to religious programs which promote family worship. The meeting was held in response to a recent statement by FBI Chief Edgar Hoover, who called for the reinstatement of the family altar in homes. The judges signed a resolution specifically requesting time for the airing of the Family Worship Hour, a non-denominational program of worship that reaches more than 5,000,000 families over nearly 100 stations.

In his statement the FBI head said: "The picture of the family circle,

father, mother, and children, sitting together reading the Bible, is a scene of inspiring beauty. There the Word of God is at work — molding character, lighting the path of good, inspiring deeds of service. Religion has a vital meaning, touching every aspect of life. God is there in the home, working through purposeful lives to create His kingdom.”

Mr. Hoover said that “today, unfortunately, too many homes have lost touch with religion. The home is a place in which to sleep, to eat, or to change clothes.” “The failure of the home to provide sympathetic guidance for the nation’s youth has been most marked,” he added. “The rampage of juvenile delinquency, the high incidence of crime across the nation, is a disgraceful reflection of the abdication of parental responsibility.”

The group of Chicago jurists, who included Judge Robert Jerome Dunne of Family Court and Judge Joseph Drucker, of Boys’ Court, in citing Mr. Hoover’s statement, called attention to the aid radio can give to the fight against delinquency. Judge Dunne, known for his work in rehabilitating families and young offenders, said: “Any radio time which brings religion and moral uplift into the family is an aid in the fight against juvenile delinquency. There are not enough such programs.”

Russell Baker, secretary of the Chicago Crime Commission, who also attended the meeting of judges, stated: “Most of the effort in the control of crime is aimed at symptoms. Not enough is aimed at underlying causes, which often are based on the lack of moral and religious training.” Judge Drucker, in speaking of the Family Worship Hour broadcast, said a “service of this kind, which would reach all boys before they get into trouble, is a valuable adjunct to the fight against juvenile crime.”

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According to a nation-wide survey made by the Department of Public Relations of the National Council of Churches, the Protestant and orthodox theological schools of our country will have a record enrollment this fall. One hundred seminaries answered the department’s questionnaire; while their last year’s enrollment was an all-time high of 21,455, it will mark a new increase this fall, bringing the total enrollment to 21,876. . . . Special significance was ascribed to the new survey findings, since church membership in this country is higher than ever and there are about 15,000 vacant pulpits in American Protestant and orthodox churches. . . . Only one denomination, the Church of the Nazarene, with about a quarter of a million members, reported that it had a sufficient number of ministers to fill its parishes.