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# THE CHURCH AND ITS YOUTH

An Essay Delivered By  
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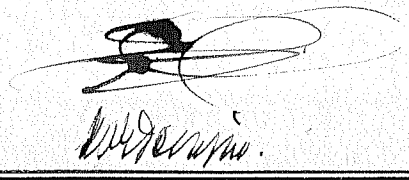
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## THE CHURCH AND ITS YOUTH

When we speak of the youth or of the young people in the church we usually have in mind those boys and girls whose ages lie between fourteen and the early twenties. The period of adolescence is commonly a difficult one, and often an anxious and perplexing period for the adolescent himself as well as for the persons who are charged with rearing and educating him. It is a period when profound changes take place, or should take place, as St. Paul indicates when he says: "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things." The question that this essay will attempt to answer is: What is the Church's special mission toward those of its members who are in the process of putting away childish things and becoming men and women?

What must the Church do for these young people? The answer to that question is found in Mt. 28, 19, 20: "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." That is the whole duty of the Church toward all men, young or old. God expects no more of the Church, but He expects no less. The Church, and in particular those whom the Church calls to teach and preach publicly, are by these last words that Christ spoke during his visible presence on earth made the stewards of the mysteries of God, of whom one thing only is expected, which is that they be found faithful in the discharge of their stewardship.

These mysteries of God are called elsewhere "the deep things of God," "the things which God hath prepared for them that love him," "the Gospel of Jesus Christ," or in Christ's words in Mt. 28, "all things whatsoever I have commanded you." All things whatsoever I have commanded you, you are to teach to all the world, says the Lord and we may not depart from His teaching and yet profess to be His servants and stewards, nor may we withhold his teachings from his

people and still think to be accounted faithful. It is a most sacred trust that Christ has committed to us. He has put that into our hands for the sake of which He created the world and still preserves it, for the purchase of which He gave His own life, that thing which is the sole light and life and hope of all who are born into the world. Furthermore He has given these precious mysteries into the hands of the Church alone. Christ will not again appear in the flesh to preach His healing words to sinners, nor will He send any angel to do so, — that privilege has been granted to His Church on earth exclusively. And we who claim discipleship of Christ cannot but be faithful to Him who has trusted us with such a high mission. "The love of Christ constraineth us." If our discipleship is at all sincere we must feel about this mission as St. Paul did. "If I do this thing willingly, I have a reward, but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed to me." Whether he finds himself willing or unwilling, he nevertheless finds a necessity laid upon him, he has been entrusted with a sacred stewardship which he must discharge.

If the Church does not do that work, no one else will do it, for the Church is God's one and only preacher and teacher of His mysteries. If the disciples of Christ fail Him in this work, the words of Isaiah will apply to them as they did to the unfaithful teachers of Israel: "His watchmen are blind, they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs." Where the Church fails in this it ceases to be a Church and has earned the title of unprofitable servant, or of salt that has lost his savor and is henceforth good for nothing but to be cast out and to be trodden under foot of men.

Faithfulness in the steward requires, however, that he not only be found faithful in teaching in their purity those things that Christ commanded, but that he also keep in view the object for which Christ endowed His disciples as teachers and as His spokesmen. A faithful steward does not distort Christ's words, he does not adulterate God's mysteries, neither does he supplant God's purpose in revealing these mysteries with another purpose of his own conceiving. The

purpose for which Christ endowed His disciples with special gifts of the spirit in order to enable them to serve as His teachers in the Church is clearly expressed in Ephesians 4: "He gave some, apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive, but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ."

There we have an expression of the Lord's whole and sole purpose in giving men the gifts of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers. Clearly His purpose is a spiritual one — for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ till we all come in the unity of the faith unto a perfect man, that we be no more children tossed about and deceived by worldly doctrines, but that we grow up in all things into Him who is the Head, even Christ. Is not that a complete program for any congregation that is seeking an answer to the question of what to do for its youth to hold it and save it? Is there anything missing? Or have we done all of that, so that we now have leisure to work in broader fields? The pastors and teachers are put in the Church "for the edifying of the body of Christ." Is not that alone a life's work? What better thing and what more can be done for young people than that they be edified, built up as members of the body of Christ? What that means is explained in an admonition that Paul addressed to members of the church in Philippi. He said: "Let your conversation (i. e. your life) be as it becometh the gospel of Christ — that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel; and in nothing terrified by your adversaries. — Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let

nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. — Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. — Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. — Do all things without murmurings and disputings; that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.”

If we could say of our Youth that their life is as it becometh the Gospel; that they stood fast in firm fidelity to the Gospel in the face of opposition and persecution; that they exhibited this perfect like-minded accord in the fellowship of the Gospel; possessed the Christlike humility, selflessness, and obedience to which Paul here admonishes, then assuredly we could say that the Youth Problem had been solved. Now, Paul does not present this as an unattainable, impossible ideal. This is a seriously meant, practical admonition addressed to living men and women, boys and girls who were then living in as sinful and difficult a world as we are. That high ideal was attainable because Paul had the holy God-given means by which to attain it, namely the Gospel of Christ that he was preaching. We too have that same means, and among those here present there is perfect agreement that there is in the world but this one means of attaining to that Christlike life described in these first two chapters of Philippians.

Scripture leaves no doubt as to what the content of all our preaching must be, leaves no doubt as to the object that is to be striven for, no doubt as to the means to be employed in working toward that object. There is no hard and fast rule laid down anywhere in Scripture governing the methods we must employ in bringing this Gospel to the attention of

the hearers. What various methods we employ in bringing the word of life to people, is left to our Christian freedom. We need not all of us, and at all times, employ the same methods. The method will vary according to the age we live in, the kind of people we work with, our own gifts, the peculiar situation we have to deal with, and so on. And yet it is not true that any method is right so long as we declare that it is our purpose to edify people by the word of Christ. Here Paul's warning applies: "All things are lawful to me: but all things are not expedient." "Let your conversation be so as it becometh the gospel," applies also to all our pastoral work and to all so-called church work. St. Paul, speaking of his own method of preaching the Word, said that he used no excellency of speech or of wisdom, no enticing words of man's wisdom lest his hearers' faith should stand in the wisdom of men, rather than in the power of God. He said that he compared spiritual things with spiritual, that is, the method he employed in bringing the spiritual gifts of God to his hearers was comparable with and befitting to his high message and purpose. What methods we employ in our church work are left to our Christian freedom, but as our Christian freedom is a freedom only in Christ so too the methods we use must be such as are becoming to the character of the Church as the body of Christ, becoming to the character of the Word we preach as the power of God and the wisdom of God, and becoming to the purpose of our church work, which is to edify the body of Christ. Those considerations dictate our methods to us.

The method is important. Often a church is judged by the methods it uses to attract and hold people as hearers or as members, since these methods are the only visible part of the church's activities. The public sees nothing else and judges the character of the church by the visible methods it uses. Within the church, methods may easily be confused with and substituted for content and purpose in the minds of the people. Paul saw a danger that his hearers would put their faith in method rather than in the content of preaching.

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Such a faith would have meant spiritual death, and the danger was real.

It is often difficult to pass judgment on methods employed. Are they fitting? They may be permissible, but are they expedient? Opinions here begin to vary widely, and decision rests on a man's conception of what is high, sacred, Christ-like, holy; of what a child of God should be like in this world; of what edifies or does not edify the body of Christ. As the conception of the character of the Gospel, the character of the Church, the character of the individual Christian, and the purpose of all church work varies, so also will opinion vary as to the propriety of methods employed in church work. There is no difference of opinion among us as to the impropriety of some of the devices used to attract and hold young people to the church. When a pastor dramatizes a sermon on Jesus the carpenter by fitting up his church to resemble a carpenter shop and dressing his ushers to look like carpenters, most people who have some regard for the Gospel are agreed that that is a silly, improper stunt. And it can usually be argued that the method is bad because the content of the sermon is bad. But there are many less flagrant improper devices employed which serious-minded people cannot approve and yet cannot confidently condemn. The line between propriety and impropriety is not easy to draw in matters of Christian freedom. What is an adaphoron today in one place, may be a denial of faith tomorrow in another situation.

Devices for bringing the Word to the attention of those only mildly interested, or for holding in physical contact with preaching those people who might otherwise drift away are not restricted to any one age group in the churches, but they are most numerous where youth is concerned. There is a special interest shown in young people as a special group in the church. The reason for that is not that Scripture anywhere requires that to young people as a group special attention should be paid that is not paid to other age groups. Scripture does not distinguish that group from any other as objects of the Church's care.

The special interest being shown in Youth in our day is not attributable to any scriptural injunction clearly requiring such special interest. Interest in Youth is part of the spirit of the age. Very familiar are such slogans as, "This is the age of Youth," and "Youth must be served." We remember how after the War the welfare of the world was dumped into the lap of Youth by the sentimentalists, who declared that the oldsters who had theretofore conducted the affairs of the world had made a horrible mess of things that now the only hope of bringing the world out of that mess lay with the Youth. Consider also the popularity in all the world of any uplift movement that bears the name of Youth in its title. The organization of the Boy Scouts has well over a million members in this country alone; it receives unlimited favorable publicity; and it has the unqualified approval of presidents, judges, governors, mayors, and all people in high places. Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4 H Clubs, universal education, child-labor laws, the Hitler Youth, the Italian and Russian governmental control of the Youth all attest the tremendous importance that is being attached to the social welfare of the young people in America and Europe. Interest in the Youth is in the very air we breathe. The universal interest shown in the social and physical welfare of the Youth without doubt influences the thinking and the policies of the churches too. A second reason for the special interest shown by the churches in their young people is that the young people do require entertainment and excitement and are encouraged by parents, pastors, teachers, and by their own inclination to look for it in the church. And thirdly, there is the appalling loss to the church of young people during the ten years after confirmation.

This last is the reason commonly advanced among us why something special should be done in our churches to hold our young people. There is no denying the fact of the distressing losses during the period of adolescence and no denying that the situation calls for special attention. Even though all pastors were as faithful as Paul and all parents as conscientious as Timothy's mother Eunice, there would still be

losses in the church and the greatest incidence of losses would even under ideal conditions be just in that age group between 14 and 24 years. That is the critical period when the growing child becomes conscious of the conflict between faith and reason, and reason begins powerfully to assert itself: it is the period when the child more and more emerges from the shelter of the home and comes into close contact with unbelief, lust, greed and worldliness: when the child's faith is put to the first severe test by the world, the devil, and the child's own flesh.

What now should be done to keep these young people within the fold of the Church? There is one thing, as was mentioned above, that the Church cannot leave undone without forfeiting its right to be called Church — it must teach them those things that Christ commanded. We do that first of all through our regular church services, especially through the sermon and the administration of the Lord's Supper. To bring the young people to church that they may hear the preaching and partake of communion is first of all the duty of the parents, in particular of the fathers, to whom the special admonition is addressed that they bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The faithful pastor who observes that his young people are in especial danger of drifting away from word and sacrament will make it a special part of his pastoral care to prevent that drifting by admonishing the young people, and what is sometimes more necessary, by admonishing the parents. The church services, the home training, and thirdly our Christian schools, by which we mean day schools, Bible schools, Sunday schools, Christian high schools, and colleges, are the three traditional means that we have been using for bringing the Gospel to our young people and for confirming them in faith and fidelity to it.

But in view of the fact that there are so alarmingly many casualties among the young people, should not something more be done, something that would make the church, the home, and the school more attractive and that would counteract the attractions that are offered outside of these three agencies. Youth requires recreation and play, it needs com-

panionship, must have an outlet for high spirits and enthusiasm. King Solomon recognized the naturalness of that urge when he said: "Rejoice, O young man in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth." Fun and play and congenial companionship are adaphora and certainly permissible; why should the Church not make use of the young people's natural desire for such recreation, organize them in clubs, teams, and societies the better to control or restrain their activities and thus foster harmless play in the company of like-minded Christians, brighten their church life with variety, give them an outlet for their fun loving spirit, all with the ultimate purpose of keeping them away from the contagion of the world, making them satisfied with the company of their own kind, and through the Bible lessons and little sermons and discussions that usually are a part of their meetings, increase their knowledge and strengthen their faith? That too would be a means of teaching them the mysteries of God and edifying the body of Christ.

That is, one may say, perhaps without exception, at least one of the expressed purposes of all the various societies and organizations of young people in our circles. That purpose may usually be found expressed somewhere in the constitution of the society, and there are no doubt societies that keep that purpose clearly in view, and in practice carry out what their constitution says is the reason for their existence. Such societies are already a prominent feature of our church-life. There are few congregations that do not have one or more societies for young people. Some were called into being by the pastor as a means of combating some evil, such as the dance hall; some were forced upon the pastor by the young people who saw what other congregations had and wanted something similar; some were inherited. Some pastors tolerate them, some enthusiastically encourage them, some find them a source of great anxiety. The societies are not all alike, nor is the policy of the congregations regarding them alike. There is no feature of our church-life concerning which there are such widely divergent opinions and policies as societies, young people's societies in particular.

In the Wisconsin Synod the usual form of Young People's Society is the local, independent society, which is as often as not, a Bible Class. The recreational, athletic, dramatic type of society is, however, also represented. A newer development is the merging of a number of societies from neighboring congregations into one rather loosely organized group that meets once or twice a year, mainly for the purpose of making the young people of neighboring Lutheran congregations acquainted with each other. The Walther League is strongly represented in our Synod. And whether we know it or not, we of the Wisconsin Synod have been drafted into the Unite the Youth Movement. What shall we say of this feature of our church-life? It is growing steadily more prominent, and an ever stronger pressure is being brought to bear on our pastors to fall in line with what is undoubtedly a strong trend toward organizing the Youth as a separate group in our church body. Shall we encourage that trend, or ought we to resist it?

Even if such societies are considered purely as social and recreational clubs making no pretense of being a force for the spiritual upbuilding of their members, they could not be condemned out of hand, as being wrong and harmful under all circumstances. In fact, such avowed social groups might be much less harmful than those that profess a spiritual purpose, but in practice show only an interest in food and play. If a congregation does its work in God's vineyard thoroughly and well, in church, home, school, and missions, why should not the members, if they wish, come together for a purely social evening, for a picnic, for games, for an evening of fun and food? But if those activities come to be looked upon as church work, if the interest in them supplants the interest in what is the church's real and only business, if there is enthusiasm for these activities while the congregation's school languishes, while missions go begging, church attendance is ragged, and general spiritual life ebbing low, then such activities are altogether out of place and decidedly harmful. Then they are no more permissible adaphora, for they are

taking the place of the cross of Christ. There the cross of Christ is being made of none effect.

It is true that Jesus himself once provided wine for the guests at a wedding feast and on another occasion fed some 5,000 people, but he later warned those same people, "Ye seek me not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed." The danger of being interested in the meat that endureth rather than becoming interested in the meat that endureth unto everlasting life, which Jesus there so clearly points out to his followers, is exactly the danger we have to reckon with in connection with all social activities carried on in the name of the Church.

If we consider these societies as merely incidentally social or recreational in character, but having as the main reason for their existence the consecration of "youth against the forces of evil for the world-work of the Church," there still are dangers connected with them that should deter us from including them in our church work. We may take the "Unite the Youth Endeavor" which has been launched in the Synodical Conference, as an example of such societies with a seemingly high and spiritual purpose. The resolution that called this movement into being reads in part as follows: Whereas the local congregation and the office of the Christian ministry exist by divine right and are the legitimate ordinances of our Lord Jesus Christ, and whereas unparalleled opportunities await the Lutheran Church in the world program which rightly belongs to it; and whereas the temptations of our modern age call for uninterrupted labor to consecrate youth against the forces of evil; and whereas the chief purpose of the Walther League is to serve the congregations and pastors for the enlistment of the forces of youth in the supreme work of the congregation, therefore be it resolved that the International Walther League enter upon an effort to muster all the forces of youth for greater service to the congregation and the pastor; and that the Executive Board

appoint committees for every district; that the Executive Board provide plans, materials, and publicity, and above all collaborate with the Synodical Boards in whatever measures may be expedient for the effective promotion of this endeavor; and that we all implore the Lord to cause His will to be done in and through Christian Youth and that He crown with His blessings this Unite the Youth Endeavor; and that we now with prayer dedicate ourselves, our youth, and our strength to the carrying out of this Endeavor. The Endeavor is defined as "an effort to unite all of our Lutheran young people, whether they belong to the Waltham League or not, under a single program of Christian training for greater service to the congregation, the pastor, the Synodical Conference, and thus to the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ." As members of the Synodical Conference we of the Wisconsin Synod have thus been enlisted in the movement and must concern ourselves with it. Shall we accept its ministrations and the assistance offered to our congregations and pastors and synodical Boards without question? Before doing that we should have to come to some agreement as to the meaning of certain clauses in the preamble, such as, "Whereas the local congregation and the office of the Christian ministry exist by divine right and are the legitimate ordinances of our Lord Jesus Christ," and "the world-program" which rightly belongs to the Lutheran church. A discussion of that question is, however, outside the limits of this paper. We are concerned here with what I have termed the dangers connected with such movements within the church.

The first danger inherent in such separate movements is the threat offered to the unity of the Church. Unity in the Church exists not only in the mind of God who sees and judges the hearts, but is also an ideal that should consistently be striven for and preserved with all earnestness among those who are of the same faith. It is God who admonishes us to be like-minded, all to speak the same thing, that we be of one accord, of one mind, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.

Now, it is the very nature of any separate organization

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within the congregation, that the more alive it is and the more energetic and effective its leaders are, the more it feels and shows its separate identity. Such an organization will not want to die, and in order to keep itself alive and justify its existence it stirs up its members to keep themselves busy, it invents ever new and busier activities, often becomes a busy-body in other men's affairs, including the pastor's. The more active it is as an organization, and the stronger its feeling of being a unit in itself, the sharper becomes the cleavage between it and the rest of the congregation. This threat to the unity, not only in fact, but also in feeling, was what Paul combated so earnestly in Corinth. "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together, in the same mind and in the same judgment." And Paul was there speaking, not of wide differences in doctrine, but of cliques in the congregation caused by the glorying of some members in one man who had taught them the gospel, some in another, saying, "I am of Paul; and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas; and I of Christ." Paul denounced such divisions, not only as a threat to unity, but also as destructive of faith.

A second danger inherent in such young people's societies, particularly in the active, well-organized groups, is that they so easily instill in their members a wrong conception of their calling before God as children in the family and as members of the Church. We hold that when anyone is to act as a leader in the church, as an assistant to the pastor, or to the synodical boards, he does not appoint himself to that service, but is properly called to it by those in whose hands the call properly lies. The vocation of youth is not to assume leadership in the church, not to assist pastor and boards, unless they are properly called to do so: their vocation is rather as children in the family and as learners in the church. As such their position is made clear by Scripture: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise), that it may be well with thee, and thou



mayest live long on the earth." "I beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity in the bond of peace." "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus,— he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, wherefore God also hath highly exalted him." The way to leadership in the church is not via aggressiveness, self-assertiveness, busy-ness, self-appointment; but by obedience, meekness, humility, confession of faith when the occasion demands, and remaining in one's calling until God himself by His Church calls one to another kind of service. The self-appointed leaders are called busy-bodies in Scripture, not servants.

A third danger inherent in societies within the church is that they so easily develop a false conception of what constitutes church-work. Serious-minded young people are apt to think that bustling about, holding meetings, starting new activities, keeping busy and getting everybody else pepped up is what Scripture means when it says, "Let us not be weary in well-doing." There is a real danger of placing faith in mere activity rather than in the slow process of preaching and teaching the Word of God. There is a danger of substituting noisy pep and publicity for the quiet working of the Holy Spirit; of looking upon enlistment in the special activities of the group as distinct from the congregation as a whole as being the consecration of the forces of youth. We are all, by nature, impatient with the slow, quiet workings of the Gospel as taught in the sermon, in the home, and in the school; by nature we are all like Sarah, impatient with the slowness of the fulfillment of the promise and prone to fall upon flesh-born schemes to get results. Sarah got results by her scheming and energy, an Ishmael was born to be a trouble to her and to harass the sons of Abraham to this day. Youth is especially prone to such impatience even without organization and immature leadership.

Although these societies are usually formed with the purpose of serving the congregation and the pastor, in practice

they are seldom found to be humble, meek, obedient, self-effacing servants. As they increase in numbers and solidarity of organization, they assert themselves, make others keenly aware of their presence and their importance, force their way in where they are not called. Their attention is distracted from the one purpose of the whole congregation to their own private objectives. We read in the Manual of the United Youth endeavor: "Resolved, that all districts be urged not to engage in the financial support of various projects in order that all efforts, both organizationally and financially, may be concentrated on the development and expansion of the Waltham League program and the training of our individual members for more concentrated service to the Church." What an opportunity there is in that for conflict with the program of the properly constituted, regularly called bodies in the church, such as the Boards for missions and synodical institutions.

If we are not willing to encourage such organized movements among a select group within the Church, what shall we do? We cannot neglect our youth. If we believe that the modern age is particularly dangerous for young people, and if we see that we are losing our youth to the world, then obviously we should do something about it. We should do in a much better way those things that as stewards over God's mysteries it always was our sacred obligation to do. We have not yet exhausted the possibilities of church, home, and school as means of proclaiming the word which alone can save from the world and preserve the youth blameless against that great day when Christ shall come again. We do not need a new program, but we may need to carry out neglected parts of the old program and to improve our methods at all points. If we need a program for the saving of our youth, I venture to suggest the following:

1. Improve our sermons. There is no power in the church equal to the sermon in attracting people, young and old, to the church and holding them as faithful members. If we are losing our young people, let us look to our sermons. The sermon should be biblically sound, thoughtful, simple. It

must under no circumstances be a display of rhetoric or a vehicle for the pastor's vocabulary of big words; nor dare it be a display of the pastor's bad grammar, poor preparation, and indolence. A good sermon will be understood in its essentials by every person in the audience capable of understanding simple language and listening to it for more than a brief moment. It should contain instruction, comfort, admonition for every such person in the audience. In our sermons we shall find ample room for improvement, and if we give the sermon the time and study that it deserves, we shall find ample outlet for our energies and little time for activities.

2. Improve family life. The trend of the times is against a closely knit, quiet family in which the father and mother are the teachers, guides, and guardians of children until they are ready to go out into life on their own. Just because the trend of the times is to loosen the family tie and to minimize the importance of the family, we should concentrate on saving what is left of it and restoring it to its rightful place in our New Testament economy. In doing that our work will be less with the youth than with the parents. God has assigned a part to the fathers in his own youth movement: "Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Likewise to the children: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord." Cementing the family tie and carrying out these two admonitions will provide much scope for the activity of pastors, parents, and children, and will also certainly bear fine fruit.

3. Improve the early training of children. A sound Christian training in the home and in the elementary school and in instructions for confirmation is an adequate preparation for the difficult period of adolescence. But that training must be sound and wise and thorough. Given such a training it should not be necessary to cloister the youth or to shield them from all contact with the world. They are to let their light shine in the world; they are to walk circumspectly in the world, not partakers with it, undecieved by its vain words, able with the shield of faith to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked, able to stand against the wiles of the devil. That

requires adequate preparation and a good grounding in God's Word. Just there we find much room for improvement.

4. Improve our schools. When it can be said of all teachers what St. Paul said of young Timothy, "I have no man like-minded, who will naturally care for your state, for all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. But ye know the proof of him, that as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel," then we may say that the schools are doing their full share in caring for the youth that is proceeding from them. We need to improve our schools by constantly providing first-rate teachers for them, by sending the children of the congregation to its own Christian school, and by enlisting the whole congregation in a support of the school that comes from an inner firm conviction of the necessity of a sound Christian training for all children.

5. Build up in every member of the congregation, young or old, the feeling of unity in the congregation. The Church is compared in the Bible to the human body in which all the members are nicely fitted together, all coordinating beautifully in the welfare of the one body. It is one of the most distressing features of our church-life that this feeling of unity is so rare. Fostering organizations and societies of certain members within the body will make it rarer. Every member should feel that the congregation's affairs are his personal affair. Members should really be and act like members of one body, whether that be the local congregation or the union of local congregations in one synod. He does not act like a member of a body who has no interest in the parochial school because he has no child in it; who refuses to go along with the congregation in some project merely because he was not at the meeting when it was voted on; or who is concerned only with his local affairs and has no use and no money for missions. Likewise that congregation that is a member of the Synod sins against its own body when it has an eye only for its own local affairs and refuses to join with other members in the concern for the whole body. If we wish to survive we must foster unity at all points and resist all tendency

toward division of interest and effort. We shall be serving youth well if we make them conscious members of the one body rather than members of a group of their own.

And finally let us have faith that when we faithfully teach and preach the Word of God, we are preaching the power and wisdom of God which will work all spiritual things needful for the Church in this world and the world to come, not forgetting, if we have fears for the youth of our church, to take our fears to the Head of the Church in prayer, in the calm confidence that our prayers will be heard, even as Christ himself prayed for them and for us: "I pray for them: I pray not for the world but for them which thou hast given me: for they are thine, and all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are."

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