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### Present Request for an Adequate Program of Church Work Among the Youth, with Special Emphasis upon the Returning Service Personnel

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PRESENT REQUISITES FOR AN ADEQUATE PROGRAM  
OF CHURCH WORK AMONG THE YOUTH, WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS  
UPON THE RETURNING SERVICE PERSONNEL

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A Thesis Presented to  
The Faculty of Concordia Seminary  
Department of Practical Theology

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Bachelor of Divinity

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by  
Robert Otto Wudy  
June 1945

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It is indeed a vitally correct one with which every patriot and every congressman is confronted. There is no other way of treating this problem than by accepting the facts, picking up the challenge, progressively planning and then thoroughly carrying out the program.

We do not propose to give a complete outline, detailed in every respect, of what is to be done. The situation differs with every individual and community, and to say more than that. The purpose of this paper is to set forth the facts as seen in life, that we may all study them in their true light and consider them for what they are. There is nothing new and startling presented here, but the facts which have appeared time and time again do appear here.

## INTRODUCTION

The topic is indeed a vitally current one with which every pastor and every congregation is confronted. There is no other way of treating this problem than by accepting the facts, picking up the challenge, prayerfully planning and then thoroughly carrying out the program.

We do not propose to give a complete outline, detailed in every respect, of what is to be done. The situation differs with every individual and community, not to say race and age. The purpose of this paper is to set forth the facts as seen in life, that we may all study them in their true light and consider them for what they are. There is nothing new and startling presented here, but the facts which have appeared time and time again do appear here.

## (Outline)

Theme: Present Requisites For An Adequate Program Of Church Work Among The Youth, With Special Emphasis Upon The Returning Service Personnel.

## I. The Pastor's role

- A. He is to be and remain the spiritual head
  - 1. His training demands it
  - 2. No one else is qualified for it
- B. He must be willing to go out of his way for the youth
  - 1. Speeches alone will not do it
  - 2. His example and personal backing are needed
  - 3. His time should be their time
- C. He must be a father-confessor in the better sense of the word
  - 1. The youth will trust him above all others
  - 2. His acquaintanceship is usually the closest
  - 3. He must be a good listener
  - 4. His advice must be practical, living
  - 5. His concern must be genuine
- D. He must treat all young people with the respect due human personality
- E. He must be the guide to a greater religious life

## II. The Congregation's role

- A. It alone holds the key to true happiness
  - 1. World's happiness short-lived
  - 2. World too quick to criticize
  - 3. Its work based upon Scripture
- B. It alone can keep in constant touch with the youth
  - 1. The youth is an integral part of the congregation
  - 2. The youth will follow the examples of the adults in the congregation
- C. It alone can give the needed encouragement
  - 1. Not too critical at first of youth achievement
  - 2. Adopt a planned program which includes participation in thought and deed by the youth organization: PTO
  - 3. Give the youth the opportunity to work and plan on joint committees
  - 4. Can give the sympathetic interest and backing from own experience

5. Remember, the youth is the future of the congregation

- D. It has or can obtain the necessary, essential equipment
  - 1. God's Word
  - 2. Consecrated workers
  - 3. Faith in its youth
  - 4. Physical facilities

III. Modern trends in dealing with the returning service personnel dealt with in detail

Using The Youth, With Special Emphasis Upon The Returning Service Personnel

PART ONE

THE PASTOR'S ROLE

CHAPTER ONE: THE PASTOR IS THE SPIRITUAL LEADER

Throughout history, one fact has remained true: men were to only do what they were qualified for. If a man has studied law, it would be folly to quote him as an authority on literature. If a man has made his life's study that of biology, it would be gross ignorance to quote him as an authority on the Hebrew language. Now, when a man has spent time and energy on a given subject, he is to be, and rightly so, quoted as an authority in that field. So it is with the pastor. He has studied every word, has lived up to his duty, is preparing himself for his special task in life. He has majored, if you will, in theology. This, then, is his field. This is and should be his sphere of activity. He should be well-versed on various other fields in the world, but his primary task is

Present Requisites For An Adequate Program Of Church Work  
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Service Personnel

PART ONE

THE PASTOR'S ROLE

CHAPTER ONE: THE PASTOR IS THE SPIRITUAL HEAD

Throughout history, one fact has remained with mankind: there is only one man qualified for a given task. If a man has studied Law, it would be folly to quote him as an authority on literature. If a man has made his life study that of biology, it would be crass near-sightedness to quote him as an authority on the Romance languages. But, when a man has spent time and energy on a given subject, he is to be, and rightly so, quoted as an authority in that field. So it is with the pastor. He has studied many years, from five up to ten, in preparing himself for his special task in life. He has majored, if you will, in Theology. This, then, is his field. This is and should be his sphere of activity. He should be well-informed on various other fields in the world, but his primary task is



that of making known the will of God before the world. Therefore, all other fields and studies should and must of necessity take to the background, while he deals with only the spiritual side, making propitious use of the mundane things to help in getting his spiritual task across. Especially is this true when dealing with the young people of his congregation. Remember, first and foremost, the pastor is to be troubled about spiritual matters.

We have already mentioned something about the pastor's special training for his task in the world. We have stated that he studied theology primarily. In this studying of theology he was to acquaint himself with what God's Holy Word has to say regarding sin, grace, salvation. But, he also was to see what Scripture has to say in dealing with people. In many fields, men deal with inanimate things. In the ministry, people are the subjects. Primarily, people are to be treated the same throughout life. It has been said, and rightly so, that older people are but children, exaggerated. Thus, we say and maintain that a pastor who handles and desires to handle properly the older people of his congregation will first have to learn how to handle their children. As loathe as the older members of a congregation are to subscribe to this statement, it is however exceedingly true. Thus, we wish first to learn how to properly deal with children.

Throughout his training, the pastor has been preparing himself to meet with, deal with, and help children and

the youth of his congregation. He has had special courses which were to be of help to him in this task. Stock, in his book, Church Work With Young People, desires to put across this one point: a pastor must make use of his early training to prepare for his future work with the youth. The Jesuits have often been quoted as saying: Give me a child until it is twelve years old, and you can never change its ways. That this is a truth beyond reproach, we will all agree.

Above all, the pastor is to remember that his specific task is "To help young people understand the nature of religion and the meaning of Christianity."<sup>1</sup> There is no one else who is qualified to teach the youth this fundamental knowledge. Should the pastor at any time forget this task, his conscience would be seared for life. Many times the question is asked: Do young people understand their religion? This question was answered concretely and to the shame of many pastors. In a survey taken about eight years ago, it was pointed out that only three out of every six young persons knew even the fundamentals of their own religion. In this survey, it was pointed out that the doctrine of God was the most universally misunderstood. It would seem that the young people have no real, tangible concept of who God is, what He does and has done, what His

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1. Stock, Henry Thomas, Church Work With Young People,  
p. 39

powers are, and so forth. About all they did know was that there "seems to be a Divine Being who takes us to task, every now and then."<sup>2</sup> But, and this should be noted by every pastor, each and every one of these young people showed a definite interest in learning more about their religion. All they asked for was the opportunity to receive instruction from a man who "had the spiritual knowledge and training to help." Thus, the pastor's training demands that he equip himself to teach, yes, that he be "apt to teach" in all spiritual matters.

This spiritual training must take on a definite plan especially today, when our Service men are returning to civilian life in great numbers. In the writer's correspondence with these service men, he discovered that what they deplored most was that the pastor was going to "treat them just like everyone else would - try to help him 'get back in the swing of things again'."<sup>3</sup> What these men want is spiritual understanding and training. They have lost much of their previous training in Biblical matters by not being able to make use of the Means of Grace in the manner in which we have and they had formerly been privileged to do. Time and time again the cry has gone up: Care for my soul, Pastor; the government will take care of my body. Once again we must say with emphasis: the pastor and the

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2. Dickerson, Paul L., Understanding Myself, p. 16

3. Letter from Sgt. O. E. W., February 16, 1945

pastor alone has been trained for this task.

If every pastor were to only take a closer look at his title of "pastor", he would see that his primary task is not to be a driver but a shepherd, and not a shepherd to the peoples' bodies but to their souls.<sup>4</sup> In this spiritual field, in which he has been trained, he will bear in mind the words of Jude 20, 21: "But, ye beloved, building up your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." The fact that this spiritual care on the part of the pastor toward his young people is very important indeed is that Dr. John H. C. Fritz, D. D., in his great work Pastoral Theology devotes one whole chapter just to such work of the pastor.<sup>5</sup> In every book which deals with pastoral theology there is always to be found a very special emphasis on this youth work. This fact that much time and space is thus used should convince the pastor of his great task, as noble as it is difficult.

It has been pointed out that there is no one else qualified to carry on this much needed work. There are organizations which have tried to carry on this work, but all of them have given up entirely the spiritual side of

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4. Dannenfeldt, Paul L., The Returning Service Men and Women, p. 46

5. Fritz, John H. C., Pastoral Theology, Chapter 13, "The Spiritual Care of the Young People", p. 155-161

life, and are now concentrating their efforts on the physical side only. Dr. Link, in his book, The Return To Religion, brings this to light, especially when he states that both he and his wife thought their children really did not need this personalized spiritual man, the pastor. Later on, however, they realized that the pastor and his definite knowledge of spiritual things alone was the man to help their children through the difficulties of their formative years and then to continue on through their young lives unto death.

Further proof for this thesis is provided by an interview with an ex-Marine. This fighting son of ours enlisted when he was but a lad of sixteen. After spending many months over-seas, he was discharged because of wounds. Now he returns to finish his high school training. He confesses as follows: "I thought that I could get along without the Chaplain. I lived a pretty good life, the Red Cross was sending food, the U. S. O. was furnishing the entertainment. But, when I was wounded, I finally woke up to the fact that I had missed the boat entirely. Sure, my life and body were being taken care of, but that Chaplain was the one who really took care of me, for he saw me through, he and Christ. There is no one else who could have or would have done the same."<sup>6</sup> Brethren, this is a confession of one who has experienced the consoling help

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6. Arnold, Oren, An Ex-Marine Looks at High School, p. 17

of a man whose spiritual knowledge was at its fullest and best. There just is no one else who can or will take this self-same pain.

Need more be said? The pastor is to take care of the souls of his young people; therefore he is first to prepare himself for this task in prayer and hard work. Above all else, he is to remember that, if he does not take care of these souls and the spiritual needs of the youth, they will go unheeded and unaided, for there is no one else qualified to do this God-given task.

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## CHAPTER TWO: GO OUT OF YOUR WAY FOR THE YOUTH

"A house-going pastor makes a church-going membership"<sup>7</sup> is considered today a truism. It is taken for granted that a pastor who wants to have people in his church will have to be found regularly in their houses. When dealing with the youth of the congregation this is just as important if not more so. The things of this world come right up to their doors with advertising of all sorts, publicity "stunts", and great propaganda campaigns. All these things are designed to make the young people conscious of their surroundings. Thus, if the pastor wants to make known what the Church has to offer for these young people, he will have to get out and advertise. By all means, he must never get the idea that making speeches every now and then will suffice. In his speeches he and he alone has the floor, he is "der Herr Pastor", whether he wants to be known as such or not. His very office gives him an exalted position in the eyes of the people, and this being placed on a pedestal will be the first thing he will have to avoid in dealing with the youth. They want to work with a man, not a god. They want to speak with and ask advice from one who is one of their number, not set apart from them or out of their reach.<sup>8</sup> Thus, we will say again: Making speeches, be they

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7. Harmon, Nolan B., Ministerial Ethics and Etiquette, p. 87

8. Letter from Pfc. R. E., January 7, 1945

ever so fine and so "orthodox", they still will have no effect, if the pastor does not get down and in with his youth.

Whenever the youth of a certain congregation wanted a man to make a speech for them, they asked their pastor. But, when the youth wanted to go out on a picnic, or a hike, or an educational tour, they would ask a pastor from a different congregation. They had come so to revere their own pastor, that they felt that he was no longer one of their own number. In speeches we might be able to outline how things are to be done, but we must "roll up our sleeves, put our shoulders to the wheel, and dig in"<sup>9</sup> if we really want to be of service to the youth. The youth, far more so than the adults of the congregation, will appreciate what we call a practical man in their pastor. When a nail needs pounding and the pastor is there to pound with the best or worst of them, he will get in among them, become one with them. This fact was never made more clear for us than in our teaching vicarage. We really got to know what these children thought and did with what we tried to teach them, in the hours after school. Helping them build a snow fort, they realized that teacher too knew what they wanted and enjoyed, and that he was able to enjoy it with them. Must we say that the older youth of our churches is any different?

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9. Dimock, Hedley S., Rediscovering The Adolescent, p. 83



We do not feel so. In fact, when dealing especially with the Juniors, actions ALWAYS speak louder than words, either in reprimand or instruction.

This fact that the pastor should and must spend his time with the youth is brought to our attention in most vivid colors by the letters of the men in service. Many comments have been made regarding the various things which had been done for them while in service, but they all maintain that the personal attention of the Chaplain is what they remember most clearly. "His tent or room was always open for whatever a soldier had on his chest."<sup>10</sup> "We never had to look around for our chaplain. He was always there when we needed him most. Our problems were his problems, and his solutions were ours. He did not waste time with a lot of words but gave us the help we needed when we needed it."<sup>11</sup>

Above all, and here we must repeat ourselves, the pastor's own example must be forth coming. In Ernest M. Ligon's book, Their Future Is Now,<sup>12</sup> we found this example of what not to do. A father had been very severe in warning his young boys as to what not to do on Hallowe'en. Immediately after this warning, he went into a long discourse on some of the many escapades which he had. How far do you think his exhortation went? If the boys bothered

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10. Letter from Sgt. O. E. W., December 13, 1944

11. Strietelmeier, John, My Church When I Come Home,  
p. 33

12. p. 239

to listen at all, these words must have given them a few new ideas of what to do to make the evening more of a trial for all concerned. Needless-to-say, no pastor will go this far (we sincerely hope!) but this example was brought in to prove the point that words will have little meaning, unless they can be coupled with the actions of the person who has been giving the advice.

One thing which the pastor must not be the least bit loathe to give is his time. He might have a large congregation which takes up much of his time and energy. But, he must always be sure of having plenty of time which he can spend on the youth of his congregation. If he neglects to spend time with them, they will be able to find plenty of people of this world who are able to find the time to spend with them. It would seem that many pastors are afraid of spending too much time with their youth. At no time must the pastor feel that his time spent with the youth was wasted. On the other hand, time thus spent cannot be spent in a better form.

Whenever the youth have a special meeting at the church, that is the place for the pastor to be too. No one else is able to take his place at these get-togethers. It is true that another may be able to pray for and with them, may be able to counsel the youth. Yet, the pastor's presence is almost a necessity. While he might not have any special task to do, yet his very presence gives a certain amount of prestige to the meeting. It is also a definite fact that

the pastor's presence lends the much needed disciplinary element. This no one who has had any experience with young people will deny. Where the pastor is found there is also the presence of Christ to be found. With the presence of Christ the youth will go on to even greater heights.

Especially for their spiritual welfare the pastor alone is able to give the needed direction. He should always be willing to give special Biblical instruction to the youth. He must never hesitate when asked by them to answer special questions which have to deal with their souls' salvation. If need be, he must spend extra time in special preparation to give the youth the required answers. At no time must he feel that time thus spent is wasted much less useless. Here we must again go back to our first point, namely, that the pastor is the only one who is qualified to take this matter in hand.

It seems a positive shirking of one's duty when a pastor spends much of his time thinking of excuses for not attending meetings and other functions of his young people. We can thank God that this condemnation is not too widespread among the clergy of the Missouri Synod. However, the tendency seems to be toward this evil. Many of the new men in the field have no inclination toward working with and spending too much time with their youth. Perhaps they feel that it is beneath their dignity. If so, let them bear in mind the example of Christ, who "suffered LITTLE children to come unto Him."

When any young person comes to the pastor seeking personal advice and counseling, the pastor should have time or make time to take care of the person's needs. It is in this line of work that many pastors miss their calling. In his book, Adolescent Psychology,<sup>13</sup> Arlitt maintains that the young people have an uncanny "sixth sense", which warns them of individuals who do not care to spend time with them. Beware the pastor who gives this impression, for with it will come offense which will lead the young people away from instead of to the church and Christ. Time is talent which God has given to all men, yes, has given in abundance. But, it is also the easiest of all the talents to waste. Especially is this true with the pastor. He can fret away his time on unessentials, while the real essentials go by the board. Time spent on the youth is never time spent wantonly. Will anyone contradict this statement?

But what do the men in service have to say about this time spent on the youth? We have already quoted one soldier who felt that the time spent thus was in accord with the chaplain's calling. But, other service men feel the same. The Marine who has now returned to high school,<sup>14</sup> has this to say: "Before I joined the service, my time was spent in various manners. But, one place where I did not spend my time was at church and with the pastor. Perhaps it was my

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13. p. 58

14. Arnold, Oren, op. cit., p. 18

fault, but I'm inclined to think that it was the pastor's fault. When I was in service, I began to realize what a great thing the chaplain was doing. I became interested, and, much to my surprise, I began taking an active part in the chaplain's work. Why? Because he would spend countless hours explaining problems of the Bible to me, leading me through many of the simpler truths of Scripture which I had not learned. This did not bother him. His time was my time, he used to say. I hope very much that I can find a pastor who feels the same way." Here is the challenge thrown out to all of us. Spend your time with your youth and discover how much they will appreciate it and respect it. They will not, as once was the opinion, misuse it.

It will not prove a hindrance, either to the pastor or to the congregation, if the pastor spends some time in his weekly sermons on special problems which face the youth. The pastor will be getting on the good side of the youth, and the older member will be living through his youth once again, perhaps learning a few new things which make it a difficult problem to stay with the Church.

Special services for the youth will always be a big help in winning the youth to the pastor's side and in using his very valuable time profitably. Permit the youth to make the plans, work out a program. Of course, supervision is necessary, and this will take time. But again, let us say: this is time well-spent, both for the pastor and for the young people.

### CHAPTER THREE: BE A FATHER-CONFESSOR

In the book, Youth Tell Their Story,<sup>15</sup> by Bell, is found this general statement: the young people will always trust their pastor as long as he will trust them. It is a proven fact that the young people will trust the pastor above all others. The reasons for this may be many, but he must remember that they want to trust him. If their trust is not forthcoming, it most likely is due to the fact that the fault is the pastor's. Perhaps he laughs at their seemingly trite problems. Perhaps he broadcasts them to all people. Never should a pastor become guilty of these two evils, evils which might cost him the souls of many of his young people. It is true, their parents should be the ones whom the young people are to trust. But, and this is an ever increasing practice, the parents never seem to have the time or the patience to listen to their children. Or, they listen and then prescribe some outmoded, antiquated cure which cannot be carried out by the modern youth. In many cases, the parents just leave their children run loose until they become loose spiritually and morally. However, the pastor often becomes the center of many of the young people's lives, for they begin to realize early in life that he will listen, he will help, and he will take an active interest in their problems.

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15. p. 77

It is on this basis of mutual trust that Father Flannigen's Boys' Town originated and flourishes to this day. The boys brought there cannot help but trust the Father, because he is more than father to them. To them, he is the representative of Christ, and as such he is trusted above all else. Many a young boy has confessed his crimes and sins to Father Flannigen, whereas the secular authorities could do nothing with him. Such examples of trust are being given all over the world, wherever there is a pastor who takes an active interest in and puts complete trust in the young people.

Contacts with service men of all branches of the service reveal one thing regarding this trusting the pastor. Even though at present students like the writer are not pastors, yet the fact that they are studying for the ministry makes many of the men exceedingly frank and trustful. They did not ask for an oath of silence for what they were about to tell. However, one young sailor did ask: "Say, can I be sure of you? I was fooled once before by a minister." The writer's face became red with embarrassment. After the young sailor had received assurance that what he said would be kept in confidence, he went on with his story. Not once, after that one question, did he show any signs of doubt. On the contrary, he did show that he had complete trust in a sincere minister or student of the ministry. This means much to pastors and students. It means that their work and presence in almost any situation would not be questioned,

for young people instinctively think: I can trust my pastor, so this is alright.

But, in order fully to trust a man, one must be in a pretty close and intimate relationship with him. The closest friend of the youth is and should be the pastor. He deals with human beings, and thus is ever in the center of human activity. But to keep this ever in mind is indeed a very difficult task. It is much more simple to remain on the prefabricated pedestal and to leave the rest of the world and, incidentally, the youth go by. No one is more capable than the pastor of having and deepening this close relationship with the youth. His very position gives him the opportunities which social workers, police officers, and the like envy, for the pastor is, to use the words of a youth leader,<sup>16</sup> "in on the very ground floor, where the youth can reach him without climbing to some high seat." This very fact places the pastor on easy terms with the youth, yes, makes it imperative for them to get better acquainted with them. Once this friendship is begun, it invariably lasts for life. Young people are notorious for their "jumping to conclusions and friendships", and then abiding by them, be they good or bad.<sup>17</sup> This, of course, must be made use of by the pastor who desires to

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16. Johnson, William, Speech delivered January 16, 1945 at Kiel Auditorium. The meeting was sponsored by the youth of St. Louis

17. Blos, Peter, The Adolescent Personality, p. 103



help his youth, who desires to be their shepherd.

The question may arise in some minds: How can I meet and become a real friend of my young people? In the first place, be natural whenever you are around the young people. If anything emerges from dealings with young people and from reading the applied psychology of dealing with them, it is this one statement, found repeated and emphasized everywhere. Why? The answer is simple: Imaginative as young people are, they yet have the ability to see through anything that is just a "front", a beautiful facade covering a discolored, bedraggled interior. A pastor is not to change from an ordinary human Christian to something out of this world just because he is dealing with young people. Many pastors have been seen to be natural, friendly, and very close with the adults of the congregation, but aloof, unnatural, yes, fraudulent with the youth. Must this be the case? It is not difficult to be natural. It is by far the safest manner, for then you can "let yourself go" (with restraint becoming the ministry), and not have to worry about giving your true self away.

Secondly, the pastor must meet his young people. The case of one pastor should be studied to see how not to try to become friends with the young people. This pastor decided, from the very beginning that he was going to wait until the youth came to him. The next thing to discuss would naturally be, did he have success? The answer, naturally, is NO! Never can a pastor expect the youth to

come to him, unless they are in extreme need. Even then, however, it was found that many of the young people prefer their teachers, because they "were more friendly than my pastor."<sup>18</sup> Must this condemnation be heaped upon all of the pastors?

A third step, as developed by many men interested in this work, is that the pastor learn to play with his young people. He should never be so stiff as to stand on the side-lines when games are played at the social gatherings, or, worse yet, to turn his face away in disgust. Be the games childish, noisey, or just plain "peppy", what is keeping the pastor from joining in? Is he afraid of falling and hurting his dignity? If this is the case, he can rest assured that his dignity is of the fragile kind, which would not last too long anyway. Or, is the pastor afraid of causing some sort of offence? In a survey conducted by the University of California, it was shown that the pastor who took part, wholeheartedly, in the activities of his youth organizations, was rewarded with the greatest number of active members in his church. Never, in our recollection of readings, has a pastor lost out by being natural and friendly with his young people.

Yes, a pastor must be in the closest possible relationship with his young people. As stated before, if he will

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18. Harner, Nevin C., Youth Work In The Church, p.110

not, the world will. We cannot help but agree with Dimeock<sup>19</sup> when he states: "Satan is always on the look-out for those young people whose pastor is too busy or too 'stuffed-shirted' for them. Satan will be at leisure and wearing a sport shirt, waiting with open arms." Again, the question, "Must this condemnation be heaped upon us?"

There is, however, another point which the pastor who would help his youth should remember: he must be a good listener to all. Fundamentally, this must be a characteristic of every man who would desire to help people. Unless he can listen attentively, patiently, and without comment for the time, his task will be hopeless. How can a man know what to do to help, unless he listens to find out what is troubling the individual? Especially is this ability to listen a "must" for the pastor. He cannot diagnose a difficulty by probing this or that muscle, by trying this or that experiment. He must first listen; only then can he go into action. Many times, the youth come to a pastor who is known as their friend, with problems which may seem inconsequential to the pastor. However, to the young person this matter is one of "life and death." If they were not problems of this nature to them, they would not bother their pastor. Therefore, the first lesson to remember is: never laugh at the problems of the youth, no matter how unimportant or childish they may appear to you.

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19. Op. cit., p. 187

At all times let the pastor emphasize the fact that the young person is to tell all his problems to him, for in this manner only can he help him. Therefore, one must listen to all they have to say. At times they will seem to get way off the line of thought on some subject which has bothered them, and now needs airing. Of course, they should not be permitted to waste time with a multitude of words. But, like any good psychologist, one must be prepared to listen to everything that troubles the young person, and never must he give the idea that he is becoming bored or that he just does not have any more time to spare for apparently trivial matters.

This same advice is given to pastors who wish to deal wisely and helpfully with the service personnel who return. In the pamphlet In Attitudes And Problems,<sup>20</sup> special emphasis is given this very point of being a good listener. A warning is given: watch the way in which we listen, do not be too disapproving nor too indifferent. When reading this last statement, we might begin to think, "Why that is exactly the manner in which I was told to deal with my young people." Yes, the service men have not changed as much as we might imagine. They are still children of God who need guidance and above all else, a good, friendly listener. This advice is so simple and because

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20. "Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, The Church and Returning Service Personnel" pamphlet number IV.

of its simplicity, it is so easy to overlook. Many things can be sought and are being sought as substitutes for this listener, but so far, there are not even reasonable facsimiles of it. Nothing will ever take the place of the pastor who has a good ear for hearing the problems of the youth.

After the problems have been sufficiently aired, it will do the pastor no good whatsoever, neither the young person if he says, "That surely is a difficult problem." Advice is what was sought, not a repetition of what the young person already knows. Sympathy might be needed in some few cases, but again, sympathy will not solve the problem. Advice is what was sought. Steck,<sup>21</sup> when outlining the manner in which the pastor is to help the young people, has this advice listed as the second most important requisite: "Aid in facing the ethical and social problems of the immediate present and far future." This objective presupposes that the youth have a problem which needs solving and advice. Therefore, when dealing with these young people, the pastor should bear in mind that they discern value in the practical side of life much more readily than in the spiritual. We do not wish to say that the spiritual side must be overlooked in favor of the practical. What we mean to intimate is that practicability of spiritual things must be made more obvious. Unless we

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21. Op. cit., p. 79

can bring the Bible "down to earth", the pastor will miss the mark of his calling. Christ Jesus, the great Teacher, never neglected the practical side of life. All His miracles and His parable stories show us this. Why not follow Christ's example in this line also?

If a special social difficulty arises which might cause the young people to have doubts about their own way of life, it will do no good whatsoever for the pastor to spend his time in talking about the life-to-come, when this present life is what bothers the young people. "First get them through this life safe and healthy, and then the life-to-come will come", has been the motto of many of the members of the Salvation Army. This far we cannot go. But, we can say that the life-here should be built up on the scaffolding of the life-to-come. Thus, a good pastor will be a practical pastor, one who has lived with his people and seen their needs; one who can give the advice of Scripture as practically as it is stated therein.

Another objective stated by Stock is: "We must create an intelligent and active loyalty to the Christian ideals." Can this be done in a better manner than by giving the Christian ideals their rightful practical background? We cannot create anything from nothing. That alone is God's work. Therefore, we must first have something on which to build. Having laid the proper Christian foundation in school, in Bible classes, and in Confirmation classes, plus our regular and special sermons, it will be an easy task to

make our Christian ideals practical ways of living. Again we will state: be a practical pastor.

However, all these foregoing things will prove to be wasted breath unless the pastor shows that he is genuinely interested and deeply concerned with the youth of his church. Paul L. Dannenfeldt, D. D., has this to say regarding this aspect of helping the youth. "In the spirit of Christ the pastor will open his heart, mind, and arms to the returning service man."<sup>22</sup> There we have given the motivating power behind the pastor's action - Christ. As Christ loved us, as His concern for us was sincere to the point of death, so should the pastor's concern for the welfare of his young people be sincere. "I hope the pastor won't gush all over me, but I sure do hope that he takes time with me."<sup>23</sup> This is the sentiment of a man who has had U.S.O. girls serving him, English lords and ladies waiting on him. Now he desires his pastor to show real concern over him. His body has been taken care of; his soul is thirsty. Let us not try to ease ourselves into thinking that the young people will not see whether or not we are sincere in our concern. Their vision is sharp because of their need.

The concern which a pastor is able to show his young people will in itself prove to be the thing which creates or strengthens that lasting bond of friendship which every

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22. Dannenfeldt, Paul L., op. cit., p. 46

23. Letter from Sgt. O. E. W., February 16, 1945

pastor strives for with his young people. A question asked  
 time and time again by many pastors is: How can I register  
 real, sincere concern? The simplest answer is: Be sincere!  
 Nothing is quite as sincere and nothing will register as  
 sincere as sincerity itself. A trite statement perhaps,  
 but a true one. There is no sense trying to put on a show  
 of sincerity unless there is something of sincerity from  
 which to draw. If a plan were required whereby a pastor  
 might begin to check himself to determine if he is sincere,  
 the only plan or table on which to check is the face and  
 the reaction of the young people you are trying to help.  
 There is no better meter of success than the people whom  
 you are trying to help.



#### CHAPTER FOUR: TREAT THEM WITH THE RESPECT DUE HUMAN PERSONALITY

A quotation from a letter received from one of our service men will serve to introduce this section. "I'm wondering whether the pastor will show care and concern for me, just because I've done something over there. I'm an individual, and I desire to be treated as such."<sup>24</sup> Every individual is a special personality who has to be treated as an individualized personality. What does this mean to the pastor?

When dealing with the youth of the congregation, the pastor must realize, and this right soon, that the young people will expect a bit of respect. They are in that in-between-age when people just do not know how to treat them. Therefore, the youth will feel that the pastor is the one who is capable of treating them as they feel they should be treated, and is willing to do so. They are no longer children. Therefore, the pastor will, of necessity, not treat them as he would children in the Confirmation age level. He must treat them as though they were above their actual age level, say, as being in the upper teen age. This has proven to be a great point when discipline and work are required of them. Treating them as above their age, gives them the feeling that their pastor thinks them capable of doing much more and better things than the world expects. Needless to say, this pays great dividends.

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24. Ibid

In The Adolescent Personality<sup>25</sup> the point is brought forward that the young people will respond to a greater degree, if the adults treat them as being on a par with themselves in work and in thinking things through. They do not desire to be placed on the same level with the adults in dignity but they do show greater results when they are entrusted with certain duties. This has worked out magnificently in all our youth organizations. Just let these young people do the work, and they will surprise you as well as themselves. They have the possibilities and potentialities<sup>26</sup> All we have to give them is respect and the encouragement to go ahead.

Many people of this world will not feel that it is right and proper to give this respect to the youth. They would prefer to keep them entirely under their "experienced thumb", permitting the youth to do nothing unless under the strictest governing of the adults. However, if we desire to have these young people grow into active, thinking adults, we must treat them as people who have minds capable of good thinking. Especially must the pastor not give the idea to the young people that they are MUCH in need of his greater knowledge and experience. When he desires to help them, he must let them find their way in dealing with church work. Never must they be permitted to feel that

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25. Blos, Peter, op. cit., p. 76

26. Stock, Henry Thomas, op. cit., p. 53

they are just being told what to do, so they have to do it. Let them think their way through problems. If they are unable to solve a difficult problem, they will be more than willing to come to their pastor and ask his advice. They are not essentially "thick-headed". The average young person will be more than willing to admit when he is in need of help. But, unless the pastor respects human personality in dealing with young people, they will not be willing to come to him for anything.

Our ex-Marine says that Colonel Carlson would "ask his men for advice, would treat them as equals, would talk to his men about everything, and ask us to express our own views."<sup>27</sup> This Marine was only sixteen years old at the time, but this did not hinder Colonel Carlson. He felt that this man was capable of thought, sincere and deep. He felt that all his men were well worth the respect due any and every human personality. If such things can be done and are being done by the men in service, men who have the very lives of their men at stake, it certainly should be possible for the pastor to treat his young people in the same manner when dealing in earthly things. The youth will not take over the duties of the pastor, if this is the fear of the pastors of our day. Of course, if the pastor is incapable of coping with these problems, perhaps the youth will have to grapple with them.

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27. Arnold, Oren, op. cit., p. 47

At no time should the pastor take to himself duties which can just as easily be done by the youth. When these perhaps small tasks are taken from them, they cannot but think that the pastor feels that they are incapable of handling them. Or, perhaps the pastor feels that they are only able to do a task after he has outlined it or told them how to do it. Such an attitude on the pastor's part can bring about only indifference on the part of the young people toward dealing with and thinking through any problems. Once this attitude is permitted to prevail for any great length of time, the youth will slowly but surely wander away from their church. Thus, again we will emphasize the fact that the pastor must treat the young people with the respect due human personality.

## CHAPTER FIVE: HE MUST BE THE GUIDE TO A GREATER RELIGIOUS LIFE

This first part of the thesis began with the assertion that the pastor must be the spiritual head of his young people. It is necessary to enlarge upon this topic a little more.

To be a true spiritual guide to a deeper religious life, the pastor must himself be religious. It will do no good if he is a happy-go-lucky sort in life, and then metamorphoses himself when he enters the pulpit. If the pastor cannot, by his way of living, be the guide to this greater religious life, he certainly will not become the guide by "much preaching." The young people must be made to realize that though their spiritual life must begin at Church, it must continue throughout the week, to be renewed again the following Sunday. Never must the pastor permit the idea that religion belongs in church only. Therefore, we say that every pastor must insist upon a "round-the-clock, twenty-four-hour religious life." If this is lacking in his teaching, preaching, or life, he has missed his great calling.

In instructing the young people of his congregation, the pastor must ever and again emphasize the great need of a home altar. This is so vital a need and is so great an aid to a richer spiritual life, that it must be treated as a special topic. It will not suffice that the young people come only to church services and then put their religion

away for the next six days. Here is where the pastor can do the most good toward perfecting the religious life of his young people. Here he must give a detailed outline as to how this family altar should be conducted. He must not mince words, but tell of the evils connected with only a Sunday religion. After duly warning the people, he must then proceed to train them in the proper use of such an altar. He must never take anything for granted. This advice has been handed down throughout the ages, but it is always well to be told it again. An understanding of the benefits derived from the family altar, especially of how it cements the family into a solid, one-minded group, should be sufficient to launch the program of a family altar in every home.

Of course, it should go without saying, the sermons of every pastor should provide guidance, examples, and aids to attaining a deeper religious life. In treating these various aids toward a strengthened religious life, the pastor should always emphasize the positive side. He must always be ready with constructive criticism.

In concluding this first part, the writer desires to emphasize once more that we are to serve the spiritual needs of our young people; that we alone are fully equipped to carry this task to its great conclusion; that we must go out of our way to be of any help to young people; that we must be ready with an open ear and warm heart to listen to all the problems of the youth; that we treat the young people

with respect due human personality; and, finally, that we are to be the guides toward a greater religious life. Our task is great; our rewards here few; our glory in eternity beyond our wildest dreams.

## PART TWO

### THE CONGREGATION'S ROLE

All the work which the pastor may do in dealing with the young people will be brought to naught, if the congregation as a whole does not enter into the work wholeheartedly. What the pastor has done can be very easily undone by backward, uninstructed, and uninterested congregation members. Alone, the pastor can accomplish little; with the aid of his adult members, the pastor can work wonders. Thus, after dealing with the work which the pastor must do with his young people to keep them in church and in Christ, it is necessary that we deal with the congregation's role in this same God-given task.

#### CHAPTER ONE: THE CONGREGATION ALONE IS HOLDER OF THE KEY TO REAL HAPPINESS

Every one is looking for the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. To some, this means a good time; to others, this means money; to still others, this means health. But to all of them, it means happiness. Every man is looking for happiness: witness our night clubs, dance halls, theaters, ball parks, and the like. If there is anything which we might call universal it is the seeking after happiness. Especially is this true of the young people. They are always on the look-out for some new way of getting happiness. They are always the first by whom the new is tried. Bearing this in mind, the congregation's task



should be simple. We do not have to look for a goal, since it is given us by the young people themselves.

Again it will do us good to remember that the joys and happiness of this world are short-lived. For the time being the world's joys are great and beautiful, but it does not take long and they begin to dim and diminish, their luster fades and becomes dull. That this is true we can see from the code of the Epicureans which reads: "Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die." Can anything describe more graphically the changeableness of this world's pleasures? For a time, the world may have much to offer, but in a time of crisis, the world is at a loss as to what to serve up to keep the young people interested. Today especially is this fact brought home to us, when we see and hear of the great havoc this present conflict has brought upon Europe and indirectly upon us here at home. Yes, we can say that the world is about at its wit's end to find something new with which to bring happiness to the young people. Since the world has missed its chances and its ideas are all old and changeable, it is time for the Church to step in and show the young people what real happiness is.

Life no longer is at a premium. This fact has given Satan an opening into the field of giving happiness to young people. It appears that he and his helpers are never at a loss as to what to bring to youths for "happiness", which is founded in and supported by sin. "Change and

decay in all around I see" wrote the hymnist, and he certainly knew about what he was writing. Never for a moment are we to lose sight of the fact that the world is of only short duration and its happiness of even shorter duration. As letters continue to come home from the battle fronts of the Allies, we begin to see how really short this life and its happiness are. A squadron of B-19's takes off, a group of seven planes. The men had just returned from town, where they had been having a "good time". As this squadron returns, one bomber overshoots the field and the whole crew is lost.<sup>28</sup> Those men will never again have part in the joys of this world. Their life and their happiness are now at an end, never again to be taken up in the same manner in which they were lived here on earth.

Does it not seem strange that even the best of people here upon earth never seem to have their fill of happiness? They always are on the search for more. Never can this void be filled. This truth must be brought home to the young people, before they have to learn it in the school of life at the hands of the teacher of experience.

When anyone makes a mistake in the world, he is at once criticized for it. Many times this criticism is not the least bit helpful, but none the less it is given. Usually it is given without discrimination, without much thought on the why and the wherefore. It is this one fault of the world at large that causes many people to end it all

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28. Letter from Sgt. O. E. W., February 5, 1945

in self-annihilation. Rather than face the heart-rending, cruel criticism of those who have had a measure of success, many people stay in the background, do not try to get ahead, become self-centered and care little about what is taking place 'round about themselves. However, young people are far more keenly sensitive to criticism than their elders. If a young man cannot come up to the standards set by others in a chosen field, he immediately wants to quit, wants to get into something else. There can be no happiness where there is endless criticism.

It is for this very reason that the Army has given special tests to the new man, to determine in what line they can do their best work. The Army realizes full well that criticism can break the will and desire of any man. Warner desires to make much of this criticism as a foundation upon which the Church will be able to make its beginnings. While the world is criticizing openly, wantonly, the Church can be sympathizing and comforting the troubled, wronged person. Rather than to follow criticism with suggestions for self-improvement, the world would much rather criticize and then leave the individual to try as best he can to better himself without any further help. The world is so much interested in the community, that it very often forgets entirely about the individual that makes up this community.

Since the world is interested only in the body of the individual and the material side of life altogether, it is

no wonder that the world is quick to criticize and slow with help and advice. This attitude will, of course, take away much that might have brought happiness and joy to the young people. If there is anything that young people cannot stand, cannot take, it is criticism without any sign of helping to improve their ways, correct their mistakes. "I know when I make a mistake. That you do not have to tell me. Tell me how to correct this error."<sup>29</sup> Thus writes a service man who did make mistakes, even as all of us do. The mere repetition and recitation of the mistake will not help. The mistake is usually admittedly seen and acknowledged by any thinking young person. Correction is what he seeks, not condemnation. The world will condemn; it is up to the Church to correct and change the youth.

The only reason why the Christian congregation is able to correct these young people and thus to give them the key to success and happiness is because Holy Scripture is the basis for the Church's whole plan of help and correction. Whenever the congregation turns from this true corrective, its cause is as hopeless as the cause of the world. While the world can give only a passing happiness, the congregation through and in Holy Scripture can give the happiness which lasts forever, which will never change, which will never decay. The congregation through the Word is able to dispense life eternal, won by Christ through

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29. Letter from Pfc. R. E., March 9, 1945

his suffering and death for all mankind. This is the real source of all happiness. Once the individual young person is made aware of and sure of his eternal life, his life here on earth will be happy, he will have found the essence of all true happiness - his Savior Jesus Christ. Christ is long-suffering, He does not criticize immediately, indiscriminately. When Christ does criticize, He also gives us a way in which to improve ourselves. These facts will sit well with any and every young person.

When the troubles of this life begin to weigh too heavily upon the shoulders of the young people, they like to see how others have fared. Here again the Christian congregation finds its power, for here Christ and His exemplary life can be shown profitably. His way of living will prove to be a pattern for the young people. Thus, once again, Holy Scripture comes to the aid of the congregation in giving happiness and hope to the young people who are so much in need of them today.

"I sure do wish that our Chaplain would preach the Gospel." These words were overheard on the street one day. A young sailor was talking to his friend. They had been discussing various aspects of life, when the friend asked if the sailor was happy, really happy. After a moments hesitation, the sailor replied that he guessed he was. But, he did say that he had many problems which the other fellows laughed at; that he thought many times that he was happy, but that it always seemed to slip away. It was then that

the words recorded in the first sentence were spoken. When asked what he meant, he continued. "In the Bible, I read of Jesus Christ. He sure had a tough life. He couldn't have been very happy. Yet, He made a lot of other people happy. I always feel so much better when I read or hear about Him. He always gives me something which really makes me happy, which never seems to go away."<sup>30</sup> This sailor had learned the source and dynamo of real happiness. He had learned, as many young people are learning today, that the world has little to offer that counts or lasts long. This is the key to the hearts of the young people which the congregation now has. All it has to do is take the key, insert it into the rusted locks of the troubled hearts of the young people, and turn.

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30. Conversation heard while waiting for a bus at Clayton and Big Bend, Clayton, Missouri, January 29, 1945 2 P.M.

## CHAPTER TWO: THE CONGREGATION HAS CLOSE CONTACT WITH THE YOUTH

Though the young people will be vitally interested in what the world has to offer, yet they are really not an integral part of the world. In the world, the adult rules with an iron hand and will. This is not what the young people are looking for. They desire an opportunity to show what they can do or have done. However, the world does not desire to have them advance themselves, would rather keep them under the adult thumb, would have them gather experience first. Once again the door is left wide open for the Church. Whereas the young people have to grow into the world, they are already in the Church.

The day on which the young baby is baptized by the pastor, that child becomes a member of the Church. Throughout its young life, it is growing up within the church and the congregational life. Therefore, it is taken for granted that the young person is part of the congregation. This fact places a challenge before the adult membership. It is at this point that the pastor should instruct his members as to the proper treatment of these young people. It is at this point in their development that they can either be gained or lost to the church. They have become used to going to church services, taking part in the smaller activities of the congregation. If now, when they are ready to broaden out into the greater activities of the congregation, the congregation does not permit them to do

so, or discourages them instead of encouraging them, they have lost the fight against the world.

It is for this reason that Stock says, "A most necessary objective of the congregation over against its young people is to help them enlarge their small circle of confinement."<sup>31</sup> Up to this point in their lives, the young people were content to remain in the small inner circle of the family. Now, however, along with their physical as well as mental growth, the young people want to make use of that which they have acquired. It is now or never, as far as the congregation is concerned. They must take the advantage offered them now.

Only once in the entire bibliography appended to this thesis is there a reference to young people leaving their church after having been given a chance to show what they can do. They are and desire to remain members of this church. In the letters which we have received from service men and women, there is one predominant note: let me back into the church and the congregational activities where I have left off.<sup>32</sup> In every instance, they want to return, not as some one who has done something extraordinary, but as one who has been away from the congregation for some time, has changed very little, and would now like very much to pick up where he had left off. A word of warning is

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<sup>31</sup>. Stock, Henry Thomas, op. cit., p. 73

<sup>32</sup>. Letter from Pfc. R. E., January 31, 1945 and letter from Sgt. O.E.W., January 24, 1945



here in place when we think of the returning man who has lost part of his members. In the pamphlet Welcoming the Wounded,<sup>33</sup> this advice is given. Make sure that you greet the man, not the wound. What he has left on the battle field or in the hospital does him no good now and he knows it. The sooner that we begin to realize the same fact, the sooner we will be ready to give him back his task, of which he is so much in need upon his return.

The chances are very great, that, when we are dealing with the returning service personnel, we will be the ones who have changed. We might have welcomed the young people before they entered the service, but now we may be "too cool and formal and perfunctory in our ministry to their life in God."<sup>34</sup> While we are trying to think of things which we can do for them, we are forgetting entirely that they too are members of the congregation and as such are desiring to be given something to do for the congregation.<sup>35</sup>

In dealing with the young people we cannot overlook the fact that they have an over-abundance of intellect and energy. It is therefore, the duty of the congregation to "correlate this intellect and energy"<sup>36</sup> and to put it to work in the one and only place where the young people feel

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33. Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, op. cit., pamphlet number VI.

34. When The Uniforms Are Put Away, p. 5

35. Letter from Sgt. O. E. W., February 5, 1945

36. Stock, Henry Thomas, op. cit., p. 73

at home - the congregation. The young people are part of the congregation and as such desire a part in its activities.

In all social life, the young people always follow, willingly or unwillingly, the example set by their elders. Thus the little babe learns to walk by watching its mother walk about the house; thus the six-year-old swings his first bat by watching his older brother or his father swing. Throughout life this is a fact which is taken for granted. We can now state that this is also a fact when dealing with the young people in the congregation. They will follow the examples set by the older members of the congregation. Here again a challenge is handed out to the congregation. Since the young people desire to stay in and with the church, and since they will unconsciously, at times perhaps, follow the example of the adults, the adult membership has a chance to prepare for the future of their church.

It is for this reason that forgiveness, being sensitive to other people's needs, magnanimity, and Christian courage must be practiced by the membership as a whole. These four characteristics of every Christian we definitely desire to foster in the young people. Words, again, will not be able to do the task alone. Example in deeds must show the young people first how to acquire these traits and then how to put them into practice. At no other time of their lives are the young people as open to suggestion as this period. A short time later on they will be set in

their ways. If they have witnessed the men of the congregation becoming angry over any little trifle,<sup>37</sup> they will feel that this is the manly thing to do, and will follow suit, thus setting the pattern for their future life. It is for this reason that the congregation must always be on their guard never to set a wrong example, bearing in mind that they themselves are setting the example for future generations.

In this respect, every congregation member must really practice: Think before you speak; think before you act; think before you think! If this were to be put into effect, the whole church would constantly be preparing every young person in it for an active Christian life in his congregation. No matter what the topic might be or the situation, the young people will want, yes, need, these examples according to which they can outline their own lives and actions.

When the men return from service, they will have become better equipped to think and to do. They will have been following the examples of men who were vitally interested in their wellbeing, who set them examples which were good for their life. Though the American soldier is trained to act as an individual when necessary, he still has to learn to follow the example and training of his officers. They are not taught to think everything through but to follow what they have been taught. We must, there-

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37. Ligon, Ernest M., Their Future Is Now, p. 248

fore, take to heart the Scripture truth: "I am my brother's keeper", and thus must try our feeble best to help these men out, to set an example for them which is not only good but also sends out a challenge to them to follow.<sup>38</sup>

With many men who return, it will not be a matter of making up for lost time, but a matter of making a redoubled effort for the future.<sup>39</sup> If the congregation will bear this in mind, it will understand their unique position. If it but sets the pattern, the example, the returning service personnel will bend every effort to get in line, put his shoulders to the wheel, and work side by side with the man who sets a good example for him.

In this manner will the congregation keep in touch with its young people, for it alone has the opportunities to do so. In all its dealings it should always keep the young people in mind, keeping them in touch with whatever is being done by the congregation as such. Let it show the young people that it is interested in them and they will reciprocate with an unbounded energy, waiting to be harnessed by the right example.<sup>40</sup> Again, a word of warning: if the Christian and his congregation do not take the young people in, Satan and the world will.

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38. When The Uniforms Are Put Away, p. 16

39. Letter from Sgt. O. E. W., February 16, 1945

40. Bell, Howard M., Youth Tell Their Story, p. 83

### CHAPTER THREE: THE CONGREGATION CAN GIVE NEEDED ENCOURAGEMENT

The first chapter of this second part began with a discussion on how the world has lost many adherents because of its harsh, quick, non-corrective criticism. It was also mentioned that this fact opens the door for the Church. However, the Church too, especially the adult membership, must take heed lest it falls into the same condemnation and begins to lose members among the young people. Thus, to begin this chapter, let it again be emphasized: do not be too critical at first of youth achievements.

If all of us were to bear in mind that we, too, had first to learn how to do a thing before it was a success, we might not be so ready to criticize the feeble, perhaps faulty, attempts of the young people to do something worthwhile. We all had to start. Like all young people, most likely our young people will set a goal which is much too high for their own capabilities. But, the right thing to do would not be to tear down their goal. Let them shoot high. It is not always best to achieve easily the goal one has set for himself. On the other hand, when the goal is not met, be not the first to criticize, unless you can help correct the mistake. Again, if constructive criticism you cannot give, give no criticism whatsoever.

Link cannot help but say time and time again that it is absolutely necessary for the adult membership of a

congregation to encourage the youth. He feels that encouragement is worth a lot more than actual help of some kind. Anyone who has spent any amount of time with children of any age, knows full well that they do not like to be helped. Even the tiny tot in school would sooner make a mess of his drawing, rather than have teacher come over to show him how, or, worse yet, do it for him. This latter statement is included in poor pedagogy.

When mistakes are made, and they will be made, it will do no good to shake your head and show by every motion that you think their cause is a hopeless one. If anything, this will discourage the young people and will make them quitters, those who never can and never will really accomplish a task. If this is the case in your own congregation, first take a look at your own attitude ever against the plans and projects of the young people, and then judge. As Dickerson says: "Many young people are made to believe that they must work and can only work when shown how by some outmoded adult, who feels he knows it all, not realizing that he himself had to learn by doing, not by being shown how."<sup>41</sup>

Every one likes to feel a slap of approval on his back once in a while. Yes, and this includes the young people. If their play was a rousing success, do not be afraid of swelled heads and buttonless vests, if a bit of praise is given. If a project of publicity was inaugurated by the young people, do not spread your own gloom about by saying

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41. Dickerson, Roy E., op. cit., p. 16

that it is a task which is too great, that it will not bring in any results. What can you hope to do by this? Unless you can be of help and assistance, the suggestion is in order that you stay out of and keep out of the way of the youth who are working for the kingdom of God. It has been said that the only person in the congregation who will discourage a young people's program is one who has made a mess out of his own life.<sup>42</sup> The young people have an almost endless stream of energy for work. Let them make use of it in their church. Be their guide and their positive criticizer. When something goes wrong, when the scenery refuses to stand straight, or the choir members cannot get to a given spot at that certain time, be the one who says: "Who said it cannot be done!"

When dealing with these young people, it might be well for the congregation as such to adopt the motto of one of our own generals of the Marine Corps. He has said: "The difficult we do immediately; the impossible takes a little longer." If we, the adult membership, have this attitude, never will the young people taste discouragement in anything which they undertake for the Church.

It is our duty to instill in these young people a Christian courage which is able to fight on against the severest tests. It is the young person who likes to hold up an ideal. We have one of the most courageous ideals

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<sup>42</sup>. Beaver, A. W., Putting The Church On A Full Time Basis. p. 302

in the world - Jesus Christ. He stood up and fought for His own in the face of inevitable arrest, torture, and execution for what He believed to be right.<sup>43</sup> He is the One who can and will give the needed encouragement; He is the One who is never critical, but is always ready and willing to give the youth another chance at life.

But what of the returning service man in this light? He is the one who needs encouragement, not sympathy; he needs some one to push him on, not weigh him down. It is for this reason that we must remember, when dealing with these men, that they are, in and of themselves, capable of solving problems.<sup>44</sup> Many civilians seem to think that the service man has lost all his powers of reasoning, and that he must therefore be treated as an infant. This treatment is the greatest discouragement that can come to him. He will be learning how to use new limbs, learning that there are limitations. The worst thing we can do is to show by our actions how sorry we are for him, try to help him physically. All he needs and desires is mental and spiritual aid. The rest will come with practice. When he returns, give him something to do, something which will make him sweat, think, work, toil. He will thank you for it. Dr. William B. Pugh tells us to "help the man

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43. Ligon, Ernest M., op. cit., p. 248 (b)

44. Federal Council of Churches of Christ In America, op. cit., "Welcoming the Wounded", Number VIII



help himself."<sup>45</sup> The sooner the man realizes that he is again on his own, he will, as it were, "take the bull by the horns" and hang on.

Throughout their reconversion to civilian living and life, service men will be strange, afraid. Here is where the congregation comes in. Show them that they are being afraid of themselves only and not of the world. Give them a task, preferably a very difficult one, and then let them work it out as far as they can go without any help. As mistakes come up and they ask for help, give it freely without criticism. But never do the work for them. Of course, their work will be slow, painful, and very much wrong at first, but, with a little encouragement, a little prodding, and much prayer, they will come out on top and thank you for being so interested and so helpful.

One of the greatest mistakes and unpardonable errors many congregations make in general is that they adopt a beautifully planned program, but eliminate the participation of the young people. We say unpardonable, because it invariably leads to an exodus on the part of the young people to a group which will take them into its plans and programs. We have stated before that the young people are a part of the congregation. As such, they too should have the right and privilege of taking an active part in whatever the congregation has planned. Many other congregations

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45. Ibid., "In Attitudes and Problems", Number III

make a mistake by giving their young people a part and share in their plans, but they make sure that the young people will get only that share which no one else would care to handle, or which will mean very little either to the congregation or the young people. This deception is just as bad as an outward elimination of the young people.

How can the young people be drawn in? There are many plans in which the young people are made to feel that they too belong to the visible church of Christ.

Stock says<sup>46</sup> that he saw this plan worked out beautifully in one congregation. The young people, for example, were placed on a welcoming committee. It was their duty, at every service, to seek out strangers, engage them in conversation, find out their church affiliation if any, take their names and addresses if they seemed willing, and then report to their pastor. All the young people took turns in serving on this committee. They were doing the congregation's work. Therefore, this young people's group grew to 247 members.

Another pastor<sup>47</sup> has this plan. His young people have Vesper Services, sponsored by and for the young people of the community. The pastor has little to do with the plan. The young people feel that by doing this little task they are helping to foster the missionary spirit in the congregation.

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46. Stock, Henry Thomas, *op. cit.*, p. 183

47. Kurth, Karl, Pastor, Grace Lutheran Church, 3117 St. Louis Ave., St. Louis, Missouri

To bring this up to date, our Lutheran Church has inaugurated a special Peace Thankoffering Offering. The monies gathered thus are to be used for future church activity in the post-war world. Should this project be kept with the adults only? Are not the young people to profit from this noble task? Why not permit, yes, encourage them to take an active part in this work. Most young people are more aggressive than the older folks. They have more fortitude for door-slammings. Their energy is boundless. Why not get them to help in this drive? The whole congregation is to take an active part in this work, and the young people are an integral part of the congregation. When the plans of the individual congregation are being made, why not call in a representative of the youth organizations? Perhaps they too have some good ideas which might help to gather in the monies.

The young people will be of vital help to the pastor in his ministration to those of the congregation who must be visited. The young people can be sent as special ambassadors of the congregation. When canvass work must be done, why not permit the young people to go out to win souls? Is this not their Christian duty and privilege? We might say that no matter what the plans may be, the young people should be given a specific task to perform, one which will permit them to show their training, their thinking processes.

Here again a warning must be sounded when dealing with the returned service men. Many pastors have been heard to state that he would not permit this or that man on this board, because he was in service, because he is no longer the polished gentleman he had been, because he has seen too much blood and death. Is this how we are going to treat our returning service personnel? The ex-Marine quoted before tells us that upon his return, he was not permitted to live normally, because he had killed, had hated, had suffered, had changed.<sup>48</sup> This same thing is being lived over and over again by service men who have returned to a sane, safe, and progressive civilian life. How can the service man reconvert himself to his former self, if the church refuses to permit him to take an active part in those things which he had always had a hand in before? If this is the case, we should not stop to wonder but shudder at the thought of what the outcome will be.

These returned men are men, Christian men who have returned from death to life. They have read, perhaps dreamed, of what they were going to do when they would have returned to their congregations. What missionary opportunities they were going to bring back home! When they arrive, they are treated as lepers - only to be pitied, when all they want is something to do for their congregation and Christ. These are the men who should find a place on school boards,

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48. Arnold, Oren, op. cit., p. 16

for their education and line of thought have been broadened. They should be found on every board of Elders, for they have felt the need of a consecrated, Christian Chaplain and know his worth. Include these men when planning the future of your congregation.

If a purpose is sought for this kind of work, it can be stated as follows: get the young people to participate more actively than just "on Sundays", so eventually they will be able to do more for the Church.<sup>9</sup> This letting the young people in on plans and programs is just a safeguard for the future, plus an educational institution for the present.

But, we must never feel that just giving the youth something to do will take care of them. They are not to be workers only, for God has endowed them with a mind too, one which is active and very good. They want to make use of this mind for their church. Therefore, permit, yes again, encourage them to take part in the laying of the plans and work on joint committees. Again, a work of warning. We do not mean to say that they should be permitted a seat on all committees, but there are some in which the young people not only should be in attendance but must be in attendance.

Arlitt would have us understand that the young people are more than capable of working and thinking along with

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49. Letter from Sgt. O. E. W., January 24, 1945

and at times far beyond the adults of a group. If this is in any measure true, why not make use of the storehouse of new ideas, new energies, new encouragement? The young people are ready, willing, and, according to all books on this subject, able to work out with the adults. Many congregations have found this to be a fact, and have insisted that certain committees include members from the young people.

Committees on which the young people could serve are numerous. There are a few, however, which should be mentioned here. The first is, of course, any committee which has anything to do with entertainment of any sort, which is to take into account the whole congregation. Not only are the young people so close to life still, but they also know what constitutes real entertainment. They have a variety of ideas on the subject, not to mention many books of worth. They will plan far in advance for a coming picnic or the like. They will be more aggressive in getting other people to participate in the games of the day.

A second committee on which the young people should find a place is Sunday school work. We mean here the Sunday School as a whole. We are not choosing certain aspects of the work in the Sunday School, but what we wish to say is that the young people should be given a voice in every and all plans which are laid for the Sunday School. They have just left the Sunday School. Their own personal

feelings will be voiced and acted upon. Yes, they know what is needed and desired in the Sunday School as such. In addition to being the teachers of the Sunday School they should also be on the board of control of the Sunday school. Again, not that they are to be alone; they should be under the supervision of some enlightened adult who knows and loves the young people.

Thirdly, the young people should always, yes, must always be found on any committee which deals with mission work. We have stressed before that the young people will want this kind of work and that they are fitted for it. Any congregation that does not take its young people into account when speaking of and planning for a special Mission service, has missed its calling entirely. Young people are vitally interested in other people to whom they can go with the message of Christ.<sup>50</sup> The young person has not begun to think of himself, or his own family circle too much as yet, so he will be more than willing to serve on any committee which deals with any phase of Mission work. In the youth the spirit of adventure is still strong and will manifest itself in going about the neighborhood attempting to win souls for Christ.<sup>51</sup> Any congregation which is fortunate enough to have men who know this trait of the youth, will find itself growing with leaps and bounds.

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49. Letter from Sgt. O. E. W., January 24, 1945

50. Blas, Peter, op. cit., p. 107

51. Ligon, Ernest M., op. cit., p. 274

Especially should the young returning service man be given the opportunity to serve on these committees. The man who has seen any kind of service is vitally interested in the next person.<sup>52</sup> This trait can be made use of by almost every committee in the congregation. The returning service man is vitally interested in his church, though it is in a very practical way. The plant of the church, the earthly possessions of the church are things in which he is interested.<sup>53</sup> He has become, because of necessity, a very practical individual in life, planning how best to live, to survive, to gain the minor comforts of life. These things have left a marked effect upon him which the congregation can make use of in placing him on financial committees, building committees, and the like. Give him a task which he can do with his hands and he will be happy.

When plans are being laid for the extension of the church in a property transaction, put that young service man on that committee. He has learned the true value of things; he has realized the great need of modern equipment. This is the man who will find the way in which to bring this thing about. His action will mean much for the rest of the congregation, for in seeing him work for the church, which, in many cases, has done little for him, they will be stirred up to action of the greatest kind. His example will be a challenge to all the members, be they young or old.

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52. Post, Emily, When He Returns, p. 7

53. Letter from Pfc. R. E., January 31, 1945



Thus, when planning anything, give the young people and the returned service man an opportunity to voice his opinion. Again we will say, "they are an integral part of the congregation, that part which is building for the future, planning for a 'bigger and better church to do the work of Christ'."

Whenever an adult member sees the young people at work, he should be in sympathetic harmony with him, for the young person is most likely doing the same thing, making the identical mistakes which the adult made when he was "just a young person." Thus the adult member is able to relive, through the present experiences of the young people, those fond memories of his own youth. Yes, the adult can become young once again. Any adult who bears in mind that he too was young at one time, will be very sure that he treats the young people with understanding and sympathy. He will not be the first to judge, to criticize the mistakes of the young people. He will always be ready and able to give help, encouragement whenever these are needed.

Above all else, the adult will try his best to see to it that the young people are given a chance to show that they too are members of the church, that they too are capable of doing various tasks. Such an adult will try to find worthwhile tasks for which the young people can work. He will prove to be the one who will be at the young peoples' side whenever a special project is set up

by and for them. His work will be undying for the youth. His interest will be the young peoples' interest; his desires will be formulated by what the young people need and desire. Thus, he will be reliving all the pungent memories and joyous times of his own life as a young person.

Especially will such an adult member be of unestimable aid and assistance when those men return from service. They will want to talk at times and at other times silence is golden.<sup>54</sup> The gushing sympathy will not be required but the quiet manner of Christ will be deeply appreciated. In this respect no one else will be able to do the task properly, except the man who is in deep and sympathetic harmony with the returned man. Here again, many of the adults will be reliving their own experiences after the last World War. However, and here is where real, true, deep sympathy will enter in, such an adult will not "pump" the service man for all the lurid, bloody details, but will listen when the service man has something to say, will listen without comment and without adding a few things which happened to himself in the last war. As when dealing with the young people, interest is a definite "must" when treating the returned service man. Never must he be made to feel that he is now a stranger, an outsider, yes, a castaway. This was done to some extent after the last

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54. Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, op. cit., Number III

war, and we bore the consequences of crime, sin, lust, and greed which knew no bounds.

There is yet one more item which every adult member should be sure to remember when dealing with the young people of his congregation: the young people are the future of the church. This has been said before, this will be said again. As trite as this statement is, it is also true. Any congregation which will not take steps to insure the security of the young people in its midst, is also not insuring the future of its congregation. The older members will not live on forever. When they are dead and gone, there must be a prepared youth to take over the task which has been so nobly begun by the older members. Good work done for a time will not last forever; it must ever be renewed, revitalized. The only ones who are in line to take up this work are the youth of the church.

It is for this reason that we, as a Church, have laid such a heavy emphasis upon proper training of the youth in school and in Confirmation class. But this cannot stop here. Thus, we have stressed that the young people should also be taken into confidence in whatever type of work the congregation is undertaking. The youth will learn much more by observation and doing than by reading. If they are permitted to experience the work as they will have to do in their future years, they will be more apt to cope with the many problems which confront every congregation.

Thus they should and must be trained. If they are unable to take over the work as left by the older members of the congregation, that congregation is headed for a definite fall and complete annihilation. Once a congregation has fallen into chaos, it is a difficult problem indeed to pick it up and start it all over again.

Christ set the example for us, when He trained His disciples for their task in life. He took time to explain things time and time again. He rebuked the disciples when this was necessary; He complimented them when their work was well done. But not once do we read that Christ left anything unsaid or undone which might injure the future of the Church. He was always aware of the fact that some one else would have to continue the task He had begun. Here too we can learn of Christ, to prepare properly our own youth in the way in which they are to go.

We also wish to prepare for the future of the Church in setting examples for our youth. The examples we set now for them will be the examples they will set for future members of the congregation. Here again we are shaping the future of the church. This task is given to us, to insure the future church of capable, able, and willing workers. Workers they must be who will not be afraid, who will not shirk their task, who will work and die for Christ and His Church.

But what of the returning service man and the future of the Church? The same thing holds here as with the youth

in general. If we properly, warmly welcome the service man back, we will be laying the groundwork for a solid, lasting future for our Church. Any man who has been gone for quite some time, welcomed back home, is always the better man for his experience.<sup>55</sup> "Let the service man start from where he left off before going into service, just as if he was never gone."<sup>56</sup> This is the advice of a man who is now in service, He wants to feel that he has never really been separated from his church, and therefore the future of his church is his own future. These returnees want to work in the church, they want their future there, they want positions which will offer them work in the church. But they do not want the congregation as such to feel that the only reason why they are receiving this office or this committee appointment is because they "have gone through the hell of war and now deserve, because of this very fact, some recognition. Let's give them a job."<sup>57</sup> Such an attitude will not raise a bright future for the returnee in the church. In addition to this, it will not make him feel that he wants to work in the future building of his church. And, without this desire, his work and his church will suffer.

We cannot help but repeat the words: the youth is the future of the church. The sooner many adult members realize this fact the sooner will young people be given a chance to grow and expand in their church activities.

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55. Ibid

56. Letter from Sgt. O. E. W., February 5, 1945

57. Ibid

#### CHAPTER FOUR: THE CONGREGATION HAS OR CAN OBTAIN THE ESSENTIAL, NECESSARY EQUIPMENT

In order that any organization can carry on its work in a profitable manner, it must have proper tools and equipment. The equipment must not be outmoded and useless, but new, powerful, and workable. This fact is one of those which is taken for granted in any large company. Much money is spent on developing new and better equipment with which to turn out finer, more substantial products. The church is the largest concern on this earth. Its product is life everlasting as won by Christ. It strives to make a man certain, firm, lasting. To do this task properly, good tools and equipment must be used. The same thing holds true when dealing with the young people. To work with and on them, the proper equipment must be used. Let us, therefore, look at the equipment of the Church to see whether it is necessary, essential equipment or not.

The first bit of equipment is the Word of God. This tool has been used by mankind since its infancy. It has never been outmoded by any other book on the same subject. The Bible's strength is as great now as it was when it was first prepared by men through the Holy Spirit. The Bible is, therefore, the basic tool for all our work with young people. In life, many tools have been tried, but all have been found wanting in one degree or another. But, the Bible has never been superseded by anything. It is the

authority to which all men eventually bow. The Bible, therefore, might be called the text book for life. It is the one bit of equipment the Church has which no other organization can claim or surpass. It is for this reason that we lay such a heavy stress upon its use by the young people and by the adults when dealing with the young people. Whereas earthly authors err time and time again, the writers of Scripture were guided from on high. Thus, the young people can believe everything that is contained in the Bible. As the supreme norm of their life it is basic.

But, are the young people willing to leave the Bible guide them? It has been found that seven out of every ten students would let the Bible be their guide, if their teachers and parents would show some interest in the Book themselves. To the congregational member this is a challenge. Never does he want his young people to tell him that they are willing to adhere to the Bible, but, since he does not, they also refuse to do so. Yes, the young people will follow the dictates of God as found in Scripture, but they must be brought to them. The fact that they are willing to follow and to listen to the words of the Bible is an indication of what a great power the Bible as God's Word can exert for good upon the youth of our church today. The sooner the adult membership realizes this cardinal fact, the sooner will the young people of the churches become active young people.

The service man has voiced his opinion in many ways of how he feels toward the Bible. Their general opinion is that "it is the only book which gave me comfort, when I was out there." "Without the Bible I would have 'gone off the deep end'." "When we would get together for a few moments rest, someone would always pull out his Bible, and no one would interrupt as he read for us all." "We had to talk about the Bible. That was the only thing which gave us courage and faith to keep going." "Even our General read the Bible and talked religion with us. I hope I can keep this up when I get back." These and many other statements have been culled from various clippings from magazines, newspapers, true stories. Now that these men have become so thoroughly acquainted with the Bible and have come to rely upon it, what will our attitude be? Will we at home continue in our slipshod manner, in our living and working without God's Word? If so, many of the service men who return will be lost to us for good.

But we must let that Bible work. Let the Bible answer our questions, let the Bible outline the work as the young people are to carry it out, let the Bible serve as a guide and rule in all the activities of the young people, let the Bible live among them as the source for all the need. If we make such a use of the Bible, it will prove to be the greatest part of our equipment, and also the mightiest weapon against anything the world may bring up.



But if the Bible were left unapplied to youth, our cause with the young people would be lost. The Bible in and of itself would be able to be a leaven in the lives of the young people, for the Holy Spirit is working therein. But the young people want to be led by and to work with people. They are more interested in people than in books; they will follow people. Here again the Church has a great advantage, for it is possessor of many consecrated workers who will be more than willing to spend much time with the youth.

The first person in whom interest for the youth is to be found is the pastor. However, this has been covered in the first part of our discussion. The second one who is vitally interested in the youth is the Christian Day School teacher. His very calling demands that he love children, and, when they have grown to manhood, he will be more than willing to take time with them, encourage them, train them. It is a proven fact that the teacher in many instances is held in more esteem and favor among the youth than the pastor. Of course, this attitude of mutual interest must be made use of to its fullest.

It has been said by the returning service men that they have always enjoyed working with the teacher, for he usually has seen them through some pretty difficult times.<sup>58</sup> Thus the teacher himself can become one of the finest pieces of

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58. Letter from Pfc. R. E., March 9, 1945

equipment in building up and encouraging the youth. In life, many people will try to take the place of the teacher. However, there is no one who is able to assume the position and take the place of a consecrated teacher in the hearts of the young people. Fortunate is the congregation which has such teachers.

The superintendent of the Sunday School is another individual who can be enrolled as an essential part of the equipment of dealing with the young people. His contacts with the youth as just another member of the congregation will do much to cement their friendship. As is the case with the other two mentioned persons, the Sunday School superintendent works with and through the Holy Word. It is because of this fact that he carries much weight.

The superintendent should be called upon to make short speeches for the young people, be their master of ceremonies when they have a special function, go with them on their outings, and the like. All these various things will help to gain the confidence and trust of the young people. One service man writes: "Get an interesting speaker (not the pastor or the teacher) and let him speak on current problems as they face the young people."<sup>59</sup> Can a better man be found for this task than the superintendent of the Sunday School, who himself is vitally interested in the problems of the young people?

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59. Letter from Sgt. O. E. W., February 16, 1945

A fourth group of people who are interested in the youth is the Men's Club. In the charters of many of these organizations, it is specifically stated: "to help promote Christian fellowship also among the young people of the congregation." Having this as a background, the Men's Club should be able to do wonders with the young people. One thing which is in its favor is the fact that the fathers of the young people are also members of this organization. The young people are usually in need of some financial support. They have made plans for a special publicity campaign and now discover that their funds will not reach. Can the Men's Club as such find any better place to give their money?

Other organizations for the youth will need moral as well as organizational backing. Here again the Men's Club can come into the picture. Its members are interested in the youth as the future of the congregation. Therefore, they are interested in preparing properly these young people. At present, many Men's Clubs are the dynamo behind the Boy Scout troops in the churches. Such consecrated members should be given the opportunity to help, to plan with and for the young people.

Though many things go into the make-up of the reason for backing the young people in their various projects, as love for them, hope in them, and the realization of their future in the church, yet by far the most important motivation is faith in the youth. In the various walks of life,

little faith is wasted on employee by employer and vice versa. In most cases, a mutual feeling of doubt and uncertainty pervades the relationship. However, in the church, when dealing with young people, the congregation member must have complete and free faith in the youth. If at any time this faith is lacking, there can nothing good come from it. No one likes to work under a feeling of suspicion; but in the young people this resentment is keenest.<sup>60</sup> The young people cannot stand having older people "pussy-footing" around trying to find something wrong.<sup>61</sup> Whenever this feeling invades the young people, their work and all their plans will be lost. They must have the feeling that they are being trusted, not watched.

In the returned service man this feeling of antagonism against anyone who mistrusts him is truly an enormous obstacle which will have to be run over and under foot by the faith which we have in the youth, the same faith that Christ has in us, giving us mortals many things which we are to do, believing that we can and will do our best with them. If the Lord is able to put such trust in us, we certainly can put the same trust in our own people.

Of course, we do not mean to say that we must permit the youth to work as they see fit, never observing their procedure, never speaking about this or that practice, never criticizing. If this is done, the young people will

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60. Arlitt, Ada Hart, Adolescent Psychology, p. 197

61. Letter from Sgt. O. E. W., January 24, 1945

never know when they have done right or wrong. But we must have this sure faith in them, knowing that they too have faith in the same Christ Jesus, that we will never be guilty of mistrusting them, of thinking only evil about them, never putting the best construction on their activities.

Especially is this later thing to be watched when dealing with that man who returns from battle. We are told that we "must trust him as an essentially normal, upstanding, competent person."<sup>62</sup> And why should we treat him in any other manner? He is now out of battle, away from the tension and strain of shrieking shells and falling comrades. He is back in a comparatively sane world. Thus, to win him for Christ and His kingdom, we will have to trust that service man in everything. We can show that we trust him by "seeking his help with jobs that will in turn help us."<sup>63</sup> Not should we trust him in only those things which will have no consequence either one way or another, but in those tasks which will mean much to us if done right and more to the man by giving him the task to do.

This faith in the young people can be expressed in many ways, as said before, but the best way is by permitting them to take an active part in all the congregation will undertake. The writer has gone into this at some length in a previous section of this paper, but it must appear here once again. This is where the congregation can win

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<sup>62</sup>. Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, *op. cit.*, "How Families Can Help", Number IX

<sup>63</sup>. Ibid

or lose the young people for its cause. Giving them positions to fill which will either make or break the whole plan will, in addition to preparing them for the future and taking a load off the shoulders of the adults, will give them positive proof that the congregation has placed a great faith and trust in them. This in itself will cause them to work harder, longer, more prayerfully.

But, to carry on the work in a proper fashion, certain physical facilities must be present. Here again the church can take the lead. In almost every church, there is a special room set aside for meetings, games, and the like. Today we term such a place a gymnasium. For the young people such a place is an absolute necessity. They have much energy which must be put to work, and there is no better place to rid themselves of this excess energy and still profit by it than continual, frequent work-outs in a gymnasium. It is for this reason that all schools now have erected gyms. The world has them to offer. The church had better begin offering them. Many of our young people are members of a Y. M. C. A. or similar organizations. Here they meet with and become friends of all sorts of people. If they could have the facilities in their own church, they would not bother to go any other place. One service man, quoted quite frequently here, writes: "How about that gym back home in the school? Is it still rotting away? Is the equipment lying around

and becoming moldy and mildewed? Why not make use of that stuff? The young people love it!"<sup>64</sup>

As to other equipment. No church should consider itself complete unless it has a well-stocked library to offer its young people. Today this is true especially. The young people are book-conscious and devour almost anything which is put out. This is true even of the male section of our young people.<sup>65</sup> We know of a certainty that much of the literature is worthless and much is damnable. Here the church has another challenge thrown at it, to counteract this influx by having its own library, filled with books which are worthwhile, interesting, and cause the young people to think and evaluate life's experiences. We are told that the man in service has turned out to be an avid reader. Will the church let this opportunity slip through its fingers?

There is one thing which every church should have, namely, a special place for prayer. Call it a chapel, if you like, but such a spot should be erected to offer a devotional setting for prayer. By this habit, the Catholic Church has won many contributors if not adherents. The young people feel much better if they can pray in a place which is prayerful in the proper sense of the word. The service man has learned to value these little places, for in them he was able to get closer to God, or so it seemed.

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64. Letter from Sgt. O. E. W., February 16, 1945

65. Ligon, Ernest M., op. cit., p. 277

Of course, the church building as such should be open at all times for the young people. Never must they feel that church is theirs only on Sunday. Its doors should be a welcomed sight and an invitation to come in and worship. The church itself is the most important physical asset of the congregation. It is the center of worship, it is the center of prayer, it is the home of God. All these things go to make up for the young people an idea of worship in their minds when church is talked of. Therefore we say again, keep those church doors open so that the young people may worship at will, worship with the feeling that it is proper, meet, and right so to do.

Prayer books, hymnals, Bibles, and every type of church literature there is should be furnished for the young people. It is in this way that the young people will become better acquainted with what is going on 'round about them. They want to know what other church bodies are doing.<sup>66</sup> They are vastly interested in the new trends of religion, so-called. Make sure that they get the information from the congregation, where it is presented in its true colors.

In concluding this section, it will be well to recapitulate. The congregation must remember that it is far better equipped than the world to help and deal with young people. The congregation alone has the key to true happiness - the Word of God.

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66. Letter from Sgt. O. E. W., February 5, 1945



### PART THREE

#### MODERN TRENDS IN DEALING WITH THE RETURNING SERVICE MAN, DEALT WITH IN DETAIL

Throughout, this paper has been laying extra stress on the treatment men who return from the service should receive. As can be seen from the various paragraphs dealing primarily with the returned man, we have dealt with him precisely as we would with any young person who has returned from an extended vacation or trip. Nothing has been said about taking a different attitude toward them or spending time in trying to figure out various and devious methods of dealing with this "special problem." It may be desirable, therefore, to show why this has been done.

When the first group of returned service men came home back in 1943, they were greeted by brass bands, speeches, questions, special doctors, and the like. This was thought to be the proper manner in which to receive the returnee. In fact, a special manual was prepared in which was given a detailed outline on How To Handle That New Stranger. A few points will be discussed here.

The very first, cardinal rule to follow was: remember that he has been seeing death, has been trained to kill, and now must be treated as a killer. This meant, of course, that nothing which might be considered a normal treatment was given the returned man. Children were not to be left alone with him for fear that he "would revert to type" and begin killing.

The second rule was: he has changed a lot, so treat him as one whose life is altogether different from your own. This brought on many difficulties. To wives, this meant that the returnee was, in every sense of the word, an outcast.

One of the other rules was: question him continually, so he has a chance to get the horrible details off his chest. This meant reliving all the horror, the blood shed, the death. This was done not only once, but time and time again the returnee was questioned. Many of them lost all sense of proportion; yes, some had to be placed in institutions because of these questions.

Another rule was: rush him as swiftly as possible into some sort of work, easy or difficult. After the stress and strain of battle, this was one of the many things, perhaps the greatest, which contributed to much of the "extra-battle fatigue", as it was called. Men, who had been released as healthy and sound in mind and body, broke down completely under this system.

For those who had been wounded this advice was given: do not even mention the wound or lack of member. If anything, this attitude caused the returnee to think that the people were ashamed of his loss, or that they did not notice or care about it. This never proved to be much of a help in treating the returned man.

We can be as thankful as the returning service man that these rules have been changed and radically so.

A few of the more important changes will be noted here.

For the pastor, it was to be noted that the returned man had come to grips with stark reality,<sup>67</sup> and as such, he now demands reality in sermons, calls, visitations, and the like. This fact should be noted by every pastor. Though he should not have to change his manner too much, for he should have been dealing with realities all along, yet it is necessary for him to bear in mind that now just such things will be demanded. In this respect the returned service man will have changed, for his demands will come from a soul thirsting for spiritual enlightenment.

But, before we go on, it might be well to hear what has been said in one of our own publications.<sup>68</sup> We are told that "perhaps we are a greater problem than they." In another article,<sup>69</sup> this appears: "If any real, fundamental change has taken place, it is most likely in us, us who have stayed home." Bearing this in mind, we will look at the returnee in a different light. As soon as this truth penetrates to the inner recesses of our minds, we will not look upon the returned man as a freak, a stranger, but consider ourselves in that light: we have made ourselves strangers to them.

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67. Dannenfeldt, Paul L., op. cit., p. 57

68. When The Uniforms Are Put Away, p. 5

69. Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, op. cit., "How Families Can Help", Number IX

Many of the returned men will have come closer to God, and will show a marked horror at our own worldliness and materialism.<sup>70</sup> They will want to know why it happened, how it happened. Yes, they will be ashamed that the people back home did not see the real, true light as given them by God. They will wonder why the folks at home did not stand up under the tests given by God, tests which were far more simple than the ones they had to undergo. This might make them quiet and soft spoken, or they might voice their opinion loudly and with much vehemence.<sup>71</sup>

Before, under the old system of treating these returned men, it was pointed out that the men might "revert to type." After many costly mistakes had been made, it was found that if these men did revert to type, they would hardly stop reverting when they had gone back to some level reached during war; they would far more naturally revert clear back to what they had been BEFORE the war! At last many people have seen the light. Essentially, the soldier, sailor, and marine have not changed one bit. The sooner people begin to realize this important fact, the sooner will the returned service man feel as though he is truly welcomed.

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70. When The Uniforms Are Put Away, p. 7

71. Arnold, Oren, op. cit., p. 16

Another new rule of common sense is to let him talk if he wants to; if he prefers to remain silent, that too should be alright.<sup>72</sup> Is this not how we treat our fellow man at all times? Why should we change now? If a man has something he wants to say, we let him say it, listen attentively, and, if he asks for it, we give our own opinion. If, on the other hand, he prefers to remain silent on a given subject, we usually are not the first to breach the subject. If that service man has something he must say, let him say it. But, do not prove to be too shocked about new slants he may have on life.<sup>73</sup> Death seems to have struck almost haphazardly.<sup>74</sup> Many will have turned fatalist; many will feel that they have lost all hope of Christian fellowship. To these, the only thing which will be of any help will be God's own Word. Nothing else will take its place. In dealing with these men, they will have to be treated as individuals, for any mass treatment will miss the mark entirely.

When these men return, they will, in the majority of cases, be ready for a job. Their feelings will range from disdain for the prewar grind they left, to uncertainty and panic about their future prospects.<sup>75</sup> However, they will want to return to work, for they have not been habituated

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72. Federal Council of Churches of Christ In America, op. cit., "How Families Can Help", Number IX

73. Ibid

74. Strietelmeier, John, op. cit., p. 98

75. When The Uniforms Are Put Away, p. 11

to too much leisure time; and too much time in which to do nothing will cause most of them to become morose. But, never rush them, either into church work or into other work.<sup>76</sup> They will know when they are completely ready to begin their tasks for carrying on in their chosen tasks. Never must they be made to feel that they are being treated like little children in this deal. They must want, they must need, they must decide when they are ready. Above all, do not segregate them.

When we have to deal with men who have left limbs on the field, never give the impression that you are sorry for them any more than if they had been sick for some time but are now completely healed and well. Here again sound advice is given: greet the man, not the wound.<sup>77</sup> They are conscious of their loss, but it does not make them invalids. Today they are given a chance to continue a normal, sane life with artificial limbs. If they want to talk about how they lost the limb, let them talk. But, under no circumstances, let them know that you are helping them because they are invalids.

Changes are being made daily, in special occupational therapy, psychoanalysis of the troubled, and the like. The greater the number of the returned, the greater the care and improvement.

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<sup>76</sup>. Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, op. cit., "The Program of the Local Church", Number V

<sup>77</sup>. Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, op. cit., "Welcoming The Wounded", Number VIII

## CONCLUSION

These problems are not new. They have occurred throughout the ages. The only thing which has changed is the magnitude and the manner of their occurrence in which they are to be met. Granted, we will always have these problems with us; yet, we must not stand idly by and permit the problem-situations to become the normal thing.

Thus, we pray God our heavenly Father that He would give us the necessary strength and wisdom, love and faith to carry on in the face of these problems, and to come out the victors in Jesus Christ. Amen!

FINIS

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