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Confirmation Instruction in the Light of Adolescent Psychology

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CONFIRMATION INSTRUCTION IN THE LIGHT OF

ADOLESCENT PSYCHOLOGY

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CHAPTER I

DEFINITION AND SCOPE

During the first half of the twentieth century a
great deal of experimentation and research has been done
in the field of adolescent psychology. The purpose of this
study was to relate these findings to the traditional cus-
tom of the Church known as confirmation, more specifically
to the preparation and instruction that precedes confirma-
tion. The Church's practice of instructing and confirming
her youth arose from particular circumstances and felt
needs within the Church. The Church must be on guard con-
tinuously lest her once valuable customs become, through
centuries of repetition and practice, mere empty rites de-
void of meaning and purpose. It is the Church's duty also
to avail herself of any useful learning and skills which
the world develops if she is faithfully to carry out her
mission in the world. Today, as always, the Church must
reevaluate her theory and practice of confirmation instruc-
tion to see whether or not she is meeting to the fullest
extent the needs of her youth.

It was not the purpose of this study to deal with the
liturgical aspects of the rite of confirmation itself, but
rather with the preparation and instruction that precedes
confirmation. Generally, the confirmation instruction
spoken of will be that practiced in the Lutheran Church,

most often that practiced in the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod. However, much of the material was drawn and applies also to confirmation instruction in other church bodies and to similar practices in the non-liturgical churches.

The period of adolescence cannot be defined by any arbitrary statement of ages or years of life. Adolescence is that period during which the child develops into the adult, physically, mentally, and socially. This will naturally vary greatly with individuals. Adolescence usually begins sometime around the twelfth year of life and is completed in the early twenties. A fuller definition of adolescence will be given in Chapter IV.

Primarily psychology is the science of the study of behavior. In this report the word is used in a wide sense to include whatever contributes to the personality of the adolescent, whether physical, mental, emotional, or social factors.

The doctrinal and the historical basis for Lutheran confirmation instruction are outlined briefly in Chapters II and III. Chapter IV comprises a short summary or survey of the field of adolescent psychology. The remaining two chapters deal with the central purpose of the study by attempting to relate the findings of adolescent psychology to the aims and also a more correct age for confirmation instruction.

CHAPTER II

DOCTRINAL FOUNDATIONS FOR CONFIRMATION INSTRUCTION

The act of confirmation itself, with the laying on of hands and the pledge of faithfulness, is not an ordinance set forth in the Bible. It is a rite and custom which developed in the Church at an early date, soon after the time of the Apostles. While the Bible contains no doctrinal foundations for the ceremony of confirmation, it does clearly lay upon the Church the obligation of instructing her young in the ways of God. The very nature of the Church and her work necessitates some form of religious instruction.

The Teaching Office of the Church

In the Great Commission[1] Jesus expressly told His followers:

> Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.[2]

Here as elsewhere[3] the teaching of religion is directly commanded by God. The Church is to spread and grow. By

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[1]Matthew 28:18-20.

[2]Revised Standard Version of the New Testament.

[3]Deut. 6:7; Col. 3:16; 1 Tim. 4:11.

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her missionary activity she tries to bring into her fold those who are outside the Church. But it is in the nature of the Communion of Saints that she cannot accept anyone into her membership who does not share her faith and confession. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."[4] Thus the Church must instruct in the Word all those who desire to join her. But the Church is also to grow from within.[5] Such growth is only accomplished through the teaching of the Word.[6] Hence the command of Jesus: "Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."

Whom is the Church to teach? According to the Great Commission she is to teach all nations, more specifically all those whom she has discipled through baptism. This command is so all-inclusive that the Church has, from her very beginning, understood it to include the baptism and instruction of infants and little children. That Jesus intended also the children to be taught may be seen in His direction to Peter after His resurrection. He not only told him to guard and feed the sheep ($\pi\rho o\beta\alpha\tau\alpha$) but also the lambs ($\alpha\rho\nu i\alpha$).[7] The instruction of the young is made mandatory also by many Old Testament maxims, such as:

[4]Rom. 10:17.

[5]Eph. 4:15-16.

[6]1 Pet. 2:2.

[7]John 21:15-17.

And these words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.[8]

Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.[9]

While the Church has the enormous task of teaching all men, she can by no means overlook the children and young people in her midst.

The content of the Church's teaching is also given in the Great Commission: "Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." The Church is to transmit to her members all the teaching of Jesus. This will include the commands and directions of Jesus for godly living together with the guilt and punishment for failure and sin. But it will also include the comfort of forgiveness through His blood. The Church must help her members draw close to God to receive comfort and strength in a world of evil. At the same time the Church must show her people how Christianity is the pervading influence in their daily walks of life. The entire message of God is to be taught to men, nothing more, nothing less.

The Church carries out this work of teaching in a number of ways. First of all, she does so by preaching. The

[8]Deut. 6:6-7.

[9]Prov. 22:6.

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sermon is primarily a teaching device. The Apostles taught the first Christians by preaching.[10] All preaching that is worthy of the name is teaching in some form. The Church also performs her teaching by the written word - by books, tracts, letters, etc. Informal talks given to groups as well as conversations between individuals are a part of the Church's program of teaching. The personal counseling which the pastors of the Church carry on with individual members is effective teaching. The chief work of the Church is teaching, and most of her activities relate somehow to this task.

In addition to preaching and the informal teaching of the Church, there is also a place for the formal instruction of the young. Such formal instruction has been called catechetics or catechization, from the Greek words κατηχέω or κατηχίζω[11] which mean to sound down, that is to transmit knowledge by word of mouth from above, to instruct.[12] In the New Testament and in Church literature the words have the limited meaning of giving religious instruction. It is not the mere principle of instruction as such that is in question, but rather the purposeful and systematic instruc-

[10]Acts 2:42; 3:12-26.

[11]These words occur in Luke 1:4; Acts 18:25; 21:21; Rom. 2:18; 1 Cor. 14:19; and Gal. 6:6.

[12]M. Reu, Catechetics, (Third edition; Chicago: Wartburg Publishing House, 1931), p. 3.

tion and training. Instruction that is generally Christian in nature might be conceived as taking place from the association of Christians within the Church. But such incidental instruction would leave complete and connected learning of essential truth a matter of chance. There would be many gaps and misunderstandings. It is the duty of the Church to pay careful attention to the work of formal instruction, especially of the young in her midst.[13] Much can be accomplished by such organized instruction which is left undone by preaching and more incidental teaching.

The Relation of Baptism to Confirmation Instruction

The Church has always recognized an intimate connection between baptism and the instruction for confirmation. Originally baptism and the laying on of hands were part of the same act.[14] The early Church was kept busy gathering in adult members for her fold. For adults instruction came before baptism and the laying on of hands. But after the Church had taken root in a community, she baptized the children within her midst as infants and postponed instruction with confirmation for several years. Even after these two acts were separated, a close relationship was maintained. The Church's practice of confirming her young can definitely

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[13]Ibid., pp. 5-6.

[14]J. C. Fritz, Pastoral Theology, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1932), p. 127.

be traced to her practice of infant baptism. This is the
position taken by Lutherans:

> Our system of catechisation and confirmation grows
> out of our doctrine and practice of infant baptism,
> which is founded on the Great Commission - "Make
> disciples of all nations by baptizing them and teach-
> ing them.[15]

Some theologians, however, have tried to draw unwarranted
associations between confirmation and baptism, making con-
firmation a sort of complement to baptism, a necessary part
of baptism, or a renewal of baptism. But such a position
does not do justice to what the Scriptures say of baptism.
Confirmation is not the renewal of baptism, for baptism is
the beginning once for all. Nor does confirmation make
baptism complete, for it already is complete in itself.[16]
Rather confirmation takes place in order that "the baptized
himself assume that on which he has been baptized, and that
he express it with his own mouth; that his covenant with
God in baptism be also a covenant of the understanding and
will."[17]

Baptism by its very nature necessitates instruction as
to its meaning and essence. Circumstances will determine
whether this instruction is to be given before or after
baptism, but it must be given. When children are baptized,

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[15]P. Bergstresser, "Catechisation and Confirmation in
the Lutheran Church", Lutheran Quarterly, XXI (October,
1894), 516.

[16]Ibid., p. 518.

[17]Ibid.

there is the understanding that they will receive subsequent religious instruction.[18]   Instruction in the Christian faith is the necessary consequence of infant baptism, if the new-born believer is to remain in the faith and grow to Christian maturity.   In the case of infants, baptism is the initiation into the faith, while instruction is the means for maintenance and growth.   Baptism and instruction are the same in that they are both means whereby God instills faith and life into men.   But they are different in that baptism is a single complete act, done once for all time, whereas instruction is a continual process in which the baptized believer's connection with God is sustained and strengthened.   There is an inseparable relation between baptism and religious instruction, the one as the adoption into the family of God, the other as nurture within that family.

Confirmation Instruction and Religious Certainty

The word "confirmation" itself implies that the believer is confirmed, that is made firm and sure, in his faith. The Bible too speaks to Christians being certain and immovable in their beliefs.   St. Paul had such certainty of faith:

I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.[19]

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[18]Reu, op. cit., p. 4.

[19]II Tim. 1:12.

I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord.[20]

David too spoke of such confidence and assurance in the Psalms.[21] Job's certainty was a comfort to him in the time of his affliction.[22] Christians are often rebuked for weakness of faith and uncertainty. They are urged to be strong in the Lord, to be sure and firm in their faith.[23] The young people who receive instruction for confirmation are usually somewhere in the early years of their adolescence. Their powers of reasoning and of generalization are developing, with the result that some of them may begin to question things learned in childhood, even among their religious beliefs.[24] Certainly at this critical period of their life young Christians need to be "confirmed" in their faith.

People frequently say, "Pastor Brown confirmed me;" or "I was confirmed by Pastor Smith." Strictly speaking, this is not a correct view. The pastor is not the one who confirms the faith of the young person. The confirming of

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[20]Rom. 8:38-39.

[21]Psalm 23:4; 73:24-26.

[22]Job 19:25.

[23]Heb. 10:22.

[24]Infra, p. 63.

faith does not take place at the rite of confirmation, nor
at the laying on of hands, but rather during the months of
instruction that precede the ceremony. Of course, some
might say that the pastor who does the instructing is the
one who confirms their faith, but in reality it is the Word
of God filled with the power of the Holy Spirit which does
the confirming. Only the Word can make firm a weak and
quivering faith. In the achievement of religious certainty,
as in the teaching office of the Church and the relation to
baptism, it is the religious instruction that has the solid
doctrinal foundations, and not the rite of confirmation.
The latter is a useful and beautiful Church custom which
deserves to be retained, but the former is a necessary, God-
given part of Christianity.

CHAPTER III

A BRIEF HISTORY OF CATECHETICAL INSTRUCTION

The Origin of the Catechumenate

Religious instruction is as old as the human race.
Training the young people of the Church for life with God
was emphasized repeatedly throughout the Old Testament.[1]
The priests and the Levites were the official teachers a-
mong the people of Israel.[2] The same thorough religious
training practiced by the Jews before Christ was carried
over into the Church of the New Testament. Both Jewish and
Gentile converts were instructed before admission into the
Christian fellowship. Although there was no formal instruc-
tion or catechumenate during the time of the Apostles, its
earliest traces are found there.[3] A graded catechumenate
was developed by the Church during the bitter persecutions
which followed the death of the Apostles. The formal cate-
chumenate was at its height in the fourth century.[4] It be-
gan a speedy decline, however, in the last half of the fifth
century, due to the tremendous influx of heathen and the

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[1]Gen. 18:19. Ex. 12:26. Jos. 24:15. Ps. 34:11.

[2]Lev. 10:11. Deut. 33:10.

[3]M. Reu, Catechetics, (2nd revised edition; Chicago:
Wartburg Publishing Co., 1927), p. 13.

[4]Ibid., p. 33

subsequent lowering of the standards of instruction.[5] During the middle ages which followed, religious instruction generally remained at a low ebb although a few scattered promising attempts were made.[6]

The Effect of the Reformation

During the centuries immediately preceding the Reformation there was an upsurge in religious education due to the demand for learning and culture brought on by the Renaissance as well as the efforts of the Church to counteract the growing number of heretical movements. The Church carried out this instruction by urging sponsors to do their duty to their godchildren, by the confessional which checked and supplemented home teaching, and by the Latin Schools. This was, however, no golden era for religious education. Religious illiteracy was widespread. The parents and sponsors were unqualified to teach the children. Even the parish priests for the most part neglected this duty. The meager instruction that was given consisted chiefly in memorizing without understanding or inner appropriation on the part of the child.[7]

With the Reformation there came changes in religious education.

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[6]Ibid., pp. 61-68.

[7]Ibid., pp. 73-79.

The Reformers examined and sifted the mass of material
transmitted by the Medieval Church; they fixed a much
more correct aim of instruction; they also improved
the method of instruction; and above all, they under-
stood evangelically and interpreted biblically the
traditional material of instruction.[8]

The chief contribution of the Reformation was undoubt-
edly the two catechisms of Luther, particularly his Small
Catechism. These were written by Luther in 1529, the result
of thirteen years of labor in the catechetical field.[9] Pre-
vious to these catechisms, Luther had written several pam-
phlets and preached many sermons explaining the Decalogue,
the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer. He had first intended to
write but one catechism, but when he saw that his book was
becoming too long and difficult for the uneducated masses,
he immediately wrote the Small Catechism. This he published
in the form of tables or placards to be hung upon the wall
in home and school.[10] Luther's Small Catechism represents
"the crowning consummation of the educational endeavors put
forth by the Church" during the course of fifteen centuries.[11]
Luther was familiar with and made use of the writings of the
Church Fathers, the history of the Church, and the catechisms
that preceded his. Another important feature of the Small

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[8] Ibid., p. 83.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid., p. 91.

[11] Ibid., p. 99.

Catechism was the deeply evangelical interpretation that permeated all of its parts.[12] All its teachings were centered around the doctrine of justification by faith. In spite of these excellencies the Small Catechism would never have become so popular if it were not for its great pedagogical merits. These are chiefly: 1)its short but comprehensive linguistic form; 2)the absence of polemics; 3)the fact that its chief parts were not united into a dogmatical system; 4)its restriction to the absolute essentials of faith and life; 5)its methodology, not the questions and answers so much as the many illustrations.[13]

Luther's Small Catechism gained prominence over all the others soon after it was published. Its circulation reached over one hundred thousand in the first generation. Before the end of the sixteenth century it had been translated into more than a dozen languages and widely disseminated. It was a regular textbook in the elementary and Latin schools and in the universities.[14] The Catechism was read from the pulpit on Sundays. Catechetical instruction was given on Sunday afternoons or on week days. Many catechetical sermons were preached. When the children had learned to understand the Catechism from the instruction given them

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[12]Ibid., p. 101.

[13]Ibid., pp. 109-115.

[14]G. H. Gerberding, The Lutheran Catechist, (Philadelphia, Penn: Lutheran Publishing Society, 1910), p. 110.

at home, in school, and at church, an examination was conducted in the parsonage, usually during Lent, to determine whether the children might be admitted to Holy Communion. "This examination was regarded as the genuine evangelical confirmation."[15] Sometimes it was preceded by several weeks of special instruction. Gradually public examination before the entire congregation became the practice. This was connected with a simple confession of faith by the children and a prayer by the congregation. This was to be the true evangelical counterpart of Catholic confirmation. In Hesse and in Strassburg, owing to Butzer's influence, the imposition of hands was added as well as a vow of obedience to the church. Even something of a sacramental character was attributed to confirmation by some, but this view did not gain general acceptance.[16] The instruction often included a study of the Pericopes, Bible history, and hymns. Collections of Bible passages following the order of the catechism were used. The Reformed Church was also active in this field and put out a number of catechisms, the most important being the Heidelberg Catechism of 1563.

The Period of Pietism

The Pietists, notably Spener, were much concerned with

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[15] Reu, op. cit., p. 120.

[16] Ibid.

the training of the young. He was opposed to rote memorization of the catechism and stressed instead the understanding and inner appropriation of the truths contained in the catechism. This emphasis was his chief contribution to the religious education of his day. Spener wanted to make religion not so much a matter of the intellect as of the heart. He insisted upon using the Bible in instruction, proving every doctrine from the Bible itself. It was Spener who gave wide diffusion to the ideas of confirmation as the concluding ceremony of religious instruction and as preparation for the first Communion. His stress upon the solemnity proper and the vow was a departure from the early Lutheran emphasis upon the public examination of faith.[17]

As is often the case, the disciples of Spener went beyond the teachings of their master and wandered off on dangerous paths. Confirmation was exalted over baptism as the completion of the work which the Holy Ghost only began in baptism. Confirmation was regarded as a renewal of the covenant of baptism, on the part of both God and man. The catechist tried to lead the catechumens through the various stages on the way of salvation so that they might actually experience conversion and new birth. Their certainty of salvation as well as their vow of allegiance to God were based upon this experience and feeling of grace rather than

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[17] Ibid., pp. 133-135.

God's objective acts and promises. Many of them ignored Luther's Catechism and used instead the Ordnungen des Heils.[18] A more moderate follower of Spener who wrought great blessing for the Church in the field of education was August Hermann Francke. His orphans' school and secondary schools at Halle were models for and a great influence on all of Germany.[19] Although many of the Pietists went to extremes of emotionalism, they did make a contribution to confirmation instruction in respect to motivation and understanding.

The Influence of Rationalism

A natural reaction to the subjectivism of the Pietists was rationalism. Rationalism began by trying to demonstrate logically and scientifically the doctrines of the Church, and ended by disregarding revelation altogether and recognizing reason as the only source of knowledge and morals. Using this basis, they employed the Socratic method of questioning in the belief that it was possible to draw out of the children's minds all the necessary articles of faith and rules of life. Because of this they finally discarded most of the Christian teaching and ended up with a natural religion.[20] While this practice wrought havoc with the doc-

[18] Ibid., p. 136.

[19] Ibid., p. 137.

[20] Gerberding, op. cit., p. 115.

trines of the Church, it did make some contribution to method.
The didactic method, when properly modified, is an important
aid to teaching. Their practice of proceeding from the known
to the unknown promoted interest and understanding in the pu-
pils. The Socratic method of interrogation was modified by
Pestalozzi, but it was Schleiermacher who sounded the death-
knell to rationalism in the Lutheran Church. The Church soon
returned to the faith and theology of the Bible and of Lu-
ther's Small Catechism. The period of rationalism was at an
end.[21]

Catechetical Work during the Last Century

With the renewal of confessional Lutheranism (about
1830) there was a return to evangelical principles of train-
ing the young. Many biblical expositions of Luther's Small
Catechism were published. There was renewed interest in the
teaching of Bible history, Bible reading, the hymnal, and
Church history. Since many pastors felt that they could not
do justice to all these topics in the time previous to con-
firmation, the institution called Christenlehre was developed
to continue the education of the young after confirmation.[22]

A new attempt at the religious education of the young
came from the Sunday school movement, which was begun by

[21]Reu, op. cit., pp. 140-144.

[22]Ibid., p. 150.

Robert Raikes in England, (1736-1811). It began as charity education, both secular and religious, for the poorer children of the city. But it spread rapidly throughout all of England and soon came to America. It succeeded in America because of the lack of general elementary education and also because the Church fostered the new institution, regarding it as the real church school. Soon it embraced children of all social and economic levels. With the rise of the public school system, the secular subjects were dropped from the curriculum, and the Sunday school became exclusively religious. Sunday school societies and unions were formed which established a curriculum and published materials. At first the materials and the teaching tended to overstress memory work. Eventually the Bible story became the center of instruction and graded uniform lesson series were used.[23]

In addition to the Sunday school, the educational agencies available in the Lutheran Church were the parochial and the catechumen schools, and in many congregations the Christenlehre, which was a catechization of the young on Sundays after the regular worship service. Many Lutherans were willing and ready to accept the Sunday school as an additional agency of instruction. The catechism was adapted to Sunday school use, and special lesson leaves with evangelical content were issued. Teachers' manuals were pub-

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[23]Ibid., pp. 162-180.

lished to assist the lay teachers. For many Lutherans, how-
ever, the parish school remained the primary institution for
religious education, particularly among the Germans and Scan-
danavians. Most of the time, graduation from the parish
school fulfilled all the requirements for confirmation. Of-
ten the pastor taught the religion classes in the upper
grades prior to confirmation. Wherever parish schools could
not be established, other efforts were made to supply the
lack. The pastor often conducted special confirmation clas-
ses during the winter. Sometimes there was a summer school
term for several months. A number of congregations held a
Saturday school. Nearly all of them had Sunday schools. In
recent years efforts have been made to complement public
school education by religious instruction on a part time
basis, variously known as released time, dismissed time,
week day instruction, etc.

As a rule, the Sunday school and released time instruc-
tion are the chief agencies of religious education prior to
church membership in the non-liturgical church bodies, which
do not observe the practice of confirmation. However, in
the liturgical churches, particularly among the Lutherans,
a special course of instruction is given for weeks or months
prior to confirmation and communicant membership in the
church.

CHAPTER IV

A BRIEF SURVEY OF ADOLESCENT PSYCHOLOGY

Definition

"An adolescent is a child moulting to adulthood."[1] Adolescence is primarily a period of transition. The child of yesterday is becoming the adult of tomorrow in every aspect of his life. Adolescence is not only a time of rapid physical development but also a time of social and economic maturation.

> Adolescence is both a biological process and a social-cultural transition. The juvenile organism undergoes a process of growth and maturation as it moves toward adult size and functional capacity, and, more or less concurrently, the individual must pass through a transition from the status and conduct of a child to the responsibilities of the adult.[2]

It is a well known fact that the human child has the longest infancy of all species. Human adolescence is also significantly prolonged. This is due not so much to any lengthy physiological development as to the present complexity of the social order and adult culture.[3] It is the demands and pro-

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[1]Ira S. Wile, The Challenge of Adolescence, (New York: Greenberg Publishers, 1939), p. 1.

[2]L. K. Frank, "Adolescence as A Period of Transition," Forty-Third Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part I Adolescence, edited by Nelson B. Henry (Chicago: Department of Education, University of Chicago, 1944), p. 1. (This book will hereafter be referred to as NSSE.)

[3]H. S. Dimock, Rediscovering the Adolescent, (New York: Association Press, 1937), p. 274.

hibitions of adults and their culture which have made ado-
lescence for American youth a much more lengthy and trying
experience than it is, or was, among more primitive peoples.[4]
While G. Stanley Hall and other early students of adolescent
psychology went to extremes in making adolescence a period of
sudden and violent changes caused by a biological "new birth,"[5]
the time of adolescence is still to be considered a critical
period in the development of the individual.

Physical Aspects of Adolescence

Growth in Height and Weight

Adolescence and the years immediately preceding it are
periods of rapid growth. Until recently growth curves were
based upon figures obtained by measuring individuals in dif-
ferent age groups. This was faulty in that different child-
ren were measured in each age group. A more meaningful meth-
od is now employed, sometimes referred to as longitudinal
measurement, whereby the same individual is followed through
the various stages of growth year after year. The curves
shown in Figures 1 and 2 are based upon such longitudinal
measurements. These figures show the average development
in height and weight for boys and girls extending from early

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[4]Ada H. Arlitt, Adolescent Psychology.

[5]G. Stanley Hall, Adolescence, (New York: D. Appleton
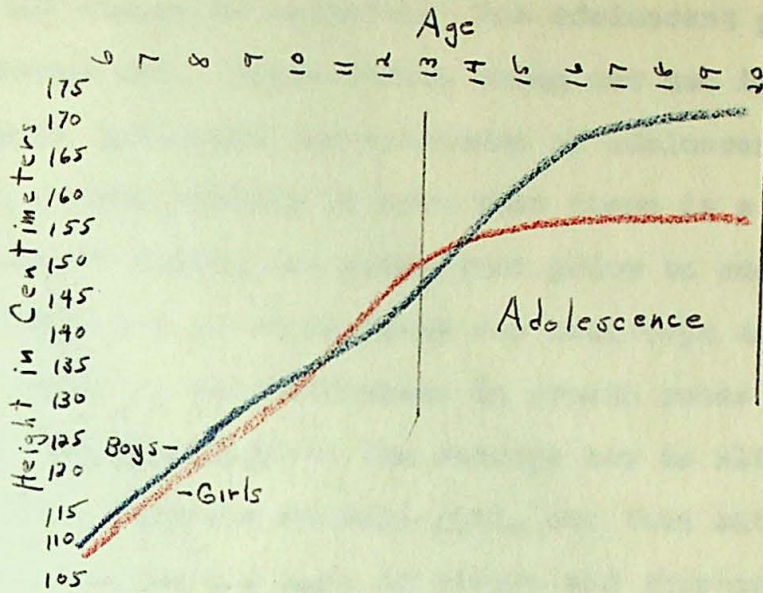Century Co., 1905), 2 volumes.

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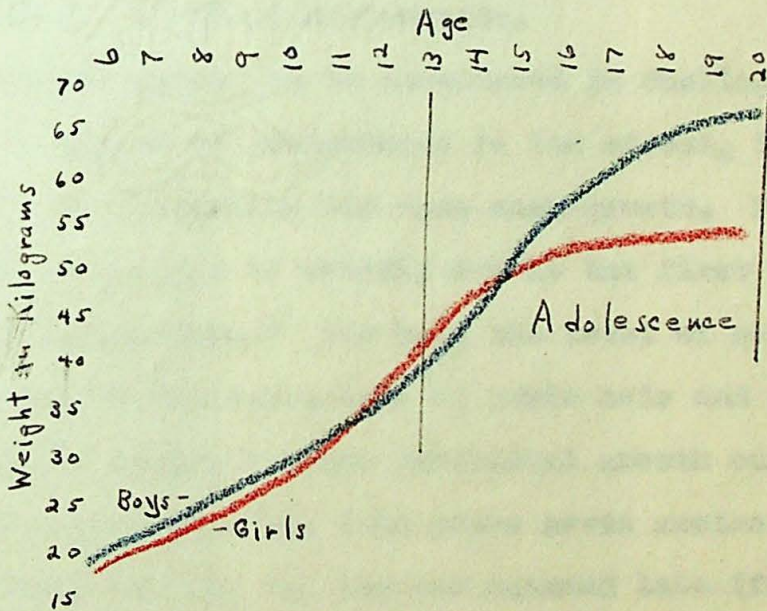Figure 1. Height of Boys and Girls, Ages 6-20.
Based on Shuttleworth.

Figure 2. Weight of Boys and Girls, Ages 6-20.
Based on Shuttleworth.

childhood almost to maturity. The adolescent period has
been marked off. These curves bring out two important fac-
tors which influence the attitudes of adolescents. First
of all, it can readily be seen that there is a period of very
rapid growth during the years just prior to adolescence and
the early years of adolescence for both boys and girls. The
second point is the difference in growth rates between the
sexes. During childhood the average boy is slightly taller
and heavier than the average girl, but this situation is
reversed between the ages of eleven and fourteen. In the
fourteenth year the boys quickly overtake the girls in height
and weight, which superiority is maintained to maturity.
These figures, of course, cannot show the wide range of dif-
ferences in indiviual adolescents.

Another factor to be considered in dealing with the
physical growth of adolescents is the effect, if any, which
the time of maturation has upon such growth. For girls the
time of maturation is usually set at the first menstrual
period, or menarche.[6] For boys the level of maturity is
determined by the appearance of pubic hair and certain other
criteria.[7] Figure 3 shows individual growth curves of ten
girls who matured early (ten years seven months to eleven
years three months) and ten who matured late (fourteen years

[6]W. W. Greulich, "Physical Changes in Adolescence,"
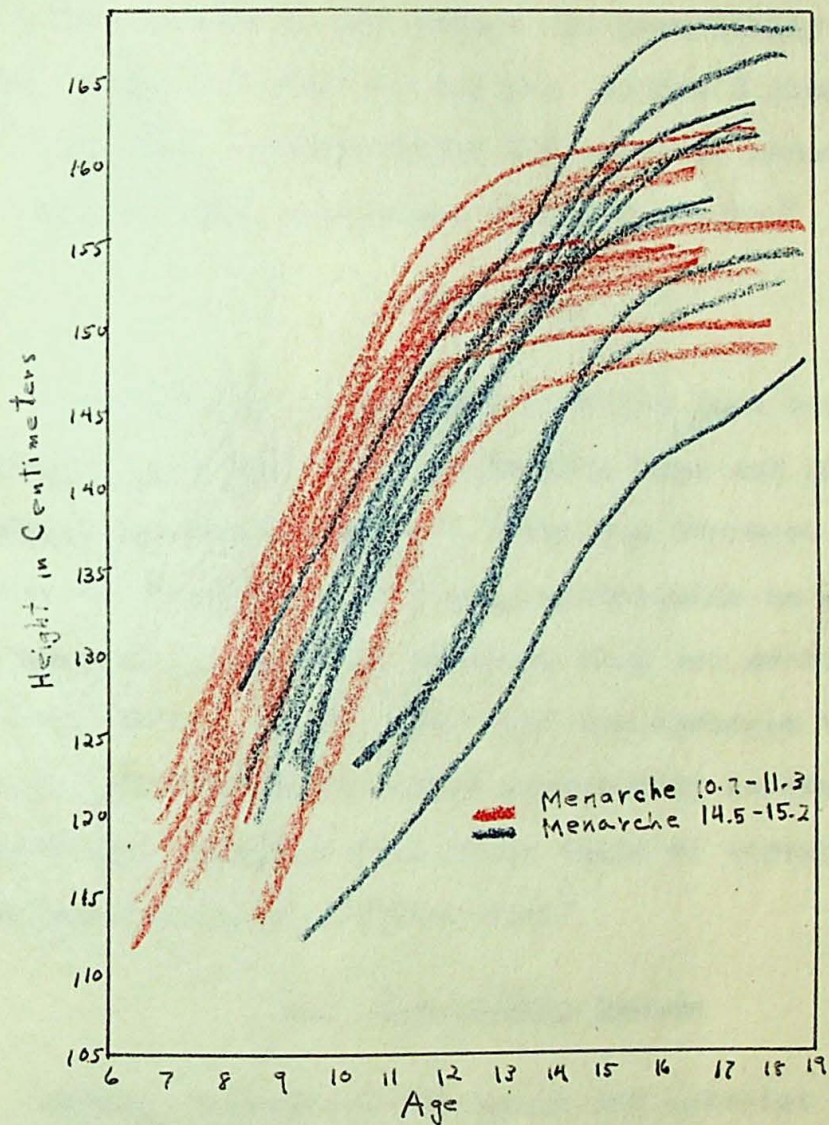NSSE, p. 19.

[7]Ibid., p. 24

Figure 3. Growth As Related to Age at Menarche.
Based on Shuttleworth.

five months to fifteen years two months). It will be noted
that the early maturing girls were somewhat taller through-
out later childhood than the late maturing girls. The girls
in the late menarchial group, however, continued to grow
after the growth of the others had practically stopped, and
ended up just as tall or taller. Figure 3 also brings out
the fact that for most girls the onset of menstruation marks
the end, not the beginning, of rapid growth.[8]

Strength

The increase in muscular strength that accompanies ado-
lescence is easily observed in both boys and girls, but es-
pecially in boys. Figure 4 shows the increase in strength
for both boys and girls during adolescence as measured by
the number of pounds of pressure they can exert by the grip
of their hand. At all ages boys are stronger than girls,
and as they grow older their superiority increases. Similar
results are obtained from other tests of strength such as
running, jumping, throwing, etc.[9]

The Circulatory System

During adolescence the heart and arteries undergo impor-
tant changes. From childhood through adolescence the pulse

[8]Luella Cole, Psychology of Adolescence, (Revised edi-
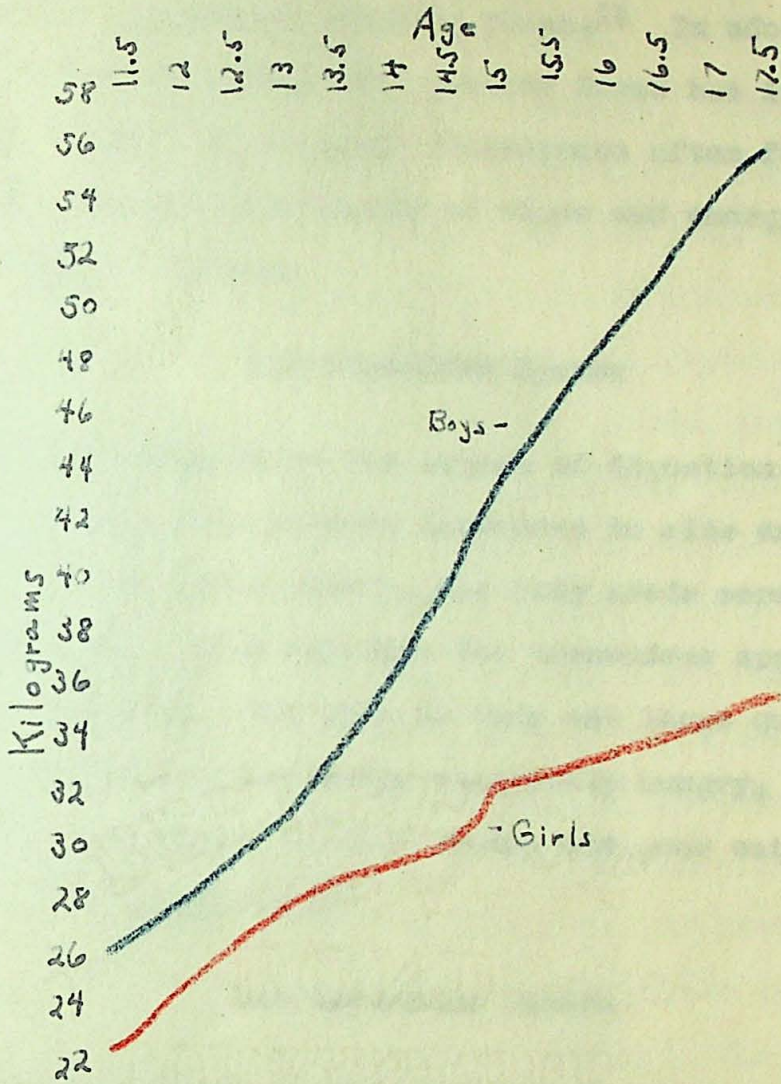tion; New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1942), p. 54.

[9]Ibid., p. 29.

Figure 4. Increase in Strength of Grip.

rate gradually becomes slower.[10] But during the same period the blood pressure steadily rises.[11] In adolescence the heart drives the blood with greater force but it does not beat as often. As a result adolescents often feel that they have an inexhaustible supply of vigor and energy and may overtax their bodies.

The Digestive System

During adolescence the organs of digestion show considerable growth. The stomach increases in size and capacity. Because of its rapid growth, the body needs more nourishment than formerly. This explains the tremendous appetites of many adolescents. Not only do they eat large quantities of food and nevertheless remain constantly hungry, but they are also apt to develop peculiar tastes and poor eating habits if not properly guided.[12]

The Endocrine Glands

The body contains both duct and ductless - or endocrine - glands. The latter are significant in the study of adolescent development. They are the pituitary, the thyroid, the parathyroids, the adrenals, the pineal, the pancreas, the thymus,

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[10]N. W. Shock, "Physiological Changes in Adolescence," NSSE, p. 59.

[11]Ibid., p. 60.

[12]Cole, op. cit., p. 44.

the ovaries, and the testes. Each of these glands has its own peculiar rate of growth, some rather constant and gradual, others sudden and extremely variable. Each of them also has its specific function to perform in the body. The pituitary gland secretes several hormones, one of which controls body growth in general. A lack of this hormone produces dwarfism, an oversupply results in gigantism. A second pituitary hormone stimulates the gonads, causing them to grow and develop into mature testes and ovaries, and maintaining their functional capacity throughout adulthood. This hormone also stimulates the development of secondary sexual characteristics.[13] The adrenal gland has two secretions. One affects the development of masculine secondary sex characteristics. The other excites the nerve centers of the body in time of crisis. The thyroid gland regulates the rate of metabolism in the body. An inactive thyroid makes the adolescent dull and listless, while an overactive thyroid makes him nervous and high strung. The parathyroids control the absorption of essential calcium. The thymus, pineal, and pancreas also affect growth, assimilation, and other body processes to a smaller degree.[14] The sex glands are important enough to be treated separately.

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[13]Greulich, op. cit., p. 16.

[14]Cole, op. cit., p. 49.

Sexual Development

The maturing of the sex glands is perhaps the most important single development of adolescence. The first point to be considered is the age at which maturity takes place. For girls this can be determined quite readily as concurrent with their first menstrual period, although the ability to bear children usually comes several months later. With boys the time of maturity must be estimated from certain secondary sexual characteristics. The ages of maturity for boys and girls are shown in Figures 5 and 6. It is noteworthy to observe the wide variation in the age of maturity for different individuals - for girls from nine to eighteen years of age, for boys two years less. A second important observation is the difference between the sexes. During the ages of twelve to fourteen there are many more mature girls than mature boys the same age. This, of course, presents a problem for anyone dealing with youth of these ages. The testes or ovaries, in cooperation with the other glands, affect the primary characteristic of sexual development - the growth and development of the sex organs. The achievement of sexual maturity is of great importance to the individual. It is often the source of embarrassment or anxiety. The boy is more likely to be so affected because his organs are external, frequently handled, and sometimes react without his volition. While the girls has less reason for continued

Ages

8
9 . Mature Girls
10 .
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12
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14
15 1 figure = 10 %
16
17 Immature Girls .
18

Figure 5. Age of Maturity for Girls.
Based on Cole, op. cit., p. 52.

Ages

10 XXXXXXXXXX
11 XXXXXXXXXX , Mature Boys
12 XXXXXXXXXX,   1 figure = 10 %
13 XXXXXXXXX X,
14 XXXXX XXXXX
15 XX XXXXXXX/
16 X XXXXXXXXX,
17 XXXXXXXXXX
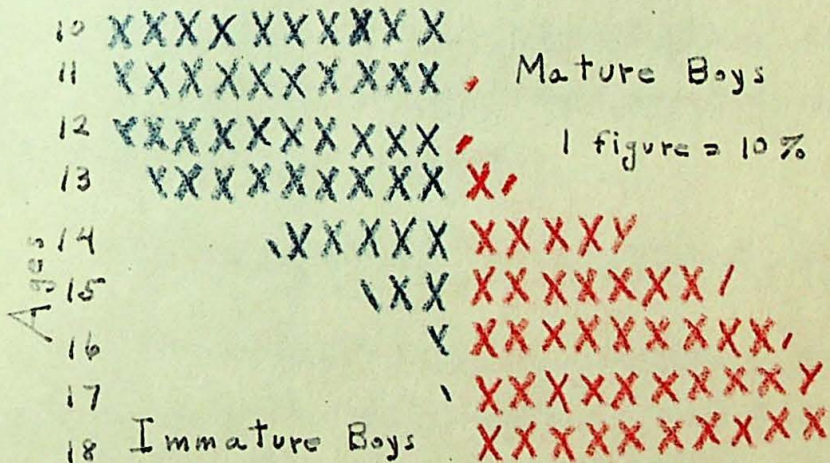18 Immature Boys XXXXXXXXXX

Figure 6. Age of Maturity for Boys.
Based on Cole, op. cit., p. 53.

emotional stress, she sometimes becomes unduly excited.
She may be terrified by her first menstruation, and often
experience pain in connection with her menstrual periods.[15]

The testes and ovaries also produce the secondary sex
characteristics, which help to differentiate the sexes.
The chief secondary characteristics for girls are the devel-
opment of the breasts, the widening of the hips, the appear-
ance of pubic and axillary hair, and sometimes a light down
on the upper lip and a moderate lowering of the voice.[16]
Some girls are disturbed by the appearances of these char-
acteristics, while their absence may cause even greater
stress. For boys the secondary sex characteristics are the
appearance of pubic and axillary hair, the growth of a beard,
the change of voice, and frequently a receding hairline.
The sweat glands in both boys and girls become more active
during puberty, much to their consternation. Another plague
of adolescence is the ever-present acne which is caused by
chemical imbalance in the body.

Problems Arising from Physical Sources

The physical development of adolescents as outlined
above gives rise to certain problems of adjustment which
they must meet. These problems vary greatly with individ-

[15] Ibid., p. 58.

[16] Cole, op. cit., p. 59.

uals. The same physical characteristic may bother one adolescent tremendously, while it is of no concern whatever to another. Generally speaking it is not the accelerated growth and development which bothers adolescents as much as their deviation from the normal development of their group. The very early and very late maturing children are apt to be self conscious. A boy of sixteen who has not yet reached puberty is apt to be embarrassed by his small stature and lack of "manliness." An early maturing girl may be disturbed if she is inches taller than the other girls and boys of her age group. A girl who remains a tomboy when all her friends are interested in romance is apt to be left out of many social activities.

Another problem arises from the difference between the sexes in the age of maturation. In a confirmation class of seventh and eighth grade children the vast majority of girls will have reached maturity and will be striving to establish satisfactory heterosexual relations with the boys, the majority of whom will still have no romantic interests in the girls whatsoever. For the girls the teaching on the Sixth Commandment may be real and meaningful, while to the boys certain applications will seem to be nonsense or pointless. It stands to reason that the interests of a sexually mature child are different from those of one who has not yet begun to feel the advent of his sexual powers.[17]

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[17]Ibid., p. 53.

Of special concern to adolescents is any of their char-
acteristics which seem to be sexually inappropriate. The
boy wants to be the strong handsome he-man. The girl pic-
tures herself as the shapely and attractive movie heroine.
If the adolescent boy notices that his build is slight, that
his breasts or nipples are showing unusual development, that
his genital organs are small - in short, that he is not all
that he thinks a man should be - he will show anxiety and
have a serious problem of adjustment. On the other hand, if
the adolescent girl notices that she is tall, muscular, clum-
sy, heavily built, has facial hair, or that her breasts are
undeveloped - in short, anything that she does not consider
feminine or that might keep her from being attractive to
boys - she is apt to become maladjusted.[18] Boys and girls
need to be told how normal many of these factors are and to
be guided in sensible compensations and remedies.

Adolescents put a great deal of emphasis on their fac-
ial appearance. A mole or scar on the face can cause real
consternation. Boys are concerned about wearing eye-glasses,
having dimples, a small mouth, a receding chin, a lack of
beard, and anything which prevents them from looking mascu-
line. Girls are concerned with anything that keeps them
from looking glamorous, such as eye-glasses, braces on teeth,
large nose or mouth, or a receding chin. Both boys and girls

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[18]K. C. Garrison, The Psychology of Adolescence, (3rd
edition; New York: Prentice-Hall, 1946), p. 17.

are disturbed by anything noticeably different, such as
large protruding ears, an asymmetrical face, freckles, and
particularly by acne. Of course, many adolescents may have
one or more of these features and be in no way disturbed by
them. Others will vent all of their wrath and anxiety on
one small characteristic in order to evade facing the true
causes of their lack of social success.[19]

Body odors and cleanliness are also of concern to mat-
uring youth. American culture and advertising have placed
a stigma on the natural human body odors. Since the sweat
glands become more active during adolescence, this creates
a special problem for young people. Cleanliness is highly
regarded. The natural body odors are covered with the arti-
ficial odors of perfumes. Smelly feet and bad breath are
strenuously avoided. The adolescent boy or girl who remains
unkempt and dirty after his peers have reached the stage of
profound cleanliness may have a few friends of his own sex,
but he will be avoided at any social gathering. One of the
chief reasons girls dread menstruation is the fear of not
being able to bathe enough to "prevent detection of the un-
pleasant odor."[20]

The menstrual period itself presents a problem to many
adolescent girls. They are embarrassed when they have to

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[19]H. Stolz and L. Stolz, "Adolescent Problems Related
to Somatic Variations," NSSE, pp. 91-95.

[20]Ibid., pp. 95-97.

stand on the sidelines during certain activities, for some of the boys are certain to ask why. Her peace of mind is not helped any by such widespread misinformation as that a boy can tell when a girl is menstruating by the color of her eyes. She will also avoid standing up in class or social affairs for fear that her dress might be stained.[21]

These problems of adjustment due to physical factors will need a variety of treatment from the adviser. In one case it may be necessary to convince the adolescent that he is exaggerating differences which are really unimportant. Another may need the assurance that his troubles are but a passing phase of normal development. Others will need to learn the techniques of proper grooming and dressing. Some will have to be taught to develop certain assets of their personality which will compensate for any physical difficulty. The individual problem of the adolescent boy or girl must be carefully studied and met with sympathetic guidance.[22]

Mental Aspects of Adolescence

Variation and Growth of Intelligence

Tests of mental ability do not offer as simple and unambiguous a picture as measurements of a physical dimension, such as stature, for whereas in the latter case we have a single and universally understood linear measurement, in the case of intelligence we have many

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21Cole, op. cit., p. 59.

22Stolz and Stolz, op. cit., p. 98.

different tests which do not always yield exactly the same information.[23]

The measurement of mental ability is a difficult task because of the great number of variables involved and the imperfections of most tests. Nevertheless, the results of such tests are illuminating. A sane observer will neither believe without reservations the results of such tests nor will he refuse to accept them at all, but he will use such findings as are at hand, always remembering that they are far from being absolute or final.[24] The variation in mental-test scores for adolescents have been shown to follow the "normal curve of probability" just as in childhood.[25] By means of this curve the reliability of the tests may be judged as well as the normality of the group tested.

Figure 7 shows the mental growth of boys and girls measured from early childhood to maturity. Through late childhood and adolescence the curve is very nearly a straight line. It begins to level off, however, after the seventeenth year. Before that the amount of growth each year is almost the same. While this composite curve is fairly smooth and uniform, the mental growth curves for individuals are often quite irregular. The differences in growth occur not only

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[23]H. Jones and H. Conrad, "Mental Development in Adolescence," NSSE, pp. 146-147.

[24]Cole, op. cit., p. 446.
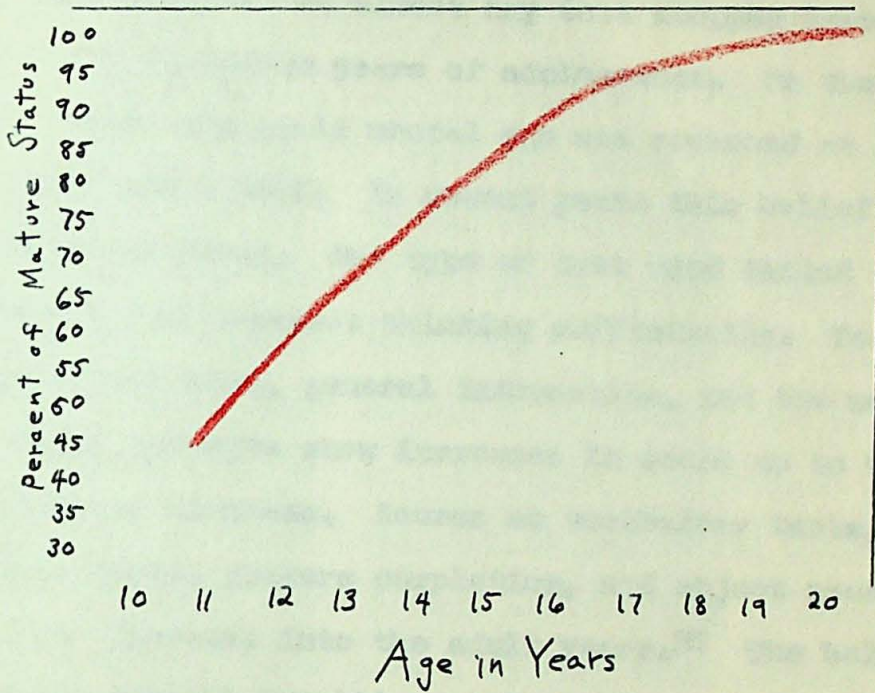
[25]Jones and Conrad, op. cit., p. 148.

Figure 7.   Mental Growth Curve.
From Jones and Conrad, op. cit., p. 153.

between the various individuals, but also within the indi-
vidual himself from year to year.[26]

The Limit of Mental Growth

In the early days of mental testing it was found that
the average score on almost any test stopped increasing in
the early or middle years of adolescence. On the basis of
these tests the adult mental age was reckoned at about
thirteen and a half. In recent years this belief has been
shown to be false. The type of test used failed to test
reasoning and abstract thinking sufficiently. Tests that
require reasoning, general information, and the manipulation
of verbal concepts show increases in score up to the ages of
eighteen or nineteen. Scores on vocabulary tests, compre-
hension tests, picture completion, and object assembly con-
tinue to increase into the adult years.[27] The bulk of evi-
dence on general intelligence indicates a limit of mental
growth not earlier than eighteen to twenty years.[28]

Pubescence and Mental Growth

There seems to be some evidence to indicate that pubes-
cence is preceded or accompanied by a fairly rapid rise in

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[26]Cole, op. cit., p. 449.

[27]Ibid., pp. 444-445.

[28]Jones and Conrad, op. cit., p. 158.

both physical and mental growth.[29] The rise in mental ability, however, is not nearly so great as some have supposed.

> It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that, at least for a part of adolescence, a genuine although small relationship exists between intelligence and physical maturing. It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that this is due to the influence of common, inherent, growth factors upon both mental and physical or physiological characteristics.[30]

It should be pointed out, however, that the increase in mental growth which takes place in puberty is much less predictable or evident than the well-established increase in physical development which takes place in this period. The suggestion has sometimes been made that boys and girls should be grouped in classes according to their level of maturity instead of age in years. This would put younger girls with older boys, to match them in size and social interests. Such a procedure would create new problems of mental inequality, since mental growth adheres more closely to chronological age, and is less sensitive to sexual maturing than is physical growth.[31]

Intelligence and Adjustment

In the present American school system and culture it is always of concern to adolescents whether they will be able

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[29] Garisson, op. cit., p. 67.

[30] H. Conrad, R. Freeman, and H. Jones, "Differential Mental Growth," NSSE, p. 169.

[31] Ibid.

successfully to meet all intellectual requirements. It might be expected that an intellectual handicap would raise problems of personal and social adjustment. But this has not proved to be the case. Gifted children have been shown to attain higher scores in tests of personality traits, and many types of problem behavior are associated with low mentality. "But within the normal range of school children correlational studies have in general failed to exhibit any significant relationship between these variables."[32] This is probably due to the fact that the importance of intelligence depends upon what is expected of a person or what he himself wants. In helping adolescents with problems of adjustment due to mentality, the counselor must be aware of a number of factors: the child's own level of intelligence; the intelligence needed in the activities to which he is being directed by the ambitions of his parents or friends; the social pressures arising from these ambitions; the individual's own ambition and aspiration; and his actual achievement.[33] The personality of the individual must be considered. A healthy stimulus for one child might be harmful to another. It is safe to say that there is an important relationship between mental ability and adjustment, though not a simple or statistical one. What this relationship is must be discovered from the study of each individual case.

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[32] Ibid., p. 179.

[33] Ibid., p. 180.

Emotional Aspects of Adolescence

An emotion may be described as a "stirred-up state of the entire organism." An emotion is not experienced in a single part of the body but throughout one's entire being.[34] The physical reactions that take place during an emotion are produced by the autonomic nervous system. An almost immediate effect of a strong emotion is the secretion of adrenalin by the adrenal glands, which acts as a whip for the organs of the body. Digestion is retarded. The liver discharges more sugar into the bloodstream to feed the muscles. Breathing becomes deeper. The heart beats faster and the blood pressure goes up. The individual in the state of an emotion has greater strength and endurance, but cannot exercise as much control over his muscles. From this it is obvious that an emotion is a serious experience. During an emotion a substantial strain is being put on the heart and the digestion, and the individual's reserve of energy is being burned up. A prolonged emotional state will leave the person seriously fatigued.

In order to determine what causes such emotions it is necessary to consider certain basic human drives and their satisfactions. Some of them are physiological, such as hunger, shelter from cold, and sex urges. Others are drives

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[34]Cole, op. cit., p. 81.

for "ego satisfaction." These are the desire for approval, the desire to dominate, the desire for social recognition, the desire for attention, the desire for security, the desire for happiness. Which of these drives is preeminent varies with the individual. When a drive develops, it produces tension in increasing amounts until it is satisfied in some way. As long as the tension continues, the individual is in an emotional state. When a drive is blocked for any length of time, the person goes through a period of frustration, which is a basic emotional experience. The emotional maturity of a person may often be seen from his success at sublimation, that is his ability to find a substitute means of satisfaction when all the obvious ones are blocked.

The three emotions which are regarded as most basic and have received the fullest investigation are anger, fear, and love.[35] Anger has been classed as one of man's primary emotions. The situations that give rise to anger differ with the various age levels. In early childhood anger comes from conflicts over playthings and interruptions during pleasant activity. In adolescence the causes of anger are primarily social. The adolescent is angry when he gets into a situation that makes him feel embarrassed, ridiculous, offended, or annoyed. The adult is angry when his leisure is inter-

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[35]Garrison, op. cit., p. 53.

fered with and also over abstract injustices and social
conditions.[36] Reactions to this emotion also vary. The
young child screams, jumps up and down, and shows his dis-
pleasure by physical means. Only to a slight degree does
he scold or talk back. By adolescence the reaction of talk-
ing has become the most important. Violence is controlled
in most instances by walking, vigorous exercise, or some
other means of "letting off steam." For adults the verbal
reasons have almost completely replaced the other forms.
The development of emotional response to anger consists pri-
marily in substituting verbalism for more direct action.
Physiologically a direct release of emotional tension is
perhaps best for the person, indirect release next best,
and suppression undesirable if not harmful with its storing
up of tensions.

The second of the three most powerful emotions is fear.
Fears are both learned and unlearned. "Most of the things
a human being fears he has learned to be afraid of."[37]
Fear is probably the emotion which <u>could</u> be most readily
controlled, since most fears disappear in the face of con-
crete evidence. Education can eliminate many fears. Young-
er children are afraid of many things from bodily harm to
family insecurity. As they mature, their fears steadily de-

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[36] Cole, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 94.

[37] <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 97.

crease in number. High school pupils retain some of the
fears of childhood, but they add a number of new ones, pri-
marily social and religious. The college students tested
had far fewer fears. The average number of fears listed in
the sixth grade was fifty. In senior college it was only
five, a decrease of forty-five. This may be the result of
education and experience,[38] or of their adult ability to
generalize and include a number of fears in one category.
The reaction to fear is generally rigidity of the entire
body. This is usually followed by some running-away behav-
ior. As children grow older, they learn to run away before
the stimulus for fear appears, that is, they learn to avoid
situations that cause fear and anxiety.

The third fundamental emotion is love. As in the case
of anger and fear, there is a definite development in the
stimuli that produce love from childhood to adulthood.
Love is particularly important to adolescents because it is
directly related to and influenced by the maturing of the
sex powers.[39] The first love object for babies is no doubt
the mother or person who cares for it. Sometime in child-
hood the individual may transfer his deepest affection to
the father. This is especially true of girls. When the
child goes to school, a teacher may displace one or both of

[38]Ibid., p. 99.

[39]Garrison, op. cit., p. 53.

the parents. This fixation on adults usually continues un-
til the eighth or ninth year. For a few years older child-
ren are more deeply attached to someone their own age and
sex than to anyone else. With the dawn of adolescence the
love-object becomes another individual of the same approx-
imate age but of the opposite sex. This continues through-
out adult life. This does not mean that an adolescent boy
stops loving parents and friends, but that his deepest love
will be centered upon girls or a girl his own age. It is
normal for younger adolescents to have frequent changes of
love-objects. But toward the end of adolescence or early
in adulthood the field should be narrowed down to one per-
son of the opposite sex and approximately the same age.[40]

In recent years investigators have worked out tests for
measuring emotional maturity. The results are expressed in
terms of emotional age, a term parallel to mental age. Thus
a sixteen year old boy who has an emotional age of twelve,
has an emotional quotient of 75. The emotional age of an
individual should be used along with the mental age, phys-
ical age, social age, and educational age in guiding future
activities and advancements.[41]

There are a number of problems connected with the emo-
tional development of adolescents. The first to be consid-

[40]Cole, op. cit., p. 108.

[41]Ibid., p. 132.

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ered are the frequent "crushes" which adolescents have on adults, particularly their teachers. Pastors are not altogether spared this unsolicited affection, and may find themselves faced with the problem of a love-sick admirer in their confirmation class. Needless to say, the pastor dare not return this affection in any way. This advice written for teachers may well be in place here:

> The teacher should remain objective and unemotional, but at the same time friendly and sympathetic. She should not allow herself to be alone with the boy.... She should not attempt to crush the boy's feelings toward her, but should present him with a number of objective, normal ways in which he can work them off.[42]

Another problem related to adolescent emotional growth is the emotional upset which is often caused by or found in the teaching situation. The pastor should be able to recognize the common symptoms of emotional stress and search for the cause and remedy. In order to recognize emotional symptoms the pastor must also be familiar with the substitute responses, sometimes called escape mechanisms. The following are five such substitute responses which appear frequently: projection - putting the blame for failure on someone or something else; compensation - making up for failure in one field of endeavor by excelling in another; "sour grapes" - criticizing or devaluating something which cannot be attained; daydreaming - escaping reality via the imagination; rationalization - adducing good reasons, though not the real

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[42]Ibid., p. 151.

ones, for a course of action taken.[43] All of these escape
mechanisms have their value because they permit the indi-
vidual to get rid of emotional tension towards situations
about which he can't do anything. While occasional use of
such escapes is beneficial, their extreme use shows the pre-
sence of some unsolved emotional problem from which the ad-
olescent is constantly running away. For the good of the
child, the pastor must help him face up to his problem and
relieve his emotional tension in a more acceptable way. To
accomplish this the pastor must establish as close a bond
between himself and his young people as is possible.

Social Aspects of Adolescence

The Technological Revolution

The adolescent of today is forced to adjust to a cul-
ture that is full of confusion and conflict, due largely to
the rapid advances of science and invention.[44] This has
been termed the technological revolution.

> The adolescent today must in some way adjust to a cul-
> ture that is characterized by instability, confusion,
> and conflict. Turn where he may or do what he will,
> he cannot escape the forces that are creating a novel,
> baffling, and, far too often, a tragic world. These
> forces stem, in the main, from science and invention
> translated into technology.[45]

[43]Ibid., p. 156.

[44]Garrison, op. cit., p. 317.

[45]Newton Edwards, "The Adolescent in Technological
Society," NSSE, p. 185.

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One of the basic problems of youth is due to a shift in the population structure. Population figures taken before the war indicate that there has been a steady decline in the birth rate and size of families. This fact, together with the increasing number of older people in the population due to medical advance, has raised the median age of the population. "The number of young people under twenty years of age is decreasing, both relatively and absolutely."[46] With relatively fewer young people to care for, society will be able to expend more resources for the education and nurture of its youth. But such a highly favored position of youth may present a psychological hazard. Also as the ratio of younger to older persons declines, youth will find it increasingly difficult to gain entrance into useful occupations and find work experience which they need for social maturation.

Technology has not only robbed youth of the opportunity to share in the work of society, but it has also taken away from the job much of the satisfaction that comes from creative activity and individual initiative. The worker has surrendered his skill to the machine. While the machine may have deprived the worker of his personal satisfaction in labor, it has at the same time given to him a great deal of leisure time. This new leisure must be depended upon to restore the organic wholeness of the personality which is injured by the machine age of labor. Youth must face this

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[46]Ibid., p. 187.

problem of leisure today as never before. They must be e-
quipped with a wide variety of skills and interests, so that
they will not misuse their leisure as spectators of paid
performers, but will engage in wholesome re-creation and
profitable activities.[47]

The Adolescent and the Family

Perhaps the most important social unit with which the
adolescent is involved is the family. One of the difficult
tasks for an adolescent to accomplish is his emancipation
from dependence upon the family and from childhood submis-
sion to parental authority. This task is perhaps just as
difficult an adjustment for parents as it is for their child-
ren. They must exercise sensible self-control and learn not
to control their children after they have reached adolescence
as they did in childhood. This shift from complete super-
vision to complete independence cannot be made overnight,
but it must be accomplished by the time the boy or girl is
an adult.

A number of studies have been made which dealt with the
sources of disagreement between adolescents and their par-
ents.[48] The most frequent source of difficulty for both
boys and girls was the issue of going out, or staying out

[47]Ibid., p. 191.

[48]Garrison, op. cit., pp. 135, 137, 138.

late at night. Others were their grades in school work, the use of the family automobile, choice of friends, use of money, taste in clothes and makeup, and also the matter of church attendance. These conflicts do not arise because children want complete independence from parents.

> Adolescents do not want freedom in a complete sense nor would they know what to do with it; if they seek to be released from parental control and conformity to family patterns, this is largely in order that they may comply with the often more exacting requirements of their own age and sex group.[49]

Parents often expect such development to take place suddenly at a certain age in some miraculous way. When a child has been brought up with complete parental control, never deciding for himself, he is utterly perplexed to find his parents and others suddenly reproaching him for lack of maturity and inability to show sensible judgment or shoulder responsibility. Other parents endeavor to control the lives of their children all through adolescence, choosing their friends, school subjects, and even their sweethearts and wives.

Parents must allow their children to achieve independence. This should not take place suddenly or without proper guidance. There are many ways adolescents can gradually achieve independence from parental attachments. In the matter of money, for instance, as they approach the years of

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[49]Lawrence Frank, "The Adolescent and the Family," NSSE, p. 247.

adolescence, they should be given an allowance of some sort, small at first, but gradually including more and more of their personal needs. This is also true of selecting friends, school subjects, and other mature decisions. It will be expected that they will make some mistakes and poor choices, but only in this way will they grow into mature adults capable of leading their own lives. Parents should by all means continue to stand by with a helping hand and give subtle guidance.[50]

There are many other social problems for adolescents which are centered in their home life. The adjustment which their parents have made to society will seriously affect them. Parents who are poorly adjusted dare not pass this on to their children. Foreign born parents, or others who have not accepted the American way of life, will not appreciate the problem and dilemma which their standards are for their adolescent children. Many standards of conduct change from generation to generation. What was disgraceful for the mother may be perfectly acceptable for the daughter.[51] Psychologists, however, do not recognize an absolute standard of morals, and will sacrifice everything for the sake of "adjustment." Christian adolescents must learn that their Christianity is not the same as the American way of life in

[50]Cole, op. cit., p. 289.

[51]Ibid., p. 304.

which they dwell, and that no "adjustment" or harmony is possible. But the point of this paragraph is that parents should not impose upon their children any unessential taboos or demands which arise from their inherited culture, but which do not conflict with their religious beliefs.

An adolescent wants to be proud of his home. Unless he is, he will not invite his friends to it. Being ashamed of one's home leads to serious maladjustment. Mixed with a feeling of guilt for harboring such thoughts about his loved ones is a feeling of social inadequacy and isolation. Many such trivial things as the father appearing in shirt-sleeves or without shoes, or an untidy house, or old-fashioned furnishings will drive adolescents out of their homes to places that afford them no protection.[52] The adolescents should be encouraged to do their share to make the home presentable to their friends, and parents should cooperate in whatever way they can, without, of course, reworking their whole lives to suit their children.

Another thing the adolescent expects of his home is security. While attempting to achieve adult status and independence, he will often want to fall back from the struggle to the safety of the home. As his independence increases, he will do this less and less frequently. But through such a critical period of development, he must have the security

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[52]Ibid., p. 309.

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and sympathy of the family to fall back on.

Another important factor of home influence upon adolescents is that the parents are models of behavior, whether they intend to be or not. From them the young people get many of their attitudes, especially about home life and marriage. From the way father and mother treat one another and the children they will learn what family life is supposed to be, and this at a time when they are planning and preparing to set up homes of their own. The Christian parent will see to it that his home is at all times a model of the kind of home he wants his children to have in their married life.

An important feature of the adolescent's personality for which the home is responsible is his attitude towards sex.

> Until recently, save in some exceptional families, it has been customary to regard matters involving sex as more or less shameful. It was considered depraved and perverse for children to be curious about biological processes and anatomical differences.[53]

Questions about sex and the origin of life were usually met with fairy tales or embarrassed hushing. As a result of such practices sex in childhood was regarded as officially tabooed, and became an emotionally charged experience whenever it did come to the surface. Adolescents, then, who begin to feel their sex powers stirring in them and experience an awakening of interest in the other sex, are apt to feel guilty about this perfectly normal development, and be hand-

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[53]Frank, op. cit., p. 241.

icapped, if not defeated, in heterosexual relationships.
They may even resort to autoerotic practices, which will
only increase their feeling of guilt. Much of the so-called
"sex education" which is offered to them today does not
solve the problem.

> It is also ironic to recall that when boys and girls
> are most eager to make an approach to each other, to
> discover what a man and a woman mean to each other and
> how they should act toward each other, we can only of-
> fer them "sex education," i.e., teaching about procre-
> ation which is the last thing they are really concerned
> about. They want to know, not about babies, but what
> to do with sex, what you can give and receive from the
> other, what love means. Instead of giving them our
> best knowledge and wisest counsel and helping to direct
> their interests, the cautious parent may instead con-
> centrate upon terrorizing them with the dangers of vene-
> real disease.[54]

It is likewise ironic to see how many parents suddenly be-
come interested in their child's social success, and even
hint that he or she should have a sweetheart, but forget all
the years in which they have made the child anxious, if not
fearful, of the opposite sex and dealings with them. Such a
handicap is not easily overcome. The problem of sex atti-
tudes should be dealt with long before adolescence if trouble
is to be avoided.

Adolescence and Peer Groups

Probably at no time during the life of most individuals
is there such great striving for conformity as there is in

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[54]Ibid., pp. 243-244.

the middle phase of adolescence. While the normal adolescent is an idealist in his thinking, he does not often carry his high ideals over into everyday life. All his efforts are directed at appearing like, acting like, doing what the group does. "In this sense it is the most conservative of all ages."[55] The peer group is perhaps the most important social agency for adolescents.

> The peer group, whether it is a neighborhood play group, a social clique, or a delinquent gang, offers the child or adolescent greater continuity in terms of time, and more understanding than he finds in most adult-directed groups....Next to the family in childhood, and probably equally with the family during adolescence, the peer group provides satisfactions to the basic urges for security in the warmth of friendship and the sense of adequacy that come from belonging.[56]

Adults often fail to recognize the fact that the subculture which adolescents set up with their peers has as much if not more influence on their attitudes and activities as the family or any adult agency. Pastors and parents would do well to study the "gang" in which their adolescents run around to see whether their influences is in keeping with Christian principles.

During the years immediately preceding adolescence there is a voluntary segregation by sex, that is boys don't play with girls and girls don't play with boys. It is perfectly acceptable for a girl to be a tomboy and play with

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[55] C. M. Tryon, "The Adolescent Peer Culture," NSSE, p. 223.

[56] Ibid., p. 236.

the boys' group, but it is rare indeed to find a boy participating in girls' group activities. In many ways adults intensify this separation of sexes in childhood. This can present a serious problem, since the next important task facing adolescents is the development of satisfactory heterosexual relationships. The transition from childhood into pubescence is often marked first by increased animosity between the sexes. But this soon gives way to growing interest in the opposite sex. Girls will spend much of their time primping with cosmetics and hair arrangements with results that often seem shocking to adults. Boys too become concerned with their personal appearance and begin to comb their hair and keep clean. This is the time of life when the peer groups exert their strongest influence, and the greatest antagonism towards adults is likely to occur.[57]

The peer group is a social unit which is constantly changing, not only in forms of behavior but also in standards of value. While these value patterns are formed within the group to meet its changing needs, they do to some extent reflect the patterns of the adult society in which the group exists. Since girls attain to pubescence before boys, their value patterns are often at odds with those of the boys' groups. At the eleven- and twelve-year level it is much more desirable for a boy to be aggressive, boisterous,

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[57] Ibid., p. 224.

and even somewhat unkempt than to be submissive, reserved, or too clean. For girls such qualities are strongly disapproved. They seek to be friendly, pretty, tidy, and quietly gracious. By the time the group reaches fourteen and fifteen years of age, the value patterns have changed. While for boys physical skill, daring, and leadership are still important and desirable, such qualities as social ease and poise, likeableness, and grooming are regarded as equally necessary. For girls the change is more revolutionary. The quiet "little lady" pattern is replaced by active amiability and aggressive good sportsmanship with both boys and girls in large groups. Others seek to be the sophisticated "glamor girl" type of woman. All of these observations reveal the complexity of the task of maintaining status in the peer group.[58]

Adolescent Vocational Interests

Vocational interests play an important role in the life of a developing adolescent. It is characteristic of a child that he does not worry about earning a living or maintaining himself in the world of work. It is characteristic of adults that they must know something about at least one serious occupation. This transition is made in adolescence.[59]

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[58] Ibid., p. 229.

[59] H. D. Carter, "The Development of Interest in Vocations," NSSE, p. 225.

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Adolescents need guidance in choosing their life's oc-
cupation. Investigations have shown that many youth have
their ambitions directed towards vocations which are bound
to lead them to disappointment and failure. The results of
Bell's study are typical.[60] About forty per cent of the
young people had wanted to enter the professions, but only
seven per cent had actually done so. Nearly twenty per cent
wanted to be skilled workmen, but only six per cent were.
Most of those who were semiskilled or unskilled had not
wanted such work, and one-third of the salespeople were not
so by preference.

There are many reasons for vocational maladjustment.
Some young people try to enter lines of work for which they
do not have the physical vitality or strength. Others may
be determined to enter occupations unsuitable for their type
or personality. Still others are maladjusted because they
want to enter work too far above or below their intellectual
level. Some choose a vocation requiring a special skill
which they do not have or cannot acquire, e.g. the arts.
Other adolescents are heading for disappointment because
they are ashamed to admit that what they really want is a
home and family. There are those young people who are un-
happy in their work because they have followed parental pres-
sure contrary to their own abilities and interests. And

[60]H. M Bell, Youth Tell Their Story, (Washington, D.C.:
American Council on Education, 1938), p. 132.

there is still the large group of adolescents without any
vocational objectives whatever. Of course, the pastor is
not equipped to be the vocational adviser for his young
people, but he should be familiar with their problems and
aspirations and help them to achieve real understanding of
their Christian calling. The pastor should also be able to
direct them to agencies where they can get information in
regard to various occupations and in regard to their own
personal abilities and interests.[61]

Morals and Religion of Adolescents

It is difficult to deal with the findings of psychology
in the fields of morality and religion, since psychology,
being essentially behavioristic, assumes a relative morality
for individuals, nations, and times.[62] Right and wrong are
made to depend upon the mores of a people at a certain time.
Since these are constantly in a state of flux, there can be
no absolute standards of right and wrong. "A person is
moral to the degree that he behaves consistently and that
his motives are rooted in inner controls for social good or
are in harmony with the welfare of the group."[63] Neverthe-
less, some of their findings are of interest and value also

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[61]Cole, op. cit., pp. 563-568, 577, 587.

[62]Garrison, op. cit., p. 107.

[63]Ibid., p. 108.

to the Lutheran pastor, who cannot agree with their basic
philosophy.

It is doubtful whether adolescence can be called the
age of conversion and of religious awakening. It has been
claimed that it is within the biological and psychic nature
of adolescence that it is a time for intense religious feel-
ings and conversions.[64] However, it has since been demon-
strated that this is not always the case, and often the rel-
igious stirring is due to adult influence and environmental
factors apart from the inner development of the adolescent
himself.[65] But whatever the causes, adolescence is still re-
garded as a critical period in the religious development of
the individual.

> This period often represents a crisis - a development
> from the earlier years in which religious ideas are
> only half understood and are concrete in nature to a
> natural and healthy growth into habit patterns involv-
> ing a more definite religious awakening.[66]

Due in part to the adolescent's growing ability to generalize
and to his idealistic outlook, the religious teachings and
impressions of childhood come to a head, and attain a reality
and significance they formerly lacked. Perhaps this is why
adolescence has long been regarded by the Church as a normal

64P. H. Heisey, "The Psychology of Confirmation," Psy-
chological Studies in Lutheranism, (Burlington, Iowa: German
Literary Board, 1916), pp. 131-143.

65Cole, op. cit., p. 377.

66Garrison, op. cit., p. 113.

time for thorough instruction.

Although many of the earlier students of adolescence went to extremes in making skepticism and doubt an innate and inevitable characteristic of youth, there is still evidence which shows that many young people do experience serious doubts and misgivings at this time. As the adolescent is taught more and more to think for himself and to judge what he hears, he is led to question some of the things he had formerly accepted uncritically. His increase in knowledge and self-assurance, together with his contact with scientific hypotheses and anti-Christian adult thinking, will also serve to unsettle his childhood convictions. The following table shows the religious beliefs of college students in late adolescence.

TABLE 1

Relgious Beliefs in Late Adolescence[67]

Doctrine	Believed	Disbelieved	?
1. Existence of God	93%	4%	3%
2. Divinity of Christ	85%	8%	7%
3. Existence of the soul	83%	11%	6%
4. Immortality	74%	15%	11%
5. Genuineness of Christ's miracles	73%	13%	14%
6. Sacrament of Baptism	59%	18%	23%
7. Day of final judgment	51%	25%	24%
8. Existence of hell	39%	40%	21%
9. Existence of the devil	33%	48%	19%

By comparison with similar tests given at earlier ages, this table shows a definite increase in skepticism, though the more fundamental religious doctrines are still believed by

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[67]Cole, op. cit., p. 375.

the majority. The religious doubts of thirteen year olds
are only beginning to develop.[68] Adolescence is a period
for doubts and questioning, though not for the reasons for-
merly advanced.

> The mental and social development of adolescents are
> closely related to a religious awakening and the growth
> of moral concepts. During adolescence conversion
> reaches its peak, only to be followed in postadolescent
> years by doubts. Doubting grows out of wider social
> and intellectual contacts, and in this the adolescent
> needs sane, reliable, and honest guidance.[69]

Investigations have been made to determine what factors
are related to the development of religious beliefs. A neg-
ative relationship was found to exist between chronological
age and accepted beliefs, also between the educational and
economic level of the homes and the beliefs. The relation
between intelligence and beliefs was slightly negative or
close to zero. A high relationship was found to exist be-
tween belief and family church attendance. No relation was
found between Biblical information or knowledge and char-
acter.[70] Church attendance and the home seemed to have the
greatest influence on the religious beliefs of youth. Gen-
erally, youth tend to accept the religion of their parents.
Over four-fifths of the youth who had any church affiliation
had adopted the faith (Protestant, Catholic, or Jewish) of

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[68] Garrison, op. cit., p. 115.

[69] Ibid., p. 123.

[70] Cole, op. cit., p. 376.

both their parents. When there was a difference between the persuasion of father and mother, there was more than twice as strong a tendency to accept the faith of the mother. The proportion of youth who adopted a different faith from that of either parent is negligible, less than four per cent.[71] Youth, as a rule, attend church more faithfully than adults.

Certain of the problems and worries of adolescence are to be related to religion and the church. Youth is a time of introspection for many. A person who looks into himself from the viewpoint of religion may come up with various problems. He may find doubts and confusion. Others may find a conflict between sexual urges and high religious ideals. An overactive conscience may cause melancholy and despair. The church also has a responsibility in connection with the sex life and functions of adolescents. It dare not make the sex drive something shameful in itself, but should take the lead in showing adolescents what to do with their sex powers and drives.

Whereas psychology has contributed much to an understanding of adolescence in its physical, mental, emotional, and social aspects, its findings in the field of morals and religion are both meager and unreliable. This is to be expected whenever a natural science tries to deal with supernatural realities.

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[71]Garrison, op. cit., p. 118.

CHAPTER V

THE AGE AND AIMS FOR CONFIRMATION INSTRUCTION
IN THE LIGHT OF ADOLESCENT PSYCHOLOGY

It has been customary in the past to set up the aims of
confirmation instruction with some regard for the needs of
adolescent youth. However, surveys have shown that the aver-
age confirmand, particularly in the Lutheran Church - Missouri
Synod, is only thirteen years old, and only twelve during the
course of instruction.[1] This means that the majority of child-
ren receiving such instruction are not yet even at the begin-
ning of adolescence.[2] Therefore most of the aims dealing with
adolescent problems are entirely beyond them. There are sev-
eral reasons why children twelve and thirteen years of age
are too young to receive confirmation instruction.

First, in respect to physical development, a class com-
posed of children thirteen years old will present a very
mixed group of individuals. In a hypothetical class of twen-
ty children all thirteen years of age, seven of the girls
will have reached adolescence, while three are still in their
late childhood. Only one boy will have reached puberty, while

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[1] W. Kraeft, editor, "Summary of Information on Confir-
mation Instruction," Unpublished tabulation of the results
of a survey taken by the Board of Christian Education, Luther-
an Church - Missouri Synod, St. Louis, 1940, p. 1.

[2] L. Cole, Psychology of Adolescence, (New York: Farrar
& Rinehart, 1943), p. 53.

the other nine remain pre-adolescent.[3] These differences
would make the class a difficult group to teach, not so much
from the intellectual point of view as from the view of their
social and emotional interests. The eight post-adolescents
would have entirely different social problems from the twelve
pre-adolescents. Nearly all of the boys would still be in
the "all-boy anti-girl" period of life. The majority of girls
would be increasingly interested in boys as emotional objects.
Such varied needs and interests place the group in a difficult,
if not impossible, learning situation. Add to this the fact
that most confirmation classes include a considerable number
of twelve year olds, and the problem is intensified. Perhaps
there is a significant relationship between the fact that the
average confirmation class approaches homogeneity only in re-
spect to intellectual powers and the discouraging findings of
some investigators who complain of mere intellectual indoc-
trination with little emphasis on life.[4]

In regard to mental development, children in seventh or
eighth grade are not yet interested in or able to cope with
the abstractions and theoretical problems which delight their
high school brothers and sisters[5] and which are a vital part

[3]Ibid.

[4]R. T. Koehler, "A Survey of the Confirmation Instruction
of the Children within a Pastoral Conference," Unpublished
Bachelor's Thesis in the library of Concordia Seminary, St.
Louis, 1948, p. 41.

[5]E. M. Ligon, Their Future Is Now, (New York: Macmillan,
1944), p. 230.

of confirmation instruction. Children in pre-adolescence are
still too young for a serious commitment to the intellectual
concepts of Christianity.

> To expect intellectual assent of any value at the age of
> twelve to fourteen is ridiculous. The coming energies of
> adolescence will inevitably and probably call for a re-
> vision of it if given. If the aim were intellectual,
> Confirmation ought to be delayed...to middle or later
> adolescence. No intellectual opinion formed in early
> adolescence is safe from overturn at a later period. Nor
> is early adolescence a time when thought, as such, has
> any natural appeal.[6]

While the aims are not primarily intellectual, the intellec-
tual element does enter in to a considerable degree. A con-
firmation class of pre-adolescents is not yet ready for the
mature thinking and reasoning essential in their instruction.

Socially and emotionally children twelve and thirteen
years of age are not mature enough to appreciate fully the
discussion of marriage, family, parenthood, Christian voca-
tion, and the host of other social problems which confront
the Christian adolescent. The social needs of pre-adolescents
still center in adventure, friendships, and the "gang." Some
of the aims commonly given for confirmation instruction, such
as preparation for marriage and parenthood,[7] are rather far
removed from the thinking of twelve year old children, ex-
cept in a remote or preparatory sense.

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[6]L. Bradner, "Preparation for Confirmation," Anglican
Theological Review, III (October, 1920), 129.

[7]Paul Koenig,"Objectives of Confirmation Instruction,"
inserted in Steege, The Preparation of Confirmands or the
Instruction of Catechumens, a reprint of an article in the
Concordia Theological Monthly, III (May, 1932).

Studies in the moral and religious development of children and young people have shown that twelve year olds are still in that period when they accept as true practically all the teachings of respectable adults. At thirteen they give evidence of only a slight degree of doubt about religious doctrines.[8] This is no doubt to be related to their mental maturity and their lack of the power of reasoning and generalization. It is questionable whether such skepticism and doubt can be warded off in advance by instructing children of twelve in the problems they will have to face. Certainly it is better to deal with doubts as they arise in the minds of adolescent youth of high school age.

Since the objectives of confirmation instruction are closely connected with adolescence and the maturing powers of youth in many areas, attempts to achieve these aims with children who are not yet fully adolescents will be next to fruitless. It would be much better to delay confirmation instruction a few years that the objectives set may truly be attained.

Psychologically, the period of middle adolescence is better suited for confirmation instruction. As far as the uniformity of the class is concerned, by the time adolescents have reached fifteen years of age, about ninety-seven per cent of the girls and seventy-six per cent of the boys will

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[8]Cole, op. cit., p. 374.

have become physically mature.[9] Accordingly they will have
similar interests, problems, and needs, and will be an easier
group to teach. The vast majority of them will be well into
adolescence and capable of achieving the goals of confirmation
instruction.

In mental development the boy of fifteen is far ahead of
the boy of twelve. His capacity for learning is practically
at its adult level.[10] Of particular importance is his fond-
ness for philosophical reasoning and abstract thinking. He
is now ready for mature consideration of the doctrines of
Christianity. Arguments and bull sessions will often center
about such topics as the existence of God, evolution, the
reality of miracles, etc. Not until these adolescent years
can he appreciate many of the deeper Christian teachings so
important to mature Christian life. By fifteen he has also
developed his capacities for organization and generalization.[11]
Perhaps for the first time he will be able to see clearly the
relation of one doctrine to another. His ability to translate
these doctrines into life will also be greatly improved. An-
other mental advantage of the fifteen year old is his charac-
teristic high idealism.[12] He is ready to aspire to the very
best that there is in the world. Since life is bound to

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[9] Ibid., p. 53.

[10] Ligon, op. cit., p. 264.

[11] Ibid., p. 265.

[12] Ibid., p. 271.

dampen his enthusiasm considerably, the Church needs to fos-
ter and use this high idealism and ambition so often lacking
in adults. From the point of view of mental development, the
adolescent is better able to master the material of confirma- ✓
tion instruction than the child of twelve.

The social attitudes and problems of high school youth
are also more significant than those of their younger brothers
and sisters in eighth grade. Not only are heterosexual rela-
tions in full swing, but adolescents are also vitally concerned
with other social questions, such as: racial prejudice, war,
Christian citizenship, vocations, marriage, family life, birth
control, church unity and denominationalism, welfare work,
missions, and the like. The Church is busy dealing with these
problems and should engage the interest and energies of her
adolescents in fighting social evils.

The emotional needs of adolescents are many. Young people
often tend to indulge in emotional excesses.[13] They can be
alternately jubilant and depressed. They fall in and out of
love many times. The slightest stimulus may set off a violent
emotional reaction. High school youth tend to become emotion-
ally excited about many of the social and religious problems
they find in the world. While the pastor must guard against
toying with their emotions or straining them, he will appre-
ciate their readiness to react also emotionally to religious
truth. Since one of the underlying concepts of confirmation

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[13]Ibid., p. 266.

is the achievement of religious certainty and conviction, it ought to take place during middle adolescence when the emotions may add their forceful contribution to such assurance.

In respect to their religious attitudes, middle adolescents have arrived at the age when many of them will begin to have serious doubts about religious teachings and will question authority of every kind.[14] While this is not true of all of them by any means, there are still a great many who need help in facing such trials of faith. In the high school they will find themselves taking courses based upon naturalism and materialism, which may shake their faith in the teachings of the Bible. Adolescents need the opportunity to discuss these questions which bother their souls in an atmosphere that is sympathetic, Christian, and also scholarly. If at this age they receive no capable religious instruction pointed directly to their needs but must look back upon material studied several years previous, they may easily fall victim to their doubts and be lost to the Church. At what better time can they receive the confirmation of their faith than during these years when they are apt to experience such inner conflict and doubt? Psychologically, in almost every aspect of personality, the ages of fifteen and sixteen are well suited for confirmation instruction and the achievement of its goals.

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[14]Cole, op. cit., p. 375.

The General Aim

The ultimate aim in all Christian education is the growth in sanctification of the individual Christian.[15] By the use of the Gospel the Church tries to increase the holiness of her members not only for their life in the world about them but also for their life in the world to come. The Church is fundamentally a fellowship for the upbuilding of individual Christians in the life of Christ.[16] Every agency of the congregation must do its part to achieve this aim by helping the Christians under its influence to grow in sanctification in the specific areas of their needs. Therefore the general aim of confirmation instruction is to help Christian adolescents to grow in sanctification, or their life in Christ, in all the areas of their spiritual and life needs. It may happen that there will be some adolescents in the class who are not yet Christians. The instruction will first bring such individuals into the fellowship of Christians and then at once begin work to increase their sanctification. The general aim of confirmation instruction will remain that of assisting Christian adolescents to grow in sanctification in respect to their needs.

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[15]A. H. Jahsmann, "Statements of the Objective of Christian Education," Unpublished list of quotations by Lutherans, St. Louis, April 12, 1949.

[16]Eph. 2:20-21.

Specific Aims

The purpose of this study was to relate the aims of confirmation instruction more closely with the recent findings of adolescent psychology. The more important psychological needs of adolescents must be listed, and the aims of confirmation instruction related to them in some way. One of the best lists of adolescent problems is that formulated by Cole: 1)the establishment of heterosexual interests; 2)emancipation from the home; 3)emotional maturity; 4)social maturity; 5)economic independence; 6)intellectual maturity; 7)use of leisure; 8)a philosophy of life.[17] Under each of these headings are listed several specific types of problems which the adolescent must solve before he becomes an adult. Using this list as a basis, some specific needs of Christian adolescents can be discussed. Their primary need may be considered as the formulation of a Christian philosophy of life. Closely connected with this aim will be the many specific aims dealing with the home, sex, social life, mental development, emotional security, economic maturity, etc.

A Christian Philosophy of Life

"An adolescent should make a beginning in the development of a point of view concerning the world about him."[18]

17Cole, op. cit., pp. 8-13.

18Ibid., p. 13.

He is at the age when he is first formulating some sort of a philosophy of life, and if the Church doesn't help him develop a Christian one, the school or the world will give him theirs. Some educators contend that the development of a Christian philosophy of life is the basic need of adolescents.[19] This is sound religion as well as sound psychology. Christians in their teens are ready to observe everything in the world from the viewpoint of their life in Christ. However, this does not come of itself. The pastor cannot expect his young people to come to adolescence with anything that might be called a Christian philosophy of life simply because they have attended the parochial school or Sunday school and have studied the catechism and Bible stories. In childhood their minds were not mature enough to understand a Christian philosophy of life if one had been taught them. They did not possess the power of organization to relate their bits of knowledge in matters religious to a systematic philosophy of life. Nor does the mere study of the facts of Christianity guarantee the ability to carry through with application.[20] Much effort will have to be expended to bring together the loose ends of years of religious instruction into a comprehensive Christian philosophy of life. Too much cannot be expected in the way of results.

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[19]Ligon, op. cit., p. 298.

[20]Ibid.

Naturally, it is only the most precocious of adolescents who enter the adult years with a coherent philosophy of life or with a complete set of ideals. A beginning is all one can expect, but as an adolescent nears adulthood he should start to select whatever values he can find to give lfe meaning for him.[21]

A complete Christian philosophy of life is too complex a thing to discuss here at any length. Suffice it to say that such a philosophy to be truly Christian must be Christ-centered. Everything and every one that the adolescent meets must be evaluated in terms of the adolescent's life in Christ. Christ is everything to the Christian. He feels, thinks, and acts because of Christ, through Christ, and for Christ. His own life with God in Christ permeates and motivates his entire existence. The Christian adolescent should know why he is here and where he is going. If the confirmation class can give to adolescents a good start in formulating their Christian philosophy of life, a great deal will have been accomplished. The other specific needs of Christian adolescents are tied up with their Christian Weltanschauung and find their solution and proper position by means of it.

Mental Maturity

The mental development which takes place during adolescence has already been discussed.[22] One of the aims of confirmation instruction will necessarily be a more mature un-

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[21]Cole, op. cit., p. 13.

[22]Supra, p. 37ff.

derstanding of the doctrines of the Christian Church. With
middle adolescence comes the almost complete maturation of
the intellectual powers and the dawn of reasoning. At this
age in life young people are first ready for a thorough
study of some of the more abstract doctrines of Christianity,
such as the nature of God, the deity of Christ, etc.[23] Since
confirmation has always been closely connected with baptism
as a voluntary and mature renewal of the baptismal vow, the
mental maturity of middle adolescence is necessary before
such action can be valid. Intellectually the aim of confir-
mation instruction is to promote a more mature understanding
of the doctrines of the Bible.

Another mental characteristic and problem of adolescence
is "general questioning of authority and demand for evidence."[24]
This is a wholesome development. The mature Christian no
longer accepts without question everything his pastor says
as truth. The adult mind demands evidence. One of the aims
for confirmation instruction often given is "to enable the
child to judge Christian doctrine on the basis of the Word
of God."[25] The adolescent is eager to do this. His catechu-
men instruction should give him the Bible knowledge and Bible
skills which would enable him to judge for himself whether

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[23]Ligon, op. cit., p. 275.

[24]Cole, op. cit., p. 12.

[25]Koenig, op. cit.

a certain teaching is in harmony with God's Word. This aim
is related to the Lutheran principle of the Priesthood of
Believers, which gives to every Christian the right and ob-
ligation to come to God on his own, to read Scripture, and
to judge doctrine on the basis of Scripture.[26] One of the
intellectual aims then must be to give young Christians an
appreciation of the Priesthood of Believers and the ability
to fulfill this privilege faithfully.

Emotional Maturity

Emotionally, adolescence is perhaps the most unstable
age.[27] Young people tend to indulge in emotional excesses.
One of the primary emotional needs of adolescents is self-
control.[28] The aim of confirmation instruction in respect
to the emotional nature of adolescents should be to show
them how to control their emotions. They will need to know
which forms of emotional release and sublimation are God-
pleasing. The aim of confirmation instruction should not
be to suppress emotions as heretical tendencies, but rather
to use the emotions for the deepening of conviction and for
motivating to action.

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[26] J. T. Mueller, Christian Dogmatics, (St. Louis: Con-
cordia Publishing House, 1934), p. 264.

[27] Ligon, op. cit., p. 266.

[28] Cole, op. cit., p. 10.

Social Maturity

"Adolescence is notably a time of great social development and of acute interest in social matters."[29] In respect to social needs, confirmation instruction will have several aims. One of these will necessarily deal with the problem of heterosexual relationships. With adolescence the individual leaves the "gang" composed of one sex to join the "crowd" composed of an almost equal number of both sexes.[30] To center one's emotional attention on members of one's own sex or on adults is typical of the child, but in adolescence it depicts a serious maladjustment. While one of the aims of catechumen instruction must be to warn young Christians against sexual abuses and excesses, the proper and normal sexual development should not be retarded. In such a class the pastor has one of his best opportunities to give his young people proper attitudes about their own physical development, to discuss with them God-pleasing relations with the opposite sex, the selection of a mate, engagement, marriage, and parenthood.[31]

Other social aims will deal with the problems adolescents have in respect to their peers and supervisory adults.

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[29]Ibid.

[30]Ligon, op. cit., p. 267.

[31]Koenig, op. cit.

The peer group often exerts far too much control over the thinking and actions of Christian youth. The aim of confirmation instruction should be to teach them that Christians do not conform to the world. The Church should help adolescents develop a set of Christian ethics which will guide them in their social life. Adolescents can be cruel and intolerant towards any member of the group who does not come up to the standards of the group in some way. The aim of confirmation instruction is to instill in their hearts in ever increasing amounts the love which flows from God to them and overflows from them to their fellow man. The aims for confirmation instruction which the pastor will formulate for his own class to meet their social needs will be both specific and numerous. If these aims are successfully met, however, some of the most crying problems of adolescence will have been remedied.

Religious Maturity

In spite of their skepticism and frequent doubts, adolescents tend to be very religious. Their doctrinal needs have already been discussed in connection with mental maturity. One of the principal aims given for confirmation instruction is that the young Christians be prepared to assume the privileges and duties of adult membership in the church.[32]

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32 Ibid.

To accomplish this the pastor will have to discuss with his class the factors that contribute to adult church membership, such as: regular church attendance, frequent communion at the Lord's Table, personal maturity in prayer life and Bible reading, and the sacrifice of time, energy, and resources for the work of the Church.[33]

The instruction for confirmation will also aim to impart to the youth of the church a certain Lutheran consciousness.[34] Young people want to know the differences between the denominations, and they have a right to know. The aim of the instruction should be that the adolescents, having compared the teachings of the various denominations with Scripture, independently arrive at the conviction that in their Lutheran Church they possess the truths of the Bible. While adolescents are usually faithful to the church of their parents, they will be better members if they are such as a result of their own research and conviction.

Independence from the Home

The child enters adolescence with complete dependence upon and attachment for the home. Sometime during adolescence he must attain independence from these childish relationships.

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[33]Ibid.

[34]H. A. Steege, "The Preparation of Confirmands, or the Instruction of Catechumens," Concordia Theological Monthly, III (May, 1931), 362.

Under normal conditions this should be a gradual development for both parents and children. Occasionally the ties of childhood are too strong to be broken easily, with the result that the child either makes a bitter and violent break, or never is able to break away from complete dependence on the home at all. The aim of confirmation instruction in this respect is to assist the family in achieving a gradual and happy development from a relationship where parents are protectors and supervisors to a relationship in which they are dearest and most honored friends. This will naturally be taught in view of the Biblical directives usually listed under the Fourth Commandment. To help adolescents achieve normal independence from the home, it will often be necessary for the pastor to deal with the parents as well as the children, for the trouble comes most often from parents who refuse to let their children grow up to adult independence and responsibilities.[35]

Economic Independence

An adolescent is not truly an adult until he earns his own living. Sometime during the years of adolescence the individual must choose what is to be his life's work. To do this well, he ought to be familiar with his own likes and abilities and also with the requirements needed in the

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[35] Cole, op. cit., p. 9.

various occupations.[36] Ordinarily the pastor should not attempt to handle this in confirmation instruction, but should leave this to the high school and its vocational guidance experts. However, one of the aims of confirmation instruction will be to help young people come to the realization that labor, skilled and unskilled, is honorable and necessary in God's economy.

A teaching of Scripture which Luther emphasized perhaps more than most Lutherans is the Christian vocation or calling. By this doctrine Luther showed the common people that there was nothing especially meritorious about being a monk or nun, but that the ordinary housewife and day laborer were serving God better in their own calling. Christian young people and adults need to realize that God has a special task for them in the world, and that by being faithful in the performance of their job, no matter how menial, they are rendering a real service to God and mankind.[37]

> Let the adolescent be challenged in the church to choose a vocation in the service of mankind. This does not mean that his choice be confined to a religious vocation or to social service occupations. There is no field of work in which service is not possible.[38]

The pastor can warn his young people about taking jobs which are difficult for Christians to carry out and still be faithful to their beliefs. At the same time there is no reason

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[37]Col. 3:24.

[38]Ligon, op. cit., p. 282.

why he shouldn't encourage them to find occupations by which they may serve their fellow men. Consecrated and gifted young people should be encouraged to enter the ministry or the teaching profession if the pastor sees that they have the necessary qualifications. No matter what vocation he finally does choose, the adolescent with all his idealism should realize that he is devoting his life to the service of his God and fellow man.

Summary

From the psychological point of view it is clear that the aims of confirmation instruction could be better accomplished if it were postponed a few years until nearly all of the children were in middle adolescence. All of the aims listed could well be included under the concept of Christian growth and sanctification. The fundamental aim is the development of a Christian philosophy of life, which would then serve as the springboard for achieving the aims dealing with the various aspects of the adolescent personality. While the general classification of aims given above will hold true for most adolescents, the pastor will have to formulate a list of the specific aims for his own group of confirmands, since the problems will vary between urban and rural parish, between upper, middle, and lower social levels, etc. The main thing is to set down a good list of aims and steer for them in every teaching opportunity.

CHAPTER VI

PROBLEMS INVOLVED IN POSTPONING CONFIRMATION

The Post-Confirmation Problem

During the past decades the Lutheran Church has been
troubled by an unusually high proportion of losses from the
ranks of those recently confirmed. Educators complain of
a "confirmation complex" among the young people, who are
inclined to regard confirmation as the ultimate completion
of their religious instruction and growth.[1] Attempts were
made to keep the newly confirmed within the fold of the
church by impressing them with the fact that Christian
growth and learning is a life-long process, and by provid-
ing them with educational agencies after confirmation such
as the Junior Bible Class and the Walther League. Although
these measures are meeting with some success, the post-
confirmation problem has not yet been solved. This might
possibly be due to the fact that children twelve and thir-
teen years of age are too young to fulfill the aims of confir-
mation instruction, particularly those that deal with ado-
lescent development and preparation for adult religious life.
If confirmation instruction is postponed for two or more
years, the post-confirmation problem would diminish. The

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[1]F. E. Mayer, "The Necessity for Further Instruction
After Confirmation, American Lutheran, XX (February, 1937), 9.

instruction would be more meaningful and better received by adolescents of fifteen.

Objections to Postponing Confirmation

The first objection that is usually raised against confirming at the age of sixteen or thereabouts is that children should not be deprived of Holy Communion for so long a time.[2] Such a contention is usually raised by those who make the privilege of attending communion one of the chief aims of confirmation instruction. However, this is not necessarily the case. Confirmation has always been associated more closely with the Sacrament of baptism than with Communion. There is nothing to prevent a child from being admitted to the Lord's Table at the age of twelve or thirteen, or even earlier for that matter. Of course, he would have to receive the necessary instruction to enable him to examine himself in regard to his faith.[3] This admission to the Lord's Supper might be marked by some sort of ceremony with an appropriate title, but confirmation itself should be associated with certainty of faith and mature participation in church life. Hence it should be left for middle adolescence.

Most of the other objections raised are based upon re-

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[2]A. C. Mueller, "Report on Confirmation Instruction," Unpublished evaluation of a survey on confirmation instruction, St. Louis, 1941, p. 3.

[3]1 Cor. 11:28.

cent Lutheran tradition. While such objections often have
little or no reasonable bases, they present a serious prob-
lem which must be met in the local situation.

Administrative Problems

The most serious obstacles to postponing confirmation
instruction lie in the field of administration. With the
great number of extra-curricular activities in the modern
high school, when would the church find opportunity for
such thorough instruction? How can one be sure fifteen
year olds would attend such instruction? How can they be
attracted? If such a program is introduced into the local
parish, what would happen to the rite of confirmation for
the next few years? Since these administrative problems
will vary in each local congregation, no blanket solution
can be laid down. Some suggestions, however, might be in
order.

There is growing concern within the Church over the
fact that the public school system is trying to take over
the entire life of the child and to direct his out-of-school
activities. The Church will have to stand up and demand its
rightful share of the child's time and refuse to be content
with the leftovers. Until this is accomplished, the Church
will have to do the best she can with the time available.
Some churches will be able to reach their adolescents through
the released time program of the high school. Others will

concentrate their efforts during the summer months, or on
Saturdays. The most commonly available time for most
churches will probably be on Sunday mornings during Sunday
School.

There is the problem whether young people will be wil-
ling to make such a change. What guarantee is there that
they will not continue to fall away from the Church at the
ages of fiteen and sixteen and not show up for such instruc-
tion? It seems logical to assume that the church can still
get most eighth graders to take instruction preparing them
for Holy Communion. The problem then is to keep them to-
gether as a class for at least two more years. This will,
perhaps, best be accomplished by making them realize that
they are not yet full fledged members of the congregation,
in respect to privileges and duties. When they understand
that with confirmation they become responsible adult members
of the congregation, they will see a reason for attending.

A method for introducing such a program into the local
parish would necessarily depend upon local circumstances.
In some congregations confirmation could just be dropped
for two or three years. Others would find this too radical
and would have to work into the program gradually, increas-
ing the age or school-grade requirements a little every
year. As long as the pre-adolescents are still instructed
for Holy Communion, the congregation shouldn't object too
strenuously to postponing confirmation until high school.

Their chief objection would often be related to the festiv-
ities and glamor that accompany confirmation, which might
now be switched to the ceremony accompanying first Communion.
The pastor will have to prepare his congregation for such a
program by instruction.

A Typical Program

A peculiar situation now exists in many congregations
throughout the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod. At the
age of thirteen a boy is confirmed, given a Bible, admitted
to Holy Communion, handed a box of contribution envelopes,
and told that he is now a full fledged member of the congre-
gation. The money to put in the envelopes he gets from his
parents. He has no voice in congregational affairs, nor
will he until he becomes twenty-one years old and makes
special application for "voting membership." All of the
activities which he and his friends have within the church
are supervised by adults. Still he is supposed to consider
himself a full, perhaps even an adult, member of the con-
gregation. Finding himself to be neither fish nor fowl, he
is apt to leave this unpleasant situation altogether. By
postponing confirmation instruction a few years, many of
these evils could easily be eliminated.

In a typical Missouri Synod parish, the pastor would
inform his people of the program perhaps during Lutheran
Education week in September. By sermons, talks, and printed

materials he would show them the inadequacy of the present
set up and explain how the new program would work. He must
give them a chance to discuss the program and modify it to
suit their needs. His eighth grade children would continue
to come to him for instruction in the catechism in prepar-
ation for Holy Communion. This instruction would not have
to be quite as ambitious as it is now,[4] since much can be
left for confirmation instruction. Thus more time can be
spent on meeting the real needs of pre-adolescents. Then
some time in Holy Week these children might receive their
first Communion with a solemn celebration. Immediately
they would become members of the confirmation class. For
two years the pastor would meet with them on Sunday mornings,
or at any other suitable time, and prepare them for confir-
mation. During this time they might have their own social
organization such as the Walther League. After completing
two years of instruction they would be confirmed, preferably
on Pentecost, since this festival lends itself well to the
purpose of confirmation.

Upon his confirmation, the youth would automatically
become a full member of the congregation, with the privilege
of voting and holding certain minor church offices. The
congregation is not apt to be swamped by adolescent voters,
and this would encourage the adults to attend in greater

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[4]Mueller, op. cit., p. 2. Average is 110 hours per year.

number to make certain nothing rash took place. Many six-
teen and seventeen year olds are already wage earners to
some extent and could contribute to the support of the con-
gregation with their own money. Older adolescents could
share in many of the adult activities of the congregation.
In this way confirmation would have some real meaning in
their lives. It would mark their advent into genuine adult
membership in the congregation.

A program like that outlined above would have to be re-
vised to meet local needs and circumstances, but the post-
ponement of confirmation until middle adolescence will bet-
ter accomplish its aims with benefit both for the adolescent
and for the Church.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY

The Church is obligated to teach all her members, of any age. Particularly has she been charged with the training of the young. Christians who were brought into the Church as infants by baptism will necessarily receive instruction concerning the faith into which they were baptized, so that they may with personal conviction affirm the doctrines of the Lutheran Church as their very own. The history of catechetics reveals not only the importance of such instruction, but also the need for adapting this agency to meet the problems of the specific time and place.

The problem of adolescence as it is found today is a phenomenon of modern civilization. Confirmation instruction must be adapted to meet the peculiar needs of this period of life. Psychologically adolescence is a time of transition and rapid development. Mentally adolescents are close to maturity. Physically they are in turmoil because of momentous changes. Emotionally they are unstable. Socially they are opening up and facing a whole array of serious problems, from heterosexual relationships to independence from parental control. Religiously they are entering the period when they are apt to question authority and have doubts about doctrines.

All of these needs must be considered in formulating

the aims for confirmation instruction. Because confirmation instruction is vitally concerned with preparing adolescents for adult religious life, the age at which such instruction takes place ought to be at least in the middle teens. Since the common practice in the Missouri Synod is to confirm at thirteen, it will be necessary to postpone confirmation several years if the real aims of such instruction are to be achieved. The primary aim is the growth in sanctification of the adolescent Christian. Psychologically this will occur as the pastor helps the adolescent to develop a Christian philosophy of life. In doing this he will try to meet the immediate needs of adolescents by helping them attain mental maturity, emotional stability, social success, independence from the home, economic self-reliance, religious certainty, etc. This will all be done according to the Christian philosophy of life. In meeting the psychological needs of adolescents, the pastor will also take the opportunity to prepare them for adult religious life within the congregation.

While confirmation is postponed several years, participation in Holy Communion may come sooner. The administrative problems connected with such postponement may often be serious. Time for such instruction will have to be found, perhaps on Sunday mornings. Young people will have to know that they must attend confirmation instruction if they want to be full members of the congregation. The

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congregation will have to be informed and motivated concerning the program. When confirmation is postponed to take place during high school years, it will have more meaning for adolescents and better serve their needs and the needs of the Church.

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