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Principles for Winning Unchurched High School Youth for Christ

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PRINCIPLES FOR WINNING UNCHURCHED HIGH SCHOOL
YOUTH FOR CHRIST

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Practical Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Divinity

by
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION.	1
II. PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS IN THE APPROACH TO YOUTH	9
III. PRACTICAL USES OF THE PRINCIPLES FOR WINNING UNCHURCHED YOUTH.	39
IV. PREPARING UNCHURCHED TEEN-AGERS FOR CONFIRMATION	57
V. SUMMARY	80
BIBLIOGRAPHY	82

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The problem dealt with in this paper arose in the experience of the author. It became clear that the high school youth with whom he was working needed activities which would be of definite value to their own church in order to keep them from falling away. Since witnessing is a primary function of the Church, it followed that witnessing by these youth would be of primary value--both for them, and for the Church. In mapping out with these youth the program of witnessing, it became evident that the people with whom they came into contact most often were people of their own age.

After some research it was found that others were trying to keep youth with the Church by activating them in the field of witnessing. Dr. Clarence Peters, chairman of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod's Board for Young People's Work, states that it was estimated that only four out of ten teen-agers are active in the Church, three girls and one boy.¹ In the same article he suggests many spiritual

¹Clarence Peters, "Needs of Teen-agers," Lutheran Education, LXXXIX (January 1954), 231.

needs of teen-agers, and one of the most important needs was guidance to do mission work.²

Then it developed that there was much material available which dealt with methods of winning adults and children for the Church, but very little material was available on the specific problems of witnessing to, and winning, youth of high school age. A new program had to be worked out, almost from scratch, to fill this vacuum. And even after all the research had been finished for this paper, only a few short magazine articles could be found which dealt directly with programs of witnessing to high school youth. To the author's knowledge, no one has made an effort to study unchurched youth for the purpose of finding the most effective points of contact between Christian youth and unchurched youth in the job of witnessing. On the other hand, much can be found which deals with reasons why Christian youth should witness. Therefore, the main problem which remains is that stated above, namely a systematic study of unchurched youth with the purpose of finding the most effective channels of reaching them with the Gospel.

²Ibid., p. 235.

Winning people for Christ includes, necessarily, these two main emphases: namely, evangelism³ and Christian Education.⁴ Those are the two emphases used both by the apostles and by the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod of our own day. To these two emphases must be added that of youth work in general. Thus, this study forms a synthesis of Christian education, evangelism, and youth work, and it is an attempt at outlining a program which will best answer the question, "How can the Church win the unchurched youth for Christ?"

That this is a question of great importance can be shown from statistics. In the 1950 census there were 10,733,000 people in the age bracket from fifteen to nineteen years,⁵ and there are definite indications that the number of students in high schools and in this age bracket in general will continue to increase considerably for quite some time.⁶ The numbers are such that a special

³Matt. 28:18,19. In this paper the term "evangelism" will refer to the initial outreach toward an unchurched person.

⁴See the strong emphasis on Christian education in the report on the Kansas City Mission Conference of that synod, held May 13-15, 1952, available at the Lutheran Building, 210 North Broadway, St. Louis, Mo.

⁵Paul H. Landis, Adolescence and Youth: The Process of Maturing (Second Edition; New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1952), p. 23.

⁶Ibid., p. 419.

effort could easily be made at setting up a program of winning these youth in many communities.

The youth program of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod has had, till very recently, no organized drive for confronting unchurched youth with their Savior. The Synod has the Walther League, the Synodical Board for Young People's Work, Lutheran Service Volunteer Schools, several publications for youth, guidelines for youth leaders, youth workers' conferences, and the local youth group's trials and errors--all of which have contributed greatly to youth work in general. But only in very recent months has a concerted and organized program been set up for winning the unchurched friends of these Christian youth. This program is called the Youth Evangelism Service.⁷ However, even this program lacks a study of the methods of presenting Christ to unchurched youth on the basis of their own life needs.

Leaders in the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod recognize this deficiency. At the 1952 Kansas City Mission Conference Rev. H. Hartner, pastor of Trinity Church, Mission, Kansas, stated that the 6,500,000 unchurched youth of America who are without Christ constituted a real challenge.

⁷Packets of information on the Youth Evangelism Service of the Walther League may be obtained from the Lutheran Youth Building, 875 North Dearborn, Chicago, 10, Illinois.

"We have programs for adults and children in evangelism," he said, "but have done little or nothing in winning the teen-agers."⁸ It follows, then, that to do as good a job in winning teen-agers as has been done among children and adults, the Church must study the problems of teen-agers as well as it has studied the problems of children and adults.

The data employed in this study included books, letters, and interviews. Books included works on education in general, Christian education, confirmation instruction, evangelism,⁹ youth work in general, psychology of youth, and special problems of youth. Magazine and news articles dealing with these subjects were also consulted. Letters were received from several leaders in youth work, education, and evangelism. Interviews were held with several others. Papers from three personal files were made available for this study. And about ten visits were made at gatherings of outstanding Walther League Societies for the purpose of observation. These sources will be referred to in the footnotes as they are used.

⁸Kansas City Mission Conference Report, op. cit., p. 33.

⁹The author found no books which dealt specifically with the problem of winning high school youth.

Definitions of terms in this study have been, and will be, taken up as they come into consideration throughout the study.

There are definite limitations in a study of this kind. For example, the lack of information on unchurched youth calls for an extensive program of questionnaires, polls, and interviews. This would be beyond the scope of a Bachelor of Divinity thesis, but a study of that kind would help immeasurably to clarify the church's approach to unchurched youth. Also, this thesis will not deal with the integration of the confirmed youth into congregational life. It will deal only with those phases of integration which should be carried out before and during the period of instruction of the high school youth for church membership. It is, of course, recognized that integration after confirmation is extremely important.

Great concern has been expressed in many circles over the fact that parish education and training for life's problems ceases for most Lutherans at confirmation. This is a very urgent and legitimate concern, but it deals only with the need for bringing the level of soul-accounting up to a "zero" mark where none are being lost. The purpose of this study, as stated before, is to point out ways of bringing the soul-accounting level among the high-school-aged youth to a mark about this zero point, namely, the gaining of unchurched youth from the outside. For this reason this

paper is advocating the addition of a class for confirmation instruction on the high school level. This class is not to take the place of the regular seventh and eighth grade instruction classes which most Lutheran parishes maintain.

Some congregations include youth of high school age in their regular adult instruction groups. It is recognized that under some conditions there is no alternative, but usually it would be better to add another level of confirmation instruction between the adult and the seventh and eighth grade levels so that a more aggressive program of winning these youth can be fostered. As will be pointed out in Chapter IV, the psychological and educational differences in this age group make such an arrangement almost necessary in any active program aimed at winning these youth. Rev. H. G. Cattau, who conducted one of the very first of these high school confirmation classes, sums the problem up in this way:

Already in high school, they were not interested in coming to children's catechism classes. Still in high school, they apparently did not feel comfortable in the company of those commonly classed as adults. We say that because when they were invited to come for instruction, they simply did not appear.¹⁰

Such an additional confirmation class on the high school level will not only take care of this difficulty, but it

¹⁰H. G. Cattau, "We're Sold on Our Confirmation Class for Older Teen-Agers," Today: A Journal of Practical Missionary Procedure, V (December 1950), 36.

will also help to keep those who have been confirmed in the seventh and eighth grade class. This is true because those confirmed in the latter class will then have a definite outlet for their Christian faith in winning their fellows for this instruction class.

The adolescent and post-adolescent years are extremely important so far as the program of the Church is concerned. During these years the Church has sustained heavy losses. Certainly there are many causes which have a bearing upon the loss of youth to the Church. But among the causes lies one which cannot be ignored, namely the frequency of a passive type of membership which holds little or no attraction to young people. Youth is eager for action. Youth is willing to espouse causes of various kinds. The Church can do much more than is ordinarily done to give youth the vision of the importance and worthwhileness of Kingdom work and also the opportunity to serve.¹¹

Therefore, this study is intended to be a contribution to the solving of both the main problems in church youth work, soul-accounting and soul-winning.

¹¹Enlisting and Training Kingdom Workers, a manual on Evangelism issued by the Committee on Enlisting and Training the Laity, available at The Lutheran Building, 210 North Broadway, St. Louis, Missouri, n.d., p. 81.

CHAPTER II

PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS IN THE APPROACH TO YOUTH

Since high school students usually fall into the category of adolescence, the study of adolescent psychology will be of great help in setting up the church's program of winning these youth. Arlitt describes adolescence as the time of life in which a human being fluctuates between the dependence of childhood and the responsibility of adulthood.¹ This fluctuation becomes apparent in different areas. Luella Cole divides these areas into eight categories, which this paper will use as a framework in finding points of possible contact between members of the church and the unchurched youth.²

Physical Maturation

During the period of adolescence the human body rapidly takes on the form of the adult as well as the power to function as an adult. Both increase in stature and the beginning of the sexual powers are experienced at this time. This causes bewilderment in many cases, since the youth may

¹Ada Hart Arlitt, Adolescent Psychology (New York: American Book Co., 1933), p. 217.

²Luella Cole, Psychology of Adolescence (Third edition; New York: Rinehart and Co., Inc., 1948), pp. 6 f.

feel awkward and out of place with adults and either conspicuous or inferior in comparison with fellow teen-agers. The former happens most often because the youth has not learned as yet how to control his rapidly growing body, and the latter takes place often because there is such a vast difference between one youth and another, both in the speed and the extent of visible signs of maturation. The beginning of rapid growth and the maturing of the sex organs may take place any time from the tenth to the seventeenth year.³ When a teen-ager is bothered by such problems, adults can greatly help them and win their confidence at the same time by reassuring them that they are entirely normal.⁴

The physical development brings with it, however, the development of the sex drive. This drive, in turn, brings with it the problems of learning to control it in a God-pleasing way. Since the sex drive is also a gift of God and men must also steward it just as any other talent, the pastor will find that discussions of the problems involved in this area will be of great interest to youth of his church. Unchurched youth will also be interested in such discussions, and thus the pastor will have a very effective avenue of

³William D. Snively, Jr., M.D., and Harold D. Lynch, M.D., "Adolescence--The Patient Years for Parents," National Parent-Teacher, XLVI (April 1952), 15.

⁴Ibid. . . . p. 217.

approach, both through his member youth and through the interest which unchurched youth will find in such discussions.

These discussions will aim at the establishment of healthy heterosexual attitudes and ability to make a good selection of a mate. The pastor or youth counselor will find much help in such a program in the book by Alfred Schmieding.⁵ The practical use of this approach to the psychology of unchurched youth will be discussed in chapter III.

Youth and his Home Life

At home the adolescent is in a paradoxical situation.

As Ada hart Arlitt puts it:

The adolescent has for generations been regarded as an individual who is adult when the home and the school desire him to be so, and who automatically becomes a child when again the school or the home wishes implicit obedience⁶ or some other type of childish behavior from him.

And Luella Cole sums up the problems such a paradox makes for the youth:

- A. Emergence from parental supervision.
- B. Reliance upon the security one can give himself rather than upon security provided by parents.

⁵ Alfred Schmieding, Sex in Childhood and Youth (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953).

⁶ Arlitt, op. cit., p. 217.

- C. Development of an attitude toward parents of dear friends rather than protectors and supervisors.
- D. Planning one's own time and making one's own decisions without parental control.⁷

The youth begins to focus attention on his friends and on their approval. When his parents' demands or mores interfere with such approval, he considers it time to "emerge from parental supervision." This naturally causes tensions within the family circle. The parents can solve this tension in one of two ways. They can either establish themselves as dictatorial supervisors, or they can patiently explain to the youth why certain behavior is expected.⁸ Most parents want to do both and thus face a dilemma.⁹ One emotion tells them to give their youth more freedom, and the other emotion tells them to retain the right of control and direction. The pastor will recognize these conditions and try to help both youth and parents to see the problem objectively.

The pastor will also recognize the added problems thrust upon the first child in a family and an only child. In both cases it is the child's job to teach the parents to be parents.¹⁰ In addition, the only child has no sib

⁷Cole, op. cit., p. 7.

⁸Paul H. Landis, Adolescence and Youth: The Process of Maturing (Second edition: New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1952), pp. 157 f.

⁹Ibid., p. 156.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 237.

relationships in the home to help him learn to make adjustments. However, Landis assures the pastor that he will not find any more serious personality maladjustments among only children than he will find among others on the average.¹¹

By finding ways and means of attracting the unchurched youth into the orbit of Christian youth, the pastor and the church will be able to take advantage of the desire for independence from the parents' sphere of influence and control, and thus will be directing this desire into a wholesome and God-pleasing channel. Delinquency and drifting are the alternate channels.

Emotional Maturation

Growing up emotionally is an important phase of adolescence. Cole lists the following steps in this process:

- A. Substitution of harmless for harmful modes of expressing emotion.
- B. Learning to react to emotional situations objectively.
- C. Learning to accept criticism without hurt feelings.
- D. Learning to face things that are unpleasant instead of running away from them.
- E. Elimination of childish fears and anxieties.¹²

Adolescence not only brings all the personality defects of childhood to a head, but it also adds many potential defects of its own. Youth finds himself thrown into many new situations, and he begins to enjoy them, since they

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Cole, op. cit., p. 7.

are continually bringing him new thrills. The perverted form of the attempt to gain such thrills is called delinquency. The delinquent boy pursues him game for these thrills, and the delinquent girl craves the excitement of new clothes, "ritzy" hotels, and fine jewelry. Soon no other types of excitement or values seem worthwhile.¹³

Thus, the new experiences of adolescence easily turn into the wrong channels. New experiences of youth are for the purpose of bringing him to emotional maturation for the healthy, godly type of confidence in life situations. But through the sinfulness of human nature it is now possible to convert this confidence in new situations into confidence as one seeks new thrills in a wrong way. The church has a definite remedy for this situation.

The marginal existence of the adolescent leads to extreme highs and lows in his emotional approach to life. One moment he will be an incurable optimist and idealist, and the next moment he will be in the depths of pessimism and rebellion. However, great thinkers and leaders of the church and in other areas have been at once great rebels and great idealists. When the church uses the right approach to such emotional highs and lows in both Christian youth and unchurched youth, it will have been greatly

¹³Landis, op. cit., p. 86.

enriched. Youth leaders must recognize the possibilities here, too, of potential friends and potential enemies of Christ and His Church, since there is a very narrow margin between the two potentialities.¹⁴ Law and Gospel in counseling must be carefully and discriminatingly applied.

Social Maturation

Closely connected with emotional maturation, social maturation can be considered the outward manifestation of the former. Cole lists the following points under social maturation:

- A. Development of a sense of security in one's social milieu.
- B. Ability to get along with others in ordinary relationships.
- C. Ability to take part in the work of a group, without trying to dominate it or to withdraw from it.
- D. Freedom from such extreme dependence upon one's social group that one thinks constantly of what others are going to say about one's behavior clothes, etc.
- E. Development of tolerance toward other nationalities, races, or social groups.¹⁵

Youth wants to "belong." If the group with which he wants to be identified refuses to accept him, he suffers excruciating emotional pain. Feelings of inferiority or other unhealthy emotional feelings arise. Some sublimate

¹⁴Kenneth Nye, "Faith for a Lifetime," National Parent-Teacher, XLV (December 1950), p. 10.

¹⁵Cole, op. cit., p. 8.

such feelings by applying themselves to their studies in order to gain recognition and acceptance that way. Others use the fields of sports, relationships with the opposite sex, etc., to gain this recognition. Some turn to delinquency for the same reason.¹⁶ The church definitely has the remedy for these feelings of insecurity and of "not belonging" in the security of the peace of God through Christ.¹⁷

Added to the problem of insecure feelings is the drive toward dominance, which naturally conflicts with the drive for security in the group setting. The youth wishes to accomplish great things and has set towering goals for himself in his own fields of interest, but he finds that fulfilling these ambitions often antagonizes his friends and costs him his feeling of security in their group.¹⁸ This leads to a stunting of the ambition in some cases or to insecurity in other cases. The healthy outcome of this conflict is that the youth becomes more of a realist, but a realist with wholesome ambitions. The church can use the latter type of individual, and it is up to the church to help the youth see the wrong channels into which this conflict can lead him and to provide Christ as his ideal so

¹⁶Irma W. Hewlett, "Watch Out For Teenage Danger Signals," Child-Family Digest, IV, (June 1951), 26.

¹⁷William E. Hulme, Face Your Life with Confidence: Counsels for Youth (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1953), pp. 101 f.

¹⁸Snively and Lynch, op. cit., p. 16.

that he will choose the right channels. For this reason, Christ must become for the youth the Ultimate Ambition, which is always attainable even when others fall by the way, and the Unifying and Directing Ideal, which converts all other ambitions into tools for reaching Him.

The desire for group acceptance often results in a hateful sort of intolerance when it is fulfilled. As Cole puts it:

Many adolescents are also intolerant--a trait that marks them off from both the child and the adult. The child has the tolerance of ignorance and insensitivity to social stimuli, while the true adult has the tolerance of knowledge and understanding.¹⁹

This is what causes the well known teen-age phenomenon called "cliques." The pastor must watch very carefully for this type of attitude in the member youth, because it is obvious that such intolerance immediately undercuts the effectiveness of any Christian witness. The pastor should point out to the Christian youth that it is his pride in being "accepted" by the group which is at the bottom of this attitude.

Such attitudes will be especially pronounced where there are children of immigrants in the neighborhood. Such children have the additional burden of growing up into two different types of societies, the Old World type and the New World type.²⁰ They are less likely to find security at home

¹⁹Cole, op. cit., p. 8.

²⁰Landis, op. cit., pp. 192 f.

and thus are driven elsewhere to find it. Intolerance by church youth can very easily be eternally fatal in such cases. Broken homes, working mothers, and lower or much higher economic conditions at home can bring about the same results.²¹

Landis summarizes the problems brought on youth by a lack of social maturation as follows:

The adolescent who defies moral codes, challenges a reasonable authority, and fails to consider conformity essential is likewise difficult to assimilate in the peer group, to manage in the social institution, and is likely to be a person who lacks a sense of unity in his inner life.²²

And the resultant job of the youth leader can be summarized in this area as the job of bringing the Christian youth to see the Christ-like attitude toward all youth, and the job of making Christ the unifying factor in the inner life of the youth, who is trying to grow up socially and emotionally.

Youth's Development of Economic Independence

The high school youth's attempt to gain at least partial independence in economic affairs is another area to which the church most speak. Youth are a marginal group in employment, since they are usually part-time or summer workers,

²¹Ibid., pp. 207 f.

²²Ibid., p. 218.

and therefore are the first to be laid off or fired. But they definitely need to learn how to take their share of the economic responsibility which will be thrust upon them as adults.²³ Cole sees four parts in the economic development of an adolescent:

- A. Reasonably accurate estimate of one's abilities.
- B. Selection of a field of work in which success is possible.
- C. Completion of enough vocational training to get started on one's career.
- D. Realization of the need for work.²⁴

Vocational training and guidance forms a large part of the program of most high schools. Since high schools are usually understaffed and undertrained, the help of a pastor, especially in the guidance area, will be greatly appreciated by the high school staff. Ways of giving such help will be discussed in a following chapter. Here it is enough to say that youth's attempt to mature economically gives the pastor the responsibility to guide youth, Christian and unchurched, toward Christ-directed stewardship of their economic life and toward a freedom from estimating their fellow's worth in terms of money or property.

Intellectual Maturation

During the adolescent years youth are forming the broad outline and pattern for the thinking they will do for the

²³Ibid., pp. 305 f.

²⁴Cole, op. cit., p. 9.

rest of life. According to Cole, this pattern is being built in three main areas:

- A. General questioning of authority and demand for evidence.
- B. Desire for knowledge, especially for explanations.
- C. Awakening of interests and narrowing of these interests to a relatively small number.²⁵

From this we see that the high school years are the years during which many youth begin to want explanations of such topics as the differences between the denominations, explanations of the reasoning behind the cultural patterns in vogue today, and the like. Some of these questions will come up in the high school, and the teachers will not be able to satisfy completely the questions put to them. At this point the pastor has his opportunity to step in, both to strengthen the convictions of his Christian youth and to give information to the unchurched youth. For the most part, however, the consideration of the intellectual maturation of youth will be taken care of, along with its implications for the program of the church, in the discussion of youth's contact and attitudes toward religion and in the chapter on instructing youth for confirmation.

Youth and Leisure Time

It is only in rather recent times that youth leaders and educators have realized the importance of training youth

²⁵Cole, op. cit., p. 9.

in their use of leisure time. Since time is a gift of God and as such must be stewarded wisely, the Church definitely has something important to say to youth about this matter. The whole program of recreation for youth in the church must be analyzed from this point of view, along with the point of view of training in expression of Christian love. Unchurched youth will certainly be attracted to listen to the Gospel, if there is a good program of recreation and the teaching of God-pleasing ways to use leisure time. This attraction to the Gospel extends beyond the Christian youth group itself into the right use of leisure time by the individual Christian youth when outside the circle of church youth.

Cole outlines four areas in which guidance in the use of leisure time is necessary:

- A. Development of hobbies that are interesting but do not make severe demands upon vitality.
- B. Learning to play well some common games that do not require much equipment.
- C. Learning to read easily and well.
- D. Membership in a few clubs or other organizations.²⁶

The church also can influence both Christian and unchurched youth in their choice of reading material and of radio and television programs and movies. Television especially is a problem, because, as one survey indicates, youth

²⁶Cole, op. cit., p. 10.

watch television almost as many hours as they spend going to classes in high school.²⁷ These media of communication provide both dangers and opportunities for the church's impact on unchurched youth. Methods of turning the dangerous elements into opportunities will be presented in the next chapter.

Youth and Religion

Cole calls this section "A Philosophy of Life,"²⁸ and states that sometimes this philosophy of life has its basis in religion and sometimes not. This is true, and it is the Church's job to make the basis be religion for as many youth as possible. Cole lists the following points under this section:

- A. Development of some consistent attitude that will give life a meaning.
- B. Acquisition of ideals and general principles of conduct.
- C. Finding one's place in the world.²⁹

The Lord Jesus has boiled these points down to two in his summarizations of the first and second tables of the law:

²⁷Bruce M. Bradway, "High-School Students' TV Habits," *The Education Digest*, XVII (October 1951).

²⁸Cole, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

²⁹*Ibid.*

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind," and Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."³⁰ Since it is only faith in the death and resurrection of Christ which can set up this love toward God and toward man in such a way that Christ becomes the integrating factor which produces God-pleasing ideals and principles of conduct,³¹ it is the Church's job to bring this faith to unchurched youth through the Gospel and to relate that faith to the problems these youth face in life. This is what some have called the "Christian philosophy of life," the ideal toward the Church must bring youth.

But youth in general, including those who call themselves Christians and those who are utterly unchurched, does not have this Christ-orientated philosophy of life. This will be made obvious from the answers to the following questions on youth's attitudes toward general religious standards.

Does youth believe in the existence of God? Yes, except in very isolated cases, according to every survey checked by the author.³² However, adolescence marks the beginning

³⁰Matt. 22:37-39.

³¹Cf. Rom. 14:23 and John 15:4-5.

³²Here the author concentrated his investigations in the field of youth itself. Four main sources were used, each of which will be designated in the order of reference.

of the period in which all religious concepts are questioned to some extent, and this shows percentage-wise in these surveys as a great increase in agnosticism and atheism, although the total of such people remains at a low mark.³³ As a general rule, however, one may assume that the youth he is trying to win accepts some sort of supreme being.

Is there a life after death? According to one opinion poll taken in 1942, youth in general answered yes to this question 89.1 per cent, with 4.3 per cent saying they had no opinion. In this poll, of those who did not claim to attend church at all, 32.5 percent answered no to this question, with 9 per cent having no opinion on the matter, and 55.5 per cent answering yes.³⁴ In another poll taken two years later, youth shows a definite tendency to become skeptical about the life after death. At twelve years of age 82 per cent said they believed there was a heaven; at fifteen 78 per cent believed this; and at eighteen, only 74 per cent believed there was a heaven.³⁵ Since this poll included all kinds of youth, the percentage of those who believed in a life after death would be lower among those

³³E.g., the chart in Landis, op. cit., p. 171

³⁴"The Fortune Survey: A Self-Portrait of Youth," Fortune (December 1942), pp. 8 f.

³⁵Landis, op. cit., p. 171.

who belonged to no church. Apparently, skepticism is making inroads on the youth level.

Does God reward and punish in the life after death? The Fortune poll lists 82 per cent saying yes to this question, but of those who did not claim to go to church at all, the percentage drops to 45.5.³⁶ This would indicate that a definite witness concerning the Christian hope is very necessary in any program of winning youth. This view is also upheld by the chart Landis uses, for, according to it, 70 per cent of the twelve-year-olds claim both that God punishes people for "not being good" and that hell is a place of punishment. On the other hand, 18 per cent and 16 per cent, respectively, claimed they did not believe these things, and the rest "wondered."³⁷ At the same time this poll indicates that only 49 per cent of the fifteen-year-olds say they would answer yes to those two questions, while 37 and 21 per cent answer no, respectively, and 13 and 27 per cent, respectively, "wonder" about their right answers. And at eighteen years, 33 and 35 per cent, respectively, answer yes to these questions, while 48 and 32 percent say no, and 18 and 34 percent "wonder." From this we see that, at eighteen years of age, almost one-half of youth do not believe in a God of justice and judgment.

³⁶ Loc. cit.

³⁷ Landis, loc. cit.

What is the way to heaven? There are many indications in all the surveys consulted that even those youth who believe in a heaven and hell after death have no idea that Christ is the only way to heaven. Going to church, being good, praying, behaving, and other deeds are given as ways to gain the favor of God in one way or another. For instance, according to Cole, the percentage of those who say it is not necessary to go to church to be a Christian jumps from 42 to 67 from the twelfth year to the eighteenth year.³⁸ Even those who consider it necessary to go to church to be a Christian seem to consider such church-going to be more of a way to do God a service than anything else. And about one out of five eighteen-year-olds seem to consider prayer to be a means of grace--a way to make up for something done wrong.³⁹ This leaves the church with a mountainous task in making clear to as many youth as possible the sola gratia and sola fida concepts of Scripture. Methods of confronting unchurched youth with this Gospel message so as to draw them into further learning situations called confirmation classes, etc., will be discussed in the next chapters.

³⁸Cole, op. cit., p. 368; and Landis, op. cit., p. 171.

³⁹Landis, loc. cit.

How big a part does religion play in the lives of youth? Murray G. Ross gives this account of an interview which throws light on this question:

Leader: "You think the average fellow hasn't much to say about what happens to him?"

Youth: "That's about it. You can talk about God and religion, but what really shapes your life is how much the boss will pay you, whether the big shots call a depression, whether Joe Stalin thinks this is a good time for a war."⁴⁰

Although this interview represents the viewpoint of a person in his lower twenties, it certainly indicates the direction toward which the thinking of today's high school youth is being led. It indicates a very materialistic and deterministic philosophy of life, which the Church must overcome with an accent on spiritual things, especially things having to do with the life after death and the Christian hope.

Ross sums up older youth's attitudes toward the value of religion in general by stating that in his poll he found that youth, for the most part, gave verbal acceptance of the existing religious standards prevalent in American life, but when facing "real life," these vague concepts cease to exist. Religion forms no important or integrating part of youth's goals or guiding principles

⁴⁰Murray G. Ross, Religious Beliefs of Youth (New York: Association Press, 1950), p. 222.

in life.⁴¹ The time to step in and reverse this trend of thinking is during the high school years, because "adolescents and youth alternate between skepticism and belief, and usually at about mid-adolescence youth with religious training are either converted or begin to harbor serious doubts about the basic Christian beliefs." Sixteen is "probably the most favorable age for the beginning of atheistic or agnostic tendencies."⁴² Again the church is faced with a danger which can be turned into an opportunity for witness.

What is youth's attitude toward existing church organizations? Ross concludes that "there is a prevailingly friendly estimate of the church, and an overall conviction that mankind needs religion."⁴³ To this Ross adds that "the predominant impression is that most of the interviewees view the church as a 'good thing' without conceiving of it as a sacred institution or without any particular enthusiasm for it."⁴⁴ Church attendance was, in general, a means of obtaining a "good feeling" toward life and a way of easing the conscience and satisfying

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 115 f.

⁴²Landis, op. cit., p. 170.

⁴³Ross, op. cit., p. vi, in the "Foreward" by Gordon W. Allport.

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 42 f.

any apiritual aspirations they might have.⁴⁵ According to Ross, then, the church is recognized by youth and has their outward assent, but it must increase its appeal to youth considerably in order to draw youth into a learning situation in which the Word can be taught them and applied to their lives. Another lesson to be drawn from Ross's findings is that the church, in general, has had only a "Law" effect on many of its members and almost all unchurched youth. It is, therefore, very important, first, that Christian youth understand the Gospel themselves, and then that they learn how to tell this Gospel to their unchurched friends in no uncertain terms. This would entail a study of evangelistic methods in church youth groups, and perhaps other steps which will be discussed later.

In order to begin with unchurched youth right where they are, the following question must be asked: What are youth's felt needs regarding religion and morals? According to Cole, 21 to 27 per cent of four hundred high school boys and girls, ages fourteen to eighteen, asked 990 religious questions, which could be boiled down to the following four:

⁴⁵Loc. cit.

1. Why are we born and of what use is life?
2. Is there a God?
3. What happens after death?
4. What is religion and why do we have it?⁴⁶

Religious discussions, both formal and informal, would be a fine way of winning the unchurched youth in this group. Here is another way Christian youth can use in witnessing to Christ, if they are equipped to do so.

In the table quoted on the following page, Landis lists eighteen religious problems which high school youth checked in a poll taken in 1944. Increasing skepticism shows itself as the youth were advancing from Junior High School through Senior High School. But there is also a growing concern with questions of the life after death, heaven and hell, and related topics. There was also an increase in concern about the apparent conflicts between religion and science. The concern over sin rises from one in four at age fifteen to almost one in two at age eighteen. Dislike for the church service seems to remain very close to the one-in-five mark all through the high school years. At age fifteen, a little more than one in five want help in religious problems, while at eighteen over 43 per cent want such help. This indicates that the church has a wide open field for counseling and instruction in the upper high school years.

⁴⁶Cole, op. cit., pp. 407 f.

TABLE I

PARTICULAR RELIGIOUS PROBLEMS AT VARIOUS AGES⁴⁷

PROBLEM	AGE 12	AGE 15	AGE 18
Having a different religion from other people. . . .	34	25	27
Disliking church service	33	47	60
Being forced to go to church. . . .	30	31	27
Disliking parents' religion	11	8	12
Failing to go to church	67	67	67
Changing my idea of God	29	25	31
Losing faith in religion	27	32	31
Doubting prayer will bring good.	37	44	35
Getting help on religious problems.	53	54	56
Choosing a religion.	21	20	15
Parents' objection to church membership	23	14	11
Wanting to know the meaning of religion.	53	48	60
Wanting communion with God	59	47	57
Heaven and hell	53	53	66
Sin	71	62	72
Conflicts of science and religion.	42	50	57
Being teased about my religious feelings.	26	22	18
Wondering what becomes of people when they die	67	56	80
Number of cases	174	243	130

⁴⁷Landis, *op. cit.*, p. 172, quoted from Raymond G. Kuhlen and Martha Arnold, "Age Differences in Religious Beliefs and problems during Adolescence," Pedagogical Seminar and Journal of Genetic Psychology, LXV (December 1944), 296.

The same conclusion must be drawn from Table II, quoted on the following page. It seems that the consciences of both boys and girls are bothering them in many cases, although there is a marked difference between the types of problems which bother them. Boys are bothered more often about swearing too much, bad habits, and being interested in "dirty" stories. Girls are bothered more often about mistakes they have made, making use of their talents, life after death, questions of honesty, group morals, and the inconsistency between what people consider right and what they actually do. It would seem from these two tables that Christian youth have a fertile field for their witnessing to Christ among their unchurched and almost unchurched friends at school and elsewhere. It is the pastor's job to point out these opportunities to his member youth and to show them how to apply Law and Gospel after a background of Christian Love. This must be done both on the individual level and on the group level, and both inside and outside the circle of the organization of the church.

What is youth's attitude toward the Bible? If the church of the sola Scriptura wants to remain such, it must face youth's skeptical attitude toward the Bible as the final authority in matters of doctrine and practice. At age twelve, according to the table used by Landis, 79 per cent believe every word in the Bible is true, while 6 per

TABLE II

PERCENTAGE OF 5,500 HIGH-SCHOOL SENIORS WHO CHECKED CERTAIN PROBLEMS IN THE FIELD OF MORALS, IDEALS, AND RELIGION

PROBLEMS	BOYS	GIRLS
Making something of myself.	27.2	33.0
Worry about mistakes I've made	14.5	23.3
How to do my best.	11.9	18.3
Concerned about life and death	9.7	18.9
What's happening in the world.	11.4	16.6
I swear too much	20.8	8.3
Puzzled about religion	13.5	14.4
Worried about some habits	16.3	11.3
Understanding things people do	6.9	14.9
Learning how to enjoy life.	11.5	10.7
Students cheating in school	8.3	12.6
Having high ideals	8.0	11.6
The morals of my crows	6.0	11.0
Losing faith in religion	9.6	7.4
Kind of life kids lead	6.2	10.3
Not facing problems squarely	7.8	8.2
Worried about my reputation	7.5	7.3
Prejudice and intolerance	4.8	9.1
About going to church	6.7	6.8
Embarrassed by friend's action	4.7	7.6
Worried about my morals.	6.4	4.3
Always alibiing	4.2	3.4
Religion and school conflict	2.7	4.8
Interested in "dirty" stories.	5.4	2.0
People are cruel and selfish	2.9	2.2
Getting into trouble a lot.	3.4	0.9
Don't believe Bible anymore	2.5	1.0
Not being very honest	1.5	1.4
My cheating in class	1.4	1.4
Unkindness toward my religion.	0.4	0.8

⁴⁸Landis, *op. cit.*, p. 137, quoted from L. J. Elias, High School Youth Look at Their Problems (State College of Washington: The College Book Store, January 1949).

cent do not believe this, and 15 per cent "wonder about" it. At fifteen years, 51 per cent believe this, with 16 per cent saying no, and 31 per cent "wondering." And by age eighteen, only 34 per cent believe every word of the Bible is true, while 23 per cent deny this, and 43 per cent have their doubts.⁴⁹ The principle to be drawn from this in regard to the church's approach to unchurched youth is that the soul-winner must never become involved in discussions about the truth of the Bible before the youth has been convinced of his sin and his Savior. When he realizes that all his knowledge about Jesus Christ is drawn from, and based on the Bible, he will have much less difficulty in seeing that every word of the Bible is true. Likewise, the pastor must teach his member young people not to argue religion, especially not to argue about peripheral doctrines, such as the truth of the Bible, but always to witness to Christ. He must show them the power that is in the Word which they are projecting to their friends, and he must lead them to trust in the power of that Word to persuade their friends rather than to trust in their own powers to win arguments.

No conclusive study was available to the author on youth's answers to questions such as, "Who is Jesus Christ?"

⁴⁹Landis, op. cit., p. 171, quoting from Kuhlen and Arnold, op. cit., pp. 291 f.

However, one poll taken among men and women in their upper twenties indicated that about one-third and less of that age group (most of whom were connected with the quasi-religious organization, YMCA) believed in the deity of Christ in the Biblical sense of the term. Most of the remaining youth questioned in the poll believed He was a "good man" or a "great moralist."⁵⁰ That the latter attitude toward Christ exists among high school youth is a safe assumption, but there were no figures to back it up. A study of this attitude of youth would be very helpful in setting up a definite program for winning unchurched youth.

A final question useful for setting up such a program is: What impact has the church made upon youth? Ross answers the question by stating that, although youth usually accept God, prayer, and the church as a culturally desirable institution, yet youth finds a ghostly quality about these things which makes them seem like heirlooms that fit badly into a modern home.⁵¹ The church's message is not a working principle of life for most youth. This shows itself in the lack of participation in church and religious life. Ross says that youth "are passive in

⁵⁰Ross, op. cit.,

⁵¹Ibid., in the Forward by Allport, loc. cit.

their religious life and basically confused about the place of religion in their own personalities and in society at large."⁵² And in the interviews reported in Ross, the following indictment of the church was made:

The interviewees seemed to have the idea generally that the church did not address itself to the specific needs of the people in their circumstances, but merely gave them a "good feeling" toward life in general.⁵³

It is quite obvious, therefore, that the church has not made any real impact on these older youth. The same would doubtless hold true for high school youth to too great a degree, and the church that would win these high school youth must find the reason why youth did not find its message relevant and must try to remedy the situation. The church must learn to relate its message to the needs of youth in such a way that youth will see the relationship and be convinced that only in Christ do they have the answer to their problems. When the church fails in this task, youth turns away and becomes cynical and intolerant of the church and its message.⁵⁴

Murray asserts that the perplexities that youth of this age encounter toward religion are chiefly due to these four factors:

⁵²Ibid., p. v.

⁵³Ibid., p. 42.

⁵⁴Cole, op. cit., p. 367.

1. The failure of religion to influence the lives of those who profess to have it.
2. The indifference of the Church to the pressing needs of society.
3. The pugnacious attitude of the Church toward members of its own household of faith.
4. Failure to consider seriously the claims of youth.⁵⁵

These four points boil down to a lack of Christian faith and a lack of Christian love. First, Christians must be sincere and convinced Christians. Then their love will look for ways to express itself (as point four), and, finally, this love will express itself in witnessing and in backing up this witness with the Christian life. These things have been known to professing Christians since the beginning of Christianity, but they have not been applied as they should have been to youth in our day.

The Summary: Guiding Principles

1. The pastor must be able to counsel youth in the following areas:
 - A. Getting along with the opposite sex.
 - B. Getting along with the other members of his family.
 - C. His emotional and social conflicts.
 - D. Vocational guidance.
 - E. Religious questions and conflicts.
 - F. Recreation and leisure time.

⁵⁵ Alfred I. Murray, Psychology for Christian Teachers: (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1943), p. 161.

2. Witness to youth must stress:

- A. Sin and grace.
- B. The Christian eschatological hope.
- C. The true concepts of worship, private and public.
- D. D. The concept of edification in general.
- E. The true concept of prayer.
- F. An accent on the spiritual, rather than the material.
- G. The reliability of Christian truth.
- H. A Christ-inspired, honest, friendliness aimed at winning youth's trust and confidence.
- I. A working knowledge of the Bible.
- J. Real witnessing, rather than arguing religion.
- K. A trust in the power of the Holy Spirit in the word.
- L. Participation in church activities and church youth activities.

The pastor or youth leader must train the Christian youth in these points.

CHAPTER III

PRACTICAL USES OF THE PRINCIPLES FOR APPROACHING UNCHURCHED YOUTH

Two opposing strategies have been used by various branches of the Christian Church in linking youth and children to the respective denomination. In setting up a practical program for winning unchurched youth, a study of these two strategies is necessary.

The first may be expressed thus:

In its efforts to win youth the Church ought to concentrate upon the weaving of emotional ties which will bind youth to itself so tightly that nothing which life can bring will break those ties.¹

It is obvious that this is the strategy used by the Roman Catholic Church. Some protestant groups have also used this strategy to a degree. The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod's use of confirmation as a sort of "graduation" from the study of religion could be cited as another example of this type of strategy. However, there is no New Testament basis for the building of a loyalty of a church body. If a loyalty of this kind is based on a faith in Christ as Savior and is directed toward Him rather than

¹Nevin C. Harner, Youth Work in the Church (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1942), pp. 26 f.

to any outward manifestation of the Holy Christian Church, then this strategy would have much value.

The other strategy can be put in this way:

The Church ought to concentrate in its efforts to win youth upon satisfying the life-needs of youth so completely as to become indispensable to youth.²

This, of course, is the strategy used by many Protestant denominations, especially those who use the "social gospel." Each church gives its own definition of the basic "life-needs" of youth. If these needs are defined as the regeneration by the Holy Spirit through the Gospel applied to sin and its consequences, psychological and social maladjustments, then this strategy could also be the correct one.

Accordingly, the strategy of the Lutheran Church must be one which is aimed at bringing youth under the influence of the Holy Spirit in the Gospel. When the Holy Spirit is working in the hearts of youth, the outward membership in a congregation takes care of itself.

Methods for Use by Youth Leaders

The first step in winning unchurched youth for pastors and other leaders of youth will be to gain the merited reputation of being a competent youth counselor. Christian

²Ibid.

youth will be able to bring or direct their unchurched friends to such a counselor for help, and in that way the counselor will have a fine opportunity to bring the unchurched youth under the influence of the Gospel. Counseling a member youth is the main way of gaining such a useful reputation.

Besides the principles of witnessing to youth laid down in the previous chapter, the counselor should keep in mind the following principles of counseling.

Many pastors and youth leaders make the mistake of treating only "surface symptoms." The youth tells the counselor what his trouble is, and the counselor fails to look beneath the surface to see the turmoil in the soul which caused the youth to say what he did. Youth counselors must understand that the words and deeds of a person are only minor indications of a vast network of conscious and unconscious thoughts.³

Lutheran pastors have an advantage in counseling because of their training, since youth looks more readily to highly trained men as leaders and ideals.⁴ However,

³J. A. Hadfield, Psychology and Morals: An Analysis of Character (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., twelfth edition, 1939), pp. 136 f.

⁴Paul H. Landis, Adolescence and Youth: The Process of Maturing (Second edition; New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1952), p. 180.

22

there is also a danger in this. Even the educated pastor must show that he trusts the youth with whom he works. Complete honesty and sincerity attracts youth. The opposite repels him.⁵ Youth is very quick to sense insincerity.

Many counselors also make the mistake of comparing the problems of modern youth with the problems they faced when they were teen-agers. The counselor must realize that he cannot use his own days of youth as a criterion in understanding the present problems of youth.⁶

These principles of counseling, together with those mentioned in the previous chapter, should be "law" to any youth counselor. He will also make use of all the institutions of the church and community which may help him in this job of counseling. These institutions include the high school, the juvenile authorities, recreational facilities, governmental resources, and the like. Counselors will also find books on youth counseling very helpful. The author would like also to recommend Professor Hulme's helpful book on youth counseling.⁷

⁵Kenneth Nye, "Faith for a Lifetime," National Parent-Teacher, XLV (December 1950), 9.

⁶Landis, op. cit., p. 373.

⁷William E. Hulme, Face Your Life with Confidence: Counsels for Youth (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1953).

In general, the counselor must keep in mind that he is curing sin, which is the cause of the disintegration of the drives, emotions, will, etc., of the mind. Through the Gospel rightly applied, he can make a good beginning in the job of integrating the minds of youth under Christ.

How can the pastor work with the local high school?

The first step is to gain the confidence of the high school faculty and to offer assistance wherever possible. The high school has a tremendous problem in taking full advantage of opportunities and fulfilling the responsibilities thrust upon it. High school teachers are having a terrible struggle to cope with this problem. The pastor should offer his help, and thus he will in doing so not only be gaining rapport with the faculty, but he will also be carrying out his duty as a Christian citizen. To do this, he will fall back on his reputation as a counselor of youth. He will not only offer his help, but he will also attend high school functions, consult the high school's schedule of events to avoid having church functions conflict with the high school program, and the like.⁸ One pastor in the author's acquaintance is the regular Protestant representative for the high school faculty when the clergy is called in to give talks on religion, sex morals, and other

⁸Letter from Rev. John Fritz, March 25, 1954.

topics. Another pastor is making plans to help the local high school in its vocational guidance program. Still another pastor has become an authority on secular subjects. When he is called in to give a talk on one of these subjects, he presents it with a distinctively Christian interpretation. By such means the pastor not only gains the confidence of the high school faculty, but he also becomes a friend to many unchurched youth while, at the same time, identifying himself as a Christian witnessing to the influence of Christ in his life.

Apart from the high school, how can the pastor reach the youth of his community? One way is to keep in touch with the juvenile court. Paul E. Lippold, a Christian policeman, suggests that the pastor should make arrangements with juvenile authorities so that they can send criminal teen-agers to him for guidance and counseling, and so that he can find them jobs with Christian business men.⁹ For such a program the pastor will want to keep a list of business men of his church who would be willing to work with him in such cases. This will also help when the pastor is working with the high school in its vocational guidance program. After a while the pastor will become known as a

⁹Paul E. Lippold, "Crime and Christian Correction," Lutheran Witness, LXXII (November 10, 1953), 11.

leader in the community in fighting delinquency.¹⁰ This will also be useful in gaining prospects among unchurched youth.

By way of taking advantage of the maturing emotional and social drives in youth, the pastor should encourage his member youth to bring their friends and dates to church functions. One pastor makes it a practice to get the names and address of the dates brought to these church functions. He adds a considerable number of names to his prospect list in this way. In many cases such a policy snowballs, because one prospect brings another.

Many congregations are beginning to see the value of youth centers in the program of winning unchurched youth. In advocating youth centers, O. H. Theiss writes:

We shall not win unchurched youth as we might, unless we reach them where they are. The most practical and promising approach to this vast opportunity is the setting up of youth centers in our congregations where the need is evident in which the leadership developed in our youth activities is offered to the youth of the community.¹¹

¹⁰This is exactly what happened in Claremond, N. H. according to "Could Your Town Lick Delinquency?", Child-Family Digest, VI (January 1953).

¹¹O. H. Theiss, "The Walther League and its Future," Our Youth Program Today: Two Messages, a tract presented to the Lutheran Youth Conference on January 21, 1950 at Chicago Illinois (St. Louis: The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod's Board for Young People's Work), p. 11.

Youth centers are the primary way of taking advantage of the developing social drive of youth.

A variation of the youth center, as suggested by Murray, is the "parsonage talk" held by some pastors during the winter months.¹² This is an informal gathering of youth in the pastor's home for social conversation and religious discussion, usually ending with a short meditation. It provides an ideal situation for youth to ask the questions which are on their minds and hearts.

Another variation of the youth center idea is called the "empty chair" method. A pastor in the author's acquaintance describes this method as follows. During the social and recreational phases of a youth gathering the pastor sits next to a vacant chair. Any youth who wants to can come to talk over his problems with the pastor. If the pastor has conditioned his member youth to take advantage of this opportunity, he will find some unchurched youth doing the same from time to time, especially after he has gained a reputation as a youth counselor.

Other methods the pastor can employ to gain the confidence of the unchurched youth in his community include helpful sermons, flexibility in the liturgy, and inspiring devotionals at youth gatherings.¹³ Another pastor writes

¹²Alfred L. Murray, Psychology for Christian Teachers (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1943), p. 157.

¹³Letter from Rev. Holger G. Cattau, September 23, 1953.

that he speaks to high school prospects in a "natural manner--over coke, candy bar, etc."¹⁴ Rural pastors have found that the Future Farmers of America and 4-H organizations are excellent means of gaining rapport among farm youth. The pastor, the member youth, and the Christian leader of the local organizations will find such organizations very useful for gaining prospects in a rural situation.¹⁵

Methods Youth Can Use

It is the contention of this paper that the use of youth to reach youth is psychologically practical, since such a method takes advantage of the social drive in youth. It has been observed that many unchurched people are shy of the professional clergyman, and that the laity find open doors where a pastor does not. Therefore, since it is the pastor's task to equip his people for the job of witnessing to the forgiveness of sins in Christ,¹⁶ the pastor will want to train his youth to do this job in the most effective way possible. That such training brings results can be seen from the reports of three congregations which tried

¹⁴Fritz, op. cit.

¹⁵Landis, op. cit., p. 437.

¹⁶Richard R. Caemmerer, Preaching to the Church (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary Mimeo Co., 1952), pp. 12 f.

such a program. Through the efforts of the youth in one small church in a community with a population of about one hundred, six high-school youth were confirmed in the first year of such activity.¹⁷ Another congregation confirmed its first group of five teen-agers on April 11, 1954. To these must be added eight to ten people related to these teen-agers who were also gained through this contact.¹⁸ The third congregation reports eighty-five confirmed in the teen-age class in seven years, plus about "two dozen" adults and children gained through these contacts.¹⁹ Pastor Cattau claims that it was due only to the use of youth to win youth, along with his regular adult classes, that he was enabled to double the membership of his charge from three hundred to six hundred in seven years. Training youth in evangelism evidently, is a very effective means of bringing more people under the power of the Holy Spirit in the Gospel.

What must the pastor teach his youth about evangelism?

Youth does not have to know the whole theory of evangelism, but a knowledge of the following basic divisions will be of considerable help to them in their job of witnessing.

¹⁷Fritz, op. cit.

¹⁸Letter from Mr. Larry Steyer, March 25, 1954.

¹⁹Letter from Rev. Holger G. Cattau, September 23, 1953.

First, the pastor must teach his youth the attitudes necessary for effective witness. If the pastor has become one of the "models" for his member youth, he will find that he can teach attitudes through his own personality. If he gets excited about witnessing, they will too. If he shows any prejudice in his choice of people to whom to witness, they will do the same. The youth will come to his evangelism classes with many prejudices for and against both individuals and classes of individuals. The pastor can, by his own attitudes, strengthen or weaken these prejudices.

Two other attitudes must be mentioned. The pastor must make clear to his youth that their faith in Christ is the most important thing in their lives. When they are convinced of this he should show them that they must want the same to be true in the lives of others. A sense of responsibility, personal and compelling, must be developed in the member youth. They must always be made aware that if they do not tell their friends about Christ, their friends will be suffering in eternity while they themselves will be with the Lord.

Second, the pastor must teach his youth exactly what is included in the message they are to bring. For this the pastor will make use of Bible classes on the level of his youth, group topics, and other means, in addition to the regular classes in evangelism. He will make clear from

the Bible just exactly what is included in the Christian kerygma.²⁰ The other-worldly emphasis must be especially stressed among youth, along with the redemption. Then the pastor will have his youth practice their witnessing on each other so that he can point out ways to overcome the practical difficulties they will encounter. He may also want to have the youth write their own tracts aimed at the youth in their own acquaintance. In these and other ways the pastor or youth leader will sharpen the concept of the Christian kerygma in the minds of his youth so that they will not merely argue religion, but actually give Christ to their friends. The total effect of his teaching will be that of a homiletics course, junior grade.

Thirdly, the pastor will point out the practical methods of bringing the kerygma to bear upon the unchurched youth. Rev. Don Deffner has done this very successfully by means of the socio-drama, which he defines as "the enactment of an impromptu conversation calculated to demonstrate the method of discussing or solving a specific problem."²¹ Another group of Walther Leaguers reactivated their members in evangelism by taking a "Gallup Poll" of people in their community on religious questions. This

²⁰Caemmerer, op. cit., is a good summary of the kerygma.

²¹Don Deffner, "Teaching Young Folks How to Witness," Today, V (October 1950), pp. 11-12.

was done by means of a mimeographed questionnaire, and the youth reported that it was "more exciting than socials."²²

Bryan Green lists informal home meetings, visitations, witness meetings, and youth camps among the ways in which youth themselves can do evangelistic work on their own.²³

To get his youth started on evangelistic work, the pastor may find it advisable to take two or three of the youth along with him when he makes calls on some of the young people on his prospect list. He will then have a good starting point for the discussions of methods in his evangelism classes. He will also remind his Christian youth that clean living, honesty, and generally healthy thinking bear loud witness for Christ. For this reason church attendance and frequent attendance at the Lord's Table will be a large part of the evangelism program of his youth group. Talking to unchurched friends about church functions, especially summer camps, Lutheran Service Volunteer Schools, vacation Bible school teaching, and about the special services at the great church festival are also eloquent testimonies to the faith in their hearts. A study of ex corde prayer will also be of great

²²Voorhees, "Youth Evangelism," an unpublished term paper in the possession of Rev. W. H. Hillmer, The Lutheran Building, St. Louis 2, Missouri, n. d., p. 21.

²³Bryan Green, The Practice of Evangelism (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), pp. 170 f.

great help in the evangelism program.²⁴

There are a number of helps the pastor can use in his evangelism classes. Foremost among these are the materials available in the Walther League's effort called "Youth Evangelism Service,"²⁵ and in Go and Tell,²⁶ a booklet dealing with motivation, message, and methods of evangelism. You Shall be My Witness²⁷ can be used as collateral reading by the youth and will help the pastor in setting up his course in evangelism. Filmstrips and movies on evangelism are also available from the Walther League in Chicago and from Concordia Publishing House in St. Louis.

A good way of beginning a program of youth evangelism in the local parish is outlined in Rev. H. Hartner's report to the General Mission Conference held in Kansas City in May, 1952:

²⁴Deffner, op. cit., p. 12.

²⁵A kit with manual and other materials is available from the Walther League, 675 N. Dearborn St., Chicago 10, Ill.

²⁶A 48-page pamphlet available from The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, 210 N. Broadway, St. Louis 2, Mo., n. p. n. d. . . .

²⁷Willaim S. Avery and Royal E. Leshner, You Shall be My Witnesses (Philadelphia: The Muhlenberg Press, 1948).

²⁸"And You Also Are Witnesses," The Walther League Messenger (April 1954), p. 12.

1. Two or three meetings with your young people's group to stress again the challenge of reaching youth through youth.--Training them in some fundamentals of evangelism.--Stressing again fundamentals of sin and grace--privileges and opportunity in your own community.
2. Develop list of prospects, friends in their own community, those who have attended Sunday School but were not confirmed, those in Young People's Bible classes, perhaps getting lists also from the high school principal, contacts through scouting, CAP, etc.
3. Sunday evening evangelism program for one month or each evening during week according to local preference.
 - A. 5:30 P.M.--Snack
 - B. Six to seven P.M.--Group play, choosing games which are in keeping with the principle of Christian fellowship; play emphasizing values as group participation, sense of belonging, etc.--the type encouraged by our Youth Worker's Conferences.
 - C. 7:00 to 8:00 P.M.--Worship period
 - 1.) Singing--about 15 or 20 minutes--informal Gospel hymns, Negro spirituals; with theme songs each evening, for example, "My Jesus, I Love Thee," or another hymn emphasizing personal connection with Christ.
 - 2.) Worship by youth--4 to 6 young people, having prepared in advance a written testimonial on subjects such as "What Jesus Means to Me," "Why I Love My Church," "What My Church Has Done for Me," etc. The LSV Schools have proven what a beautiful job our own young people can do in this respect and how worshipful and educational these presentations can be.
 - 3.) Quiet period--approximately ten minutes, time for meditation and personal prayer.
 - 4.) Vespers by the pastor. Simple Gospel messages with pointed invitations to accept Christ.

4. Follow up with courses on fundamental teachings of the Bible for all young people who have been reached during the month or week of evangelism. This could be help on Sunday morning with the Sunday School period, or on Sunday evening in connection with a youth program.²⁹

After such a program has been initiated, it will be comparatively easy to launch an intensive and permanent program of evangelism through the existing youth groups.

At the same time the youth evangelism program is being set up, the pastor should see to it that an orderly systematic procedure is followed, so that all prospects are followed up, and so that he can channel the prospects into a special teen-age level of confirmation instruction. Witnessing must always be followed up and must lead into Christian education in order to be of value.

Rev. John Fritz, of Amenia, North Dakota, writes that he and his Walther Leaguers have a system of "progress reports." In their special evangelism meetings each Leaguer reports to him on the progress made, and the pastor then follows up with a call of his own, if deemed expedient. Any unusual event is told to the whole group. A complete filing system is carefully kept in connection with the prospect list. These careful records help in deciding

²⁹Enlisting and Training Kingdom Workers (a manual on evangelism issued by the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod's committee on enlisting and training the laity, available at the Lutheran Building, 210 North Broadway, St. Louis, Missouri), n.d., p. 84.

what should be the next steps.³⁰ Such a system of records is absolutely necessary in any program of evangelism, and it serves to encourage the youth in their efforts.

Fritz also advocates the use of the "buddy system." Each Walther Leaguer is responsible especially for one to three prospects. He singles them out for special concentration in witnessing, he brings them to church functions of all kinds, and he prays for them. These youth at Amenia, North Dakota make use of "prayer lists" in connection with their "buddy system." The pastor teaches them just what to pray for in each case. The result has been an amazing growth, not only in the number of souls won for Christ, but also in the prayer life of those already members. This "buddy system" is continued until some time after the confirmation of the prospect, when it seems certain that the new member will remain active in church life.³¹

Another use of the principle behind the "buddy system" has been worked out in Trinity Lutheran Church at Mission, Kansas. Their Walther League accepts prospects into full membership with the League, including youth from other churches which do not have a systematic youth program

³⁰Fritz, op. cit.

³¹Ibid.

of their own. Whether this is advisable in other places must be decided by local circumstances.³² The advantage of this idea is, of course, that it makes use of the desire to "belong" which is so strong in high school youth.

Other means of getting and holding prospects are dating, ushering, parties (both in the youth group and at home), and other social events. One pastor suggests that wherever possible the Christian youth in a high school can put up posters advertising such discussions as "What Are Heaven and Hell?" "Will Prayer Help?" "How Does God Feel Toward Me?" and "Is There a Disagreement Between the Bible and Science?" On the bottom of the poster an invitation such as "Come! Bring your friends to (time and place)," could be added. Such posters could be placed the same way posters advertising other church functions are placed.

Christian youth, after they have begun their program of evangelism, will find many other ways to advertise their religion. It is up to the pastor to keep up with them. As has been indicated previously, the power of the Holy Spirit in the Gospel is eminently qualified to take advantage both of the enthusiasm of Christian youth in witnessing, and of the confusion in the maturing minds of the unchurched youth.

³² Steyer, op. cit.

CHAPTER IV

PREPARING UNCHURCHED TEEN-AGERS FOR CONFIRMATION

As stated in the introduction of this paper, a program of winning high school youth for Christ must aim at educating such youth in the Christian faith and in its meaning for time and for eternity. Therefore this paper must include principles by which the pastor can set up a course of instruction on the level of high school youth. Because such classes are almost non-existent, a synthesis of several elements had to be drawn up. These elements will become evident during the course of this chapter.

The Student

At this age the student is looking for basic principles upon which to build his philosophy of life. Religious questions and conflicts play a rather important part in his thinking despite appearances to the contrary. He will question everything, including Bible truths. The appeal to reason is the most effective way to satisfy his questions.¹ Murray lists the following principles to use when answering the questions put by high school youth:

¹See Chapter II. The other principles stated in this chapter are also based on the material in Chapter II unless otherwise designated.

1. Answer only the question that has been asked; do not knowingly involve other questions.
2. Receive all queries in a friendly spirit, and never become personal in your remarks.
3. Admit the validity of the question and face it honestly in your answer.
4. If you do not know the answer, state this fact; and, if worthwhile, set the class to search for the proper answer. They will enjoy the search.
5. Consider carefully all "catch" and smart Alec" queries. Do they mean an attempted display of knowledge? Or do they give indications of a suppressed desire? In such questions after you have carefully reached a conclusion, go and have a personal conference with that pupil. Do not go just to advise him. Rather discuss the class-work in general and demonstrate the sincerity of your friendship.²

The pastor will, therefore, face a dilemma. On the one hand, youth does not want to be "told" or lectured to." They want to know things on their own experience. On the other hand, the pastor will find very few youth who know very much of Christian doctrine at all. He will have to start from scratch in instructing the youth. Thus he will be running the risk of teaching things which may be "old stuff" for some of the youth. But by making the class a co-operative venture rather than a dictation period, the pastor will have gone a long way toward solving this dilemma.

Ross concludes that only three out of ten youth seem to use some form of God's will as remotely determining right

²Alfred L. Murray, Psychology for Christian Teachers (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1943), p. 128.

and wrong. Of these three, one uses the Golden Rule and two use the Ten Commandments.³ Because so many of the instructees, therefore, will not recognize the validity of the Law or will not know its contents, the pastor will have to begin the study of the Law from the common starting point of man's natural knowledge of right and wrong. For example, he may begin with a discussion of juvenile delinquency and proceed to the motives of such actions until he finds the motive in man's natural tendency to do wrong things. This he will then be able to identify as original sin, and he will then suggest that the class turn to the sections of the Bible to see what God has already told to man about original sin. In that way the pastor will be appealing to their developing desire to use reason, and at the same time he will be strengthening their faith in the validity and trustworthiness of Scripture. Other approaches to Biblical doctrine for use in instructing youth will be demonstrated later.

As was pointed out before, youth looks to certain leaders as ideals. If the pastor has had a counseling experience with some of his class, or if he has established

³Murray G. Ross, *Religious Beliefs of Youth* (New York: Association Press, 1950), p. 112.

himself as a leader of youth in some other way, he will find that they will make him one of their ideals. This is a great advantage for the pastor as long as the youth do not make him an ideal so high that they are coming to the class merely because they like him. In the latter case it would be difficult for the pastor to transfer the youth's ideal to the person of Christ, and the pastor will do well to watch for this danger.

On the whole, however, the pastor will find the youth willing students once they have begun to take instructions. There is less chance that he will find the type of mischief in this class that he finds in his seventh and eighth grade class, both because of the age difference, and because of the fact that those who do not want to come to this class will not be forced to come. Therefore the pastor will be able to make the most of this opportunity, for as Cole puts it:

Adolescence. . . is the last stage before adulthood, and it offers therefore to both parents and teachers the last opportunity to educate a child for his adult responsibilities.⁴

And, as the class proceeds, the power of the Holy Spirit in the Word which is being taught will begin to have its effect on the behavior and receptivity of the youth in the class.

⁴Luella Cole, Psychology of Adolescence (Third edition; New York: Rinehart and Col, Inc., 1948), p. 5.

The Teacher

Several basic qualifications are necessary for the pastor who teaches a high school confirmation class.

First, the pastor must be able to answer satisfactorily most of the questions which the youth put to him. He must know his theology, being personally convinced of what he is about to teach, not merely quoting what his professors before him have dictated in the classroom at the seminary he attended. Youth loses confidence in adults when they cannot answer youth's questions.

Second, the pastor must have a real concern for each youth in his class. He must love youth as individuals and recognize the infinite value of each of his instructees in the sight of God. Adults sometimes have trouble seeing youth as equal to themselves in human values. The Christ-like concern for individuals must be personified in the pastor in all his work, but especially in this work.

Third, while instructing and counseling these youth, the pastor will have occasion to hear some astonishing things. Some of the teenage slang, some of the astonishing examples they present, and some of the revealing questions they ask will surprise him greatly. But he must never show his surprise or appear to be embarrassed by anything said in such situations. If he does, he will

have lost a very valuable means of finding out just what is going on under the surface in the conscious and sub-conscious minds of his youth.

Fourth, in teaching anything, including religion, the pastor will be building up rapport by getting the youth to set up their own program of instruction as much as possible. The wise teacher of youth provides something for them to do, and then he leads them to believe that they themselves have conceived the idea. For example, after the pastor has taught a lesson on prayer, he will lead the youth to think of writing out prayers for presentation at the next lesson.

In general, the teacher of youth will use the functional method of teaching, that is, he will teach not only by word, but also by deed. Even attitudes can be taught in this way. By emphasizing the motivating power of Christ's love for us, and by showing in his demeanor that he, too, has been affected by this love, thus giving evidence of the fact that this motivation really works in actual practice, the pastor will be passing on to the students the functional use of the truths he has just been talking about.⁵

⁵Arthur C. Repp, "Objectives of Parish Education," Concordia Theological Monthly (July 1948), p. 10.

The Goals in High School Confirmation Instruction

The primary goal toward which all Christian education is directed is to make Christ the integrating Ideal of all lesser ideals in the psychological processes of each student, so that he sees Christ as the source of forgiveness of sins and of his own Christian-orientated desires and drives. We see, therefore, that the goals of Christian education can be divided into two groups, faith goals and life goals.⁶ Dr. Repp mentions the four goals of parish education used in the days before the use of functional type of teaching:

1. Acquaintance with the fundamentals of Bible history.
2. Acquaintance with the fundamentals of Biblical doctrine.
3. Skill in handling the Bible itself.
4. A repertoire of pertinent portions of Scriptures and related material (Catechism and hymns) for personal comfort, joy and proof.⁷

These are recognized to be essential goals also for the high school confirmation class, but youth needs more than this to face life with the Christian philosophy of life.

To fill in this gap, Dr. Repp adds the following goals:

⁶Richard R. Caemmerer, Preaching to the Church (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary Mimeo Co., 1952), p. 25.

⁷Repp, op. cit., p. 7.

What does the teacher hope to accomplish in the individual so that he can take his effectually Christian place in the home?

1. Preparation for Christian marriage.
2. The ability of parents to bring up their children in the nurture of the Lord.
3. The proper relation of children to their parents.
4. The art of Christian living in the home--between husband and wife, brothers and sisters, in-laws, etc.
5. The proper use of leisure time by all members of the family--making it a well-knit unit.

What does the teacher hope to accomplish in the individual so that he can take his effectually Christian place in the Church?

1. Acquaintance of the individual members with the work of the congregation, Synod, and the church at large, with a view to greater participation in this work.
2. Leadership training for the activities of the congregation and the Church (administration, education, missions, charity, etc.)
3. A sense of stewardship in cheerful and proportionate giving.
4. Acquaintance with, and appreciation of, the history of the Church, including that of the local congregation.
5. An understanding and appreciation of the liturgical heritage of the Church.

What does the teacher hope to accomplish in the individual so that he can take his effectually Christian place in the community?

1. Evangelism--local, national, and foreign missions.
2. Christian citizenship.⁸

To these goals Dr. Repp adds the devotional life, the true concepts and use of worship in the public service, and living according to God's Law as an expression of one's faith.⁹

⁸Ibid., pp. 13 f.

⁹Ibid., p. 10.

A study of the goals mentioned by Dr. Repp will be of great help to the pastor who is setting up the course of instruction for high school youth. To relate these goals to the lives of these youth, the pastor will change some of the emphases and use means different from those used in the children's or adults' confirmation classes. The principles laid down in Chapter II can serve as a basis for these changes.

Special Areas of Instruction to Be Added for Youth

The main points of Christian doctrine must be taught to any confirmation class, regardless of the age bracket into which the class may fall. However, the application of the Gospel to the problems of life causes a change in emphasis and approach at the different age levels. Because of the marginal existence of high school youth,¹⁰ and because they are for the first time beginning to realize what some of the problems of adults are which they will have to face, the Gospel must be applied to them in such a way that they can use Christ as their Guide in solving these new problems.

The first of these special considerations is the problem presented to teen-agers in their high school curriculum. Almost any science textbook or world history

¹⁰Here "marginal existence" refers to the fact that a teen-ager is considered an adult one moment and a child the next, whichever suits his peer group at a given time.

textbook takes evolution as a proved fact. Most high school teachers also take it as a fact, according to an interview held with Dr. Clarence Peters, chairman of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod's Board for Young People's Work. He suggests that the pastor meet the evolutionary theory "head-on" with Genesis 1 and 2, at the same time impressing on the minds of the youth that this is what God says about the origin of creation and of man. A frank discussion of the issues involved is the best way to handle the problem.

The second consideration arises from the fact that secularism and the "American way of thinking" are given such prominent places in the curriculum of the average public high school. As Landis says, "We believe deeply in the Christian ideals of meekness and humility, and yet in our competitive system have exaggerated traits of assertiveness and aggressiveness which are the exact antithesis of the spirit of meekness."¹¹ This is a matter of attitudes. Attitudes are taught as much by actions of others as by words. But the antithesis of the American attitude and the Christian attitude must be clearly pointed out for the youth.

¹¹Paul H. Landis, Adolescence and Youth: The Process of Maturing, (Second edition; New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1952), p. 82.

Another consideration is that, after the articles of redemption and justification have been thoroughly studied, the doctrine of the Church must be made very clear for the teen-agers. With the true concept of the New Testament ekklesia in mind, the youth will have solved many of their confusions about the differences between denominations, and this, in turn, will help greatly to allay their natural fears of "dogmatism" in religion, especially regarding the views taught them on Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The pastor must always stress, "This is what God tells us in the Bible," not, "This is what the Lutherans say." The true doctrine of the Church reinforces the former type of approach rather than the latter.

A study of the family in relation to the church and to Christ is very necessary for teen-agers. In studying the family, such topics as family devotions, the relationship between husband and wife and between parents and children, divorce, engagement, and dating should be frankly and clearly viewed from the vantage point of the Word. If the pastor gives the impression that he would rather hurry through this section and is not at ease discussing it, he will have gone a long way toward losing the confidence he needs so badly in dealing with and winning youth. On the other hand, he must not spend so much time on this section that it takes on an importance in youth's minds greater

than it deserves. Christ and the Gospel must take first place always, and the Gospel must be brought into relationship to every unit of the course, including this unit.

In connection with the study of the family, it must be pointed out that the pastor can never make light of the problems or the emotional attachments which he may encounter in such a discussion or in other dealings with youth. This is also one of the quickest ways to lose youth's confidence. The pastor must try to see the problems of youth and their "puppy love affairs" and the like from their own point of view. This is the principle of empathy, which is a necessity especially in youth work.¹²

Other areas which youth should study more than children or adults are worship in general; stewardship of time, talents, and possessions considered from the point of view of a youth with a part-time job or baby-sitting income; and the practical functioning of the royal priesthood. It is recognized that all Christians of all ages need to emphasize these areas more than is done at present.

Memory Work for Youth

Memory work has been a sore spot in confirmation instruction for many years. Too often it has not been

¹²Rollo May, The Art of Counseling (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1939), p. 123.

related to the interests and life needs of the instructees.

For this reason Dr. Repp advises that

more stress should be placed in showing a child how the passage is of value to him now, and under what circumstances it can be used. This should be followed by giving him occasions to use it under such circumstances.¹³

Walther League discussions and Bible Class work afford fine opportunities for making use of the passages learned. In assigning passages for memory, the pastor should keep the number of passages to a minimum. It would be well to give the student a choice of passages in some areas where a number of passages can be chosen. The accent should be on gaining familiarity with the Bible itself and on having at hand a few well-memorized gems emphasizing the Christian hope and joy, rather than "laying low heretical doctrines."¹⁴ A few favorite hymns can also be memorized.

Integrating the Instruction with Youth's Life Needs

Another fault in much of the church's instruction is lack of integration with the issues of life. If doctrine seems theoretical and unrelated to specific situations in which instructees find themselves, it remains on the intellectual level and never reaches down to the functional

¹³Repp, op. cit., p. 9.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 8.

level--that is, a "Sunday faith" never becomes a "week-day faith." On the youth level this is doubly important. Youth study only what they consider interesting. In order for religion to be interesting, it must be related to their experiences and to their felt needs.¹⁵

The relationship of some area of Christian doctrine to the needs or experiences of youth can be made either at the beginning of a lesson in the approach or at the end in the activity suggested in connection with the lesson.¹⁶ Thus, a lesson on original and actual sin could begin with a few examples of actual occurrences of delinquency among the friends or acquaintances of the youth in the class. The pastor would ask what made these friends do what they did. After the motives had been ascertained, he would ask how those motives got into the minds of the delinquents. In that way he could say, "We don't understand how such things get into the minds of people, but God tells us how it happens." Then he could turn to the appropriate passages or story in the Bible. Such an approach would have the additional advantage of rooting the faith of the youth even more deeply in the validity,

¹⁵Cole, op. cit., p. 592.

¹⁶Cf. the example of the "unit system" of religious education in Arthur L. Miller, "Baptism and its Meaning for the Christian," Religion in Lutheran Schools, Wm. A. Kramer, editor (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1949), pp. 78 f.

infallibility, and practicality of Scripture. If talking about delinquency of friends is too touchy a subject, the pastor could begin with some of the stories in comic books read by the youth.

Other examples of methods for making religion relevant to youth would be as follows. For the stewardship of time and talents the pastor could ask the girls in the class to contribute some of their ability as typists in the church office. This would be an example of an activity suggested at the end of a lesson. After the lesson on the royal priesthood, the pastor could appoint two or three boys or call for volunteers to attend a voters meeting and the meeting of the Lutheran Laymen's League and to give a report on how the royal priesthood is functioning in such groups. For the Fourth Commandment the pastor could begin the lesson with asking the youth what their school is doing for civil defense. In order to direct the attention of the youth to the fact that God is behind the government and government's protection of citizens, the pastor could follow with questions like "Who sets up civil defense?" "Why?" "How did our government start?" and "How did the idea of having a government begin?" For the lessons on worship the pastor could see that some of the boys of the class have a part in the youth services, such as reading from the Bible, ushering, etc. In opening the lesson on

the doctrine of God or of salvation, a comparison could be made between the respective doctrine as found in the current English or science text and the doctrine found in Scripture. Many other possibilities will suggest themselves in the local situation.

Setting up the Class in the Local Situation

Several suggestions were received as to the time of instruction. One class is held on Wednesday evenings for one hour, just as the regular adult instruction classes are held.¹⁷ Another suggestion made by a pastor in an interview was to have the instruction periods on Sunday morning, during the regular time for the high school Bible Class. This would have the advantage that the transition into the Bible Class would be a natural outgrowth of the instructions. Pastor Cattau's teen-age confirmation classes met sometimes on Saturday mornings. But one year the class had to meet from 6:30 to 8:30 P.M. Friday evenings because so many of them had jobs on Saturday mornings. He found it best to let the class decide when they wanted to meet. "Once they have made their choice," he says, "they will be present."¹⁸

¹⁷Letter from Mr. Larry Steyer, March 25, 1954.

¹⁸H. G. Cattau, "We're Sold on Our Confirmation Class for Older Teen-Agers," Today, V (December 1950), p. 15.

As to the number of instruction periods, this must be decided by the pastor. He will take into consideration the previous religious knowledge of the class, the speed at which the class receives the material, the thoroughness with which they receive it, and the amount of material he wants to hand on to them. Another factor, of course, will be the amount and the quality of the Bible study and Walther League topics presented to them during the time of instructions. Rev. John Fritz writes that he used twelve lessons in twelve to twenty-four sessions, depending on the individual class. Each session lasted fifty to sixty minutes each, twice a week.¹⁹ This author favors a longer period of instruction, but if augmented by intensive Walther League study, twelve lessons may be adequate.

Dr. Erdmann W. Frenk, of Joliet, Illinois, makes these suggestions for confirmation classes in general, and they fit very well into a course of instruction for teenagers:

Chart and balance the program of instruction in the light of the hours available. Don't emphasize Law too much, since it is in the field of natural religion. Hit Gospel harder. /

Put greater emphasis on the Bible and the use of the Bible.

Simplify instructions to meet the instructee's level.

¹⁹Letter from Rev. John Fritz, March 25, 1954.

Enlist parental (home) support and co-operation.

Maintain a high spiritual atmosphere for confirmation instruction.²⁰

His suggestion of making greater use of the Bible is especially important for youth. For carrying out this idea the best method is probably to have the references to the Bible passages written down and copied by the student, so that the references must be looked up in the Bible itself.

Several excellent outlines for this sort of instruction are available for adults.²¹ By adding applications, approaches, and activities suitable for high school youth, the pastor will be able to integrate these outlines with youth's needs and experiences. He will have to add the areas suggested above to fill the needs of youth.

In setting up his course of instruction, the pastor will find certain areas of conflict with the local high school and with other local agencies for youth. "Proms" are here to stay, according to Dr. Clarence Peters in an interview with the author. He suggests two avenues of attack. One is to make the church's youth program so interesting and rich that youth would rather go to it than

²⁰Erdmann W. Frenk, "Improving Confirmation Instruction" unpublished, mimeographed, paper in the author's possession.

²¹For a list of available outlines and other helpful materials see the bibliography.

to a "prom." The other is to make the issues clear for youth so that they themselves can make the necessary decisions under the influence of the Gospel. The pastor must show how the Gospel gives the power to make right choices, even if they require that the youth go against the crowd.

Hazing is another problem that will confront youth in instruction classes. The methods for dealing with this problem will be the same as that mentioned for "proms."

Youth lodges present another problem for the pastor, especially among the youth who are not as yet members of his congregation. The whole lodge problem should be taken up in Walther League discussions from time to time, with special discussions whenever any of the members are being approached by members of a lodge with the offer of membership. If these discussions are advertised through the member youth and by the pastor in the teen-age confirmation class, the basic principles can be taken care of outside the instructions. But the pastor will always want to make sure that the youth in his class understand clearly the issues involved and are not bothered by the question anymore. A review of the lodge problem under the concept of the Christian Church will help considerably.

Integration of Instructees during Instruction Period

This problem has been treated above as part of the program for approaching unchurched youth. However, several additional points must be stressed here.

Dr. Frenk maintains that the secret of integration of new members and of those being instructed for membership is Christian fellowship. He calls this the Familia Christi concept of the church and church membership.²² This spiritual fellowship must be shown, according to Dr. Frenk, by fellowship in worship, work, witnessing, life's joys and sorrows, and evangelism. This list is remarkably comparable to the program of the Walther League. An active Walther League, therefore, is a major means of integrating the youth in the instruction class into congregational life. This can be done by means of the entire Walther League program in general and by special parties and receptions for the instructees. Youth services, the "buddy system," choir, and family nights to which the instructees can bring their entire families and their dates and friends round out the program of integration. The best means, of course, remains that of finding the closest friends inside the church. This calls for the practice of

²²Erdmann W. Frenk, "Drawing the New Members into the Activities of the Church," an unpublished, mimeographed outline for a class lecture in the possession of the author.

true Christian love by all members of the church, especially the youth of the church.

Examination and Confirmation of the Instructees

Fritz writes that he holds private examinations before the day of confirmation.²³ Steyer writes that in his church there is no examination, but a personal "chat" is held with each candidate for confirmation.²⁴ Dr. Peters advocated a private true-false test with explanations of why the answers were chosen. Some sort of examination should be held in any case. An extensive examination, however, is not necessary in most cases, since the pastor will have a fairly accurate idea of the knowledge of each instructee long before the examination. The purpose of the examination is more to review the material with the instructees than to "see how much they remember." It may be good in some cases to have the Walther League present at the examination, together with the youth representative in the Church council or an elder. But each situation must be decided on its own merits.

²³Fritz, op. cit.

²⁴Steyer, op. cit.

The confirmation rite itself should be a high spot in the life of the youth. It should include a willing and joyful confession of Christ as personal Savior. The pastor should take care during the course of instruction to make this goal of confessing Christ clear to every youth in the class.

Convis describes the confirmation rite as follows:

The personal commitment should be affirmed publicly in the presence of the church membership on a Sunday that should be the high point of the church year, and the church should respond with fitting ceremonies to welcome the new follower of the Master into the Christian fellowship.²⁵

If Convis, who is a Congregationalist, can see the value of having a festive, happy occasion at the acceptance of new members, then the Lutheran Church should certainly make a big occasion of confirmation.

Two elements should be in every confirmation, especially the confirmation of a teen-age class. One is the heart-felt confession of the confirmand, and the other is the response by the congregation that it accepts the new members and prays for the Holy Spirit upon the

²⁵ Lewis A. Convis, Adventuring into the Church (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1951), p. 6.

confirmands. Dr. Frenk sums up the confirmation rite in the following words:

Dress up the confirmation service. A public confession of Christ and identification with His Church must always be a happy, festive occasion. The value of historic pageantry in this service should not be overlooked. Vows should be individually spoken. The congregation should publicly voice its reception of the catechumens. Parents and sponsors should not be overlooked at this time.²⁶

And if, after the service, the Walther League members and others will greet the newly confirmed showing that they are glad about their confession of Christ just made, the first steps toward the successful integration of the new members will have been made.

²⁶Frenk, "Improving Confirmation Instruction," p. 3.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

To do a good job of winning unchurched teen-agers, the church must study their psychology and their problems as well as it has studied the psychology and problems of children and adults. The results of such a study will be valuable, both for the approach to high school youth, and for instructing them for confirmation. Therefore, an intensive well-organized program of evangelism directed at winning high school youth is in order. This program of evangelism, to be successful, must culminate in a regular high school level of confirmation instruction, in addition to the levels of instruction for children and adults.

This thesis has tried to fill this need for such a study of unchurched high school youth, and it has attempted to apply the principles drawn from this study to the practical situation. The following statements will serve to point up the main lessons learned from these principles and from their practical applications:

1. A substantial mission field exists among the unchurched high school youth in the United States.
2. Many of these youth realize that they need help to solve their moral and religious conflicts.

3. The Church has almost totally failed to relate itself and its message to these needs of youth.
4. Therefore, the Church needs
 - A. a good counseling program.
 - B. a healthy Christian atmosphere in the Church youth groups.
 - C. an active program of evangelism by the member youth.
 - D. training in such a program by the youth leader.
 - E. co-operation with the local high school, juvenile authorities, welfare agencies, and other community agencies for youth.
 - F. a definite and recognized program in the local congregation for helping youth of the congregation and of the community, backed by an official and effectual status within the voters' assembly and the Church council.
5. Instruction of high school youth must take into consideration the following principles:
 - A. Instruction of youth must be
 1. undogmatic.
 2. life-related.
 3. eschatological in background.
 4. functional.
 - B. Problems posed by instructees must be frankly faced and answered.
 - C. Integration into the youth group of the congregation is an essential part of confirmation instruction.
 - D. The confession of faith at confirmation must be made a memorable and significant event in the life of the youth.

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