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## Miscellanea

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## Miscellanea

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### Concerning the Present Strike Situation

Though we pastors are servants of the Word and should devote ourselves to the preaching of the Gospel and not to efforts to settle political, economic, or purely social questions, it is highly important that we should be informed on conditions in the world in which we live and move. Furthermore, it cannot be denied that many of the social and economic questions have moral aspects which bring them into that sphere on which the pastor as the exponent of the Word of God has to give instruction. With these ideas in mind we herewith reprint an editorial from *America* (Jesuit weekly) which has the heading "Behind the GM Strike." We do not intend to pronounce on the correctness or incorrectness of the view of the labor controversy taken in this editorial, but we believe it important for our pastors to read this evaluation of what is at the basis of the labor trouble in the automobile industry.

"Every human person is doubly sacred. He is sacred by reason of his origin from God; he is sacred by reason of his redemption by Christ.

"It is not the least of Christianity's contributions to civilization that it has striven constantly to force this double truth on the attention of men. Without the recognition of the innate dignity and sanctity of the individual, there can be great material progress, but no civilization worthy of the name.

"That *laissez-faire* capitalism, which dehumanized the working masses, arose after the middle of the eighteenth century and flourished through the nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries was no accident. By that time the religion of Christ had ceased to have much influence on the civilization of the West. A new age was emerging, an age of secularism, in which the arts and sciences, politics and economics were to declare their independence of religion and go their proud, autonomous ways.

"Thus it happened that human beings became subject to the impersonal forces of the market place. Having been freed gradually from the slavery of the ancient, pagan world, workers were handed over to a new kind of bondage, which was called euphemistically 'the law of supply and demand.' Of all the crimes of *laissez-faire* capitalism, this was the worst. It provoked, by way of reaction, the rise of Marxian Socialism; it shocked the conscience of Rome and inspired Leo's *Rerum Novarum*; it started a workers' crusade, called trade-unionism, devoted to the re-establishment of human dignity in the market place.

"It may seem at first sight a long cry from these moral and historical observations to the bitter realities of strife-torn Detroit. It is not so. For beneath the surface of the fundamental issue in the struggle between General Motors and the United Auto-

mobile Workers is the refusal of the workers to be any longer the voiceless victims of impersonal economic forces. They have learned from experience that collective bargaining over wages, hours, and working conditions, while productive of much good, can never give them that material well-being which notably assists men to develop their personalities. Of what avail are fair hourly wage rates, a forty-hour week, and decent working conditions if the workers are unable to find jobs? Of what use is collective bargaining in the depths of a national depression?

"These questions have been forced on unions by the boom-bust cycle of our capitalistic economy, and they are seeking the answers in a perfectly understandable way. They are striving to widen the field of collective bargaining with a view to forcing industrial leaders to adopt wage, price and profit policies designed to level off the ups and downs of business activity.

"That General Motors understands what the real issue is has been clear all along, although many people—and most newspapers—seem to have missed the point. After the publication of the Corporation's counter-proposals on December 17, there is no longer any excuse for misunderstanding. 'Wages, hours of employment, and other conditions of employment are the only matters which are subject to collective bargaining' stated GM, and it went on to say that all other matters 'are the sole responsibility of the corporation.'

"Whether the UAW will accept this limitation on collective bargaining is very doubtful, since it is difficult to see how trade unions, dealing with corporate giants in a mass-production economy, can fulfill their historic function within such bounds. If the rights of the human person are to prevail over the blind forces of the market place and the boundless thirst for profits—and it is the purpose of trade unions to see that they do—management must, sooner or later, acknowledge its duty to adopt wage, price, and profit policies calculated to stop the boom-bust cycle. Its unwillingness to do so, and to recognize labor's interest in the question, is primarily responsible for the strike at General Motors. This will become still clearer as the hearings before a Presidential fact-finding board proceed in Washington." A.

### **Some Thought-Provoking Remarks on the Sunday School and Christian Education**

In the *Christian Century* of June 6, 1945, appeared the following article, written by Werner Fallow, minister of religious education at the Community Church of Winnetka, Ill.

"The Sunday school belonged to a period when religious teaching was centered where it should be, in the family, and family life was centered in the church. Unfortunately the family now looks to specialists to train children in religion, as other specialists are called on to direct the various other processes by which they

are developed into worthy adults. And the religious instruction of adults has largely shrunk to the Sunday morning sermon, which may be educational in a narrow sense, but does not typically deal with the problem presented by a generation of children growing up in a materialistic and religiously indifferent society.

"As a means for high-lighting and underscoring through-the-week religious learning in the home, the Sunday school fulfilled its mission. But now that family life has been secularized and is increasingly fragmentized, the role of the Sunday school is out-moded. We might as well admit it: the Sunday school is dead. It could live no longer than the only job it was equipped to do existed.

"This, of course, does not mean that the church is no longer responsible for guiding the process of Christian education. What it does mean is that the church, facing this new situation, now needs to propagate its Gospel first among family and all adult church groups and then among children. By this complete reversal of method—and I am convinced by this alone—will the religious ignorance and materialistic values of our society retreat before an informed and devoted body of Christian educators which is made up of fathers and mothers—teachers in the home—as well equipped and consistent in their teaching as ministers and lay teachers are in the church.

"If this is to take place, we need a school of the church. For a quarter century we have called some Sunday schools church schools. They have been so designated because their program tends to be wider than Sunday training. They have sought to enlarge their services during the week in order to supplement impoverished teaching both in the modern home and in the church. But just as the Sunday school cannot justify its continuation, neither can the church school which stays on the fringe of the educational problem by concentrating on children.

"Modern religious education, despite extended teaching periods, varied curricula, employed personnel, excellent equipment, through-the-week activities and community councils that sponsor various kinds of weekday religious teaching, has never been notably successful. The reason is plain. It is child-centered and not family-centered. Religious education, however highly organized and touted, will remain superficial until the Christian church goes to the root of the matter and prepares laymen to guide religious development within the family and within the church fellowship.

"Religious education as it has grown up in this century has played too completely into the hands of specialists, or pseudo-specialists. They are all right in their place, but they cannot take the place of parents. Protestantism professes to advocate a priesthood of believers. Yet, so far as Christian education is concerned, we have left the training of the child to a priesthood of teacher

specialists. The result has proved as restrictive of purposeful Christian growth in our day as ever popery was in medieval times.

"When parents are confronted with the fact that theirs is the primary responsibility for inculcating in their children Christian insight and conduct, they agree almost unanimously. They readily understand that religious awareness grips a growing child and colors his way of living largely to the degree that his family group understands and practices religious principles. Moreover, the tide of national emergency and individual uncertainty has caught parents in a swing from secular interests toward spiritual foundations. The times are right for the local church to establish an educational program centered in the family unit and working with adults, rather than spending its attention on classes for the individual child. Then how should we go about it?

"Let the church first understand that the problem of adequate Christian education for children is really the problem of educating parents and, in fact, the entire adult body of the church. And let parents face the sobering truth that the failure of religious teaching is at least as much due to the failure of the modern home as to the ineptness of modern religious education in the church.

"Adult communicants must face the depth of the issues involved in establishing a genuine school of the church. Inevitably they will see that most of the trouble lies in their own intellectual and emotional confusion concerning religion. Groups of parents and church school teachers, official boards, all the groups which are responsible for the 'adult' life within the church, must probe the issues which are involved in Christian education and nurture. Presently they will realize that individually and collectively they have too little knowledge about the content and meaning of the Judeo-Christian heritage, and perhaps an even less clear-cut and balanced emotional attachment to Jesus Christ.

"The initial step in preparing to guide children along the way of Christian knowledge and faith will, therefore, take adults before a full-length mirror in which they see themselves as (1) inadequately tutored in Biblical content and interpretation; (2) uncomprehending of the meaning of Christian revelation; (3) fearful of the uncomfortable meaning of the Cross; and (4) ready to bolt a mere mention of stringent requirements in applying Christian ethics when material possessions and social status must suffer. This candid full view, this clear mirroring of the self, is almost sure to bring conviction of educational unworthiness. But that is certainly close to conviction of sin. And after conviction, repentance.

"Repentance should drive adults to regular and systematic searching of the Scriptures. If a parent is disinclined to study the Bible on a week night with his minister and other questing spirits for the sake of his own soul, he ought at least to be ready to work regularly—once or twice a month—with competent church school teachers who are assisting with the growth of his

child. That is, assuming the honesty of his allegiance to the church and of his expressed interest in his child's religious development. The parent who keeps abreast of the cultural and intellectual development of his child as the public school leads the way, is potentially capable of doing as well, under the guidance of the church, in growing religiously along with his child.

"Of course, this parent needs to remember that Christian education embraces Biblical knowledge, but Biblical knowledge does not embrace Christian education. That is why he has just begun when he becomes a student of the Bible in general and of the particular portions which his child is studying. Larger and more important is his study of the area of conduct aiming at implementation of prophetic insights, of the Sermon on the Mount, of the revelation of Christ, of the meaning of the Cross, and more. The searching adult, faithful to the task of fitting himself to guide children in the home along the same spiritual levels they travel in the church school, will find himself responding more and more to values which reach him from the mind and spirit that was in Christ. He becomes a new creature. As with Paul, the things he once valued are now trivial; what was trivial is now of supreme worth.

"This conversion is the product of faith that transcends, but never minimizes the importance of, Biblical knowledge. This adult Christian experience is basic to fitness for guiding the religious growth of children, whether the adult be the parent teacher in the home or the teacher in the church school. It is the conduct of parents and their informally expressed attitudes that most strongly influence the actions, the devotions and values, of the young whose lives are in large measure like those of the adults closest to them.

"Unless the church reaches, impinges upon, brings its message and Christian requirements into dynamic relationship with adults, homes will set an example for the young which will undermine and often negate the standards expounded in the church school. The church that teaches only the growing generation and trusts thus to transform society and redeem sinful individuals is aiming at the fringes of the problem of Christian education and will fail. But the church that focuses on the entire family unit, that begins with adults in study groups and remains with them until they are fashioned by the grace of God, is reaching the heart of its teaching task.

"It is essential that a church make parents and all organized groups within its membership aware of Christian educational objectives. The church which is in earnest about its educational responsibility must lead an ever larger portion of its members to take a share in realizing these objectives. No board of deacons ever becomes so wise that fresh examination and study of the functions of the Christian church, its message and meaning, are not needed. The oldest trustee, whose touch with children may be remote, can be led to a new conception of the trust he holds by an

educational program for bringing up children and teaching their parents the terms of Christian living. The routine meetings of business-centered church boards, with their deadening results, must give place to regular exploration and study of the meaning and truth of the Gospel.

"Thus to revitalize a church need not involve more organization. Instead, existing groups can often be utilized in an educational venture bent on continuing discovery of the cardinal principles of the Christian religion and unfettered application of these principles to the problems of living. Parents belong at church school staff meetings no less than church school teachers. The main duty of the teacher is to develop skills in teaching in order to present the right materials for study of the Hebraic-Christian tradition. The main duty of the parent is to provide a daily background of sentiment and practice consistent with, or better than, the spiritual concepts and values taught by the church.

"Let the church turn its traditional adult organizations into study groups. Let these groups be more concerned with systematic development of spiritual seriousness than with preserving stereotyped functions. A church which will do this will be making a school of itself. Its curriculum will be fundamentally theological. The local church is beginning to realize that it has neglected theology. It has done so because it once found theology regarded as the end in view, rather than as a means toward the end of virile Christian living. Now, we may confidently expect such a church as I am trying to sketch to keep its theology in proper perspective.

"Theology for the school of the church is the structure, the form, which carries the content of the Christian message. The church school will never allow its interpretation of the Gospel to be confined to the proportions of any theology. Unlike the traditional Sunday school, which was narrowly authoritarian, the school of the church will have an inner, spiritual authority; never an external, coercive authority. This is a sound religious and educational principle.

"But if the curriculum must be more theological, equally so must it be social. This is not to say that the church should try to duplicate a college or university program of social studies. It is to say that ways and means must be learned, and then used, in the church to bring the weight of Christian truth to bear on all forms of injustice, on racial hatreds and discrimination, on economic arrogance, corrosive nationalism, and every evil and every unfinished work in this unfinished world.

"More than the educational program of the church is at stake. More than the genius of Protestantism is at stake. Christendom itself will suffer constriction unless the trend of its education improves. There will be no Christian social order if the church cannot educate existing adult groups within its membership and Christianize so small a unit as the family. Here, surely, is the end at which the school of the church must be aimed."

## The Proper Way of Reading the Scriptures in Church Services

This subject receives discussion in an article which appeared in the *Presbyterian* of January 3, 1946, and which had the heading, "Rightly Dividing the Word." The author is Prof. Stanley S. Newcomb of Princeton Theological Seminary. The subject is important enough to warrant our reprinting a few paragraphs.

"Because the Bible is the Word of God, many ministers or persons who read the Scriptures feel that the Bible should be read with a 'holy' or 'ministerial' tone. This special serious demeanor becomes ludicrous to persons who have become acquainted with good interpretative work over the radio and in the theater. In all probability, many offenders do not realize that they are guilty of such reading and would change if told. Possibly they have fallen into this habit by imitation of the minister of their youth, when such delivery was the style. There was a time when the omission of this special cadence indicated that the minister did not have a true appreciation of the Scriptures. Undoubtedly if the origin of the tone were traced, it would be discovered that it arose because the reader tried to express in a serious manner that which he did not mentally comprehend. When there is vocalization without a clear mental concept, it is bound to become 'tinkling brass or a clanging cymbal.'

"To free oneself from this vocal peculiarity the individual must be himself. He who interprets must study the passage thoroughly; read thoughts, not words, and assume the mental attitude of imparting ideas directly to his hearers as one does in ordinary conversation.

"Special care is necessary in reading God's Word because the language and sentence structure differ from our modern speech. The Bible contains some very simple sentences, and the careless reader is apt to fail to recognize the depth of meaning in 'Follow Me'; 'And when he had spent all; 'And when he came to himself'; 'Jesus wept.' On the other hand, the complexity of word arrangement and meaning requires special study. "Therefore will we not fear,' or 'Surely Thou wilt slay the wicked, O God; depart from me therefore, ye bloody men; for they speak against Thee wickedly. . . .' In this latter quotation the Psalmist is speaking to God, the wicked people, and again to God, in the same sentence as though he had been speaking to God all the time. To meet this problem, the Bible reader must have a complete understanding of the logical and emotional details, a flexible vocal mechanism, and a knowledge of how to express the intellectual and emotional content.

"So rich is the Bible in all forms of literature that it would appear that nothing more than reasonable intelligence would be needed to make the Scripture lesson a calming, challenging, convincing, stirring element in corporate worship. Most members of



a congregation, however, would witness that no part of the service is, as a rule, so perfunctory and uninspiring. Infrequently is there evidence of careful study, spiritual sympathy and interpretative power. Many ministers become so occupied with their own discussions that they lose sight of the importance of the Word of God. They spend an entire week on a sermon, but possibly only a few minutes on the Scripture passage. Such a practice takes little exertion of mind by the minister and great exercise of patience on the part of the parishioners. The indifferent attitude of the preacher begets an indifferent attitude on the part of the congregation in the reading and appreciation of the Bible."

A.

### State Shinto Forbidden

General Douglas MacArthur's sweeping directive does away with Shinto as a state-supported religion. It decrees freedom for all religious denominations in Japan. In 1899 the Japanese government, while banning all religious instruction in schools, declared that State Shinto was not a religion and made its teaching compulsory. This teaching simply meant indoctrination in hyper-nationalism. It is easy to see that the effect of reducing this powerful government agency to private rank is decisive for the status of religious freedom in Japan. No longer must a person practice Shinto in order to be counted as a thoroughly loyal and patriotic Japanese. The Japanese can learn to weigh the claims for allegiance that the different religions propose to him—Shinto simply as a traditional native religion; Buddhism, Christianity, in its various presentations, on their own evidence and not in the light of what they may or may not cost him in the matter of patriotic standing, liberty or life itself. A prominent Protestant missionary, the Rev. Lyman J. Schafer, chairman of the Japan Committee of the Foreign Missions Conference of North America, recently hailed Japan's liberation from its internal "iron ring of propaganda and oppression" as the dawn of a new day for Christianity; and this is true for Catholics as well as Protestants. Yet the effect of the MacArthur directive is not to favor Christianity or any other one belief. It is simply to establish the normal political and social conditions in which the truth can be heard and practiced, and this, in the circumstances [*sic!*], is precisely what Christianity asks for.—*America* (R. C.) for Dec. 29, 1945.