

CHURCH FEDERATION

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EDITED BY

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what would Christ have done in the direction of these enterprises? What would He have wished to see accomplished in the world, and what would He have set Himself to accomplish?

Though myself brought up in the straitest sect of a particular denomination, I believe that there is no more vitality in one denomination than in another if both be in direct contact with the person of Christ; and that if one be in direct contact, and the other only in indirect contact, with a padded interval of sophisticated doctrine, the first will be the stronger of the two, and that you must look to it that your doctrine is not padding but something that will transmit the currents. Some men's doctrine is so like padding that they seem to be in a padded cell, to judge by their performances. If you are in direct contact with the body and character of Christ, why then you have got that all-conquering impulse which comes from the only sort of devotion that ever lifts the world to any great enterprise, a devotion which is outside of yourself, in which you can willingly devote everything that is in yourself to something that you know will in the very act of absorbing you lift and translate you into greater and better things. So that it seems to me that the foundation of this inherited conviction of the young men of this age, which is to be translated into the momentum of power, is nothing else than the Church's one Foundation in Jesus Christ our Lord, and that in proportion as Christ is exhibited in the lives of the young men and young women of these organizations, in that proportion will they be fit for the conquest of the world; and that because they take the impulses of the Church at first hand, when they are fresh, when their momentum has not been lost, they are likely to be the standard bearers in the places which have hitherto seemed inaccessible.

THE BASES OF UNITY AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE AND STEPS TOWARD ACHIEVEMENT

MR. ROBERT E. SPEER

Among the young men and young women of our generation there are, as Mr. Mott pointed out, moral and spiritual relationships already established which are near to Christian unity. The ideas of practical co-operation in work and of spiritual fellowship in worship are ideas that are entirely familiar and congenial to us.

However great the difficulties which stand in the way of an actual realization of oneness among believers in Jesus Christ may appear to others, those difficulties do not appear to be great to us. The atmosphere in which we live is distinctly inhospitable to thoughts of division or separation among us. This atmosphere has changed for us entirely from the atmosphere in which our fathers and our mothers began their Christian life. For one thing, as we meet in a gathering like this to-day we realize that we are known to one another as the young Christian men and the young Christian women of no other generation were known to each other. We have established friendships that bridge the chasms between the camps of the followers of Jesus Christ. We are accustomed to meet in great gatherings where we do not ask one another for our denominational names; we are accustomed to read common books, to write and to read common papers, and more and more we are bound together by those simple ties of personal acquaintanceship and of friendship which make distrust impossible. We have discovered that we are already of a common heart and a common sympathy. It does not please us to have others endeavor to remind us of what lines of division there may be hidden among us; we are glad to feel when we gather that we are all of one company, friends of one another, capable of trusting one another. We have been engaged so long in practical work together that it would seem to us something like treason in the family to suggest that there should be antagonism between us. We are working now so closely for common ends and purposes that here this afternoon, as we look about us and recognize everywhere the faces of friends, we feel that there could not be, that it is morally impossible that there could be, any prolongation of division among us.

And this atmosphere has been changed, not by any process of denial or exclusion, but by a simple process of affirmation of those things that are common to our thought and lives, by a process of comprehension that has lifted us up above those subjects of division which have harassed those who went before us, and made us feel that we have already grounds for fellowship sufficient to warrant the closest possible union among us.

I say we live in an atmosphere which makes these ideals of federation and—I will say with perfect frankness—of Church union entirely common and congenial ideas to us, and it often-

times perplexes us to understand those objections that are raised by others and those difficulties which others say they feel in the way of the realization of these ends that seem so entirely obvious and practicable to us.

And it does not exhaust the facts to say that we live in an atmosphere hospitable to close relations among Christian men and women. We are already in many large and vital regards as one as Christian men and women ever can be. We are one in our ideals now. We have common ideals, for one thing, of what constitutes character. We admire the same things. We are all of us worshippers of the heroic love of truth. I believe that that is our predominant ideal of character. Men and women say often that they think—older men and women—that the fibre of Christian life has softened, and they wonder whether there is any more in the world of the same heroic stuff that there once was. I believe the young Christian men and women of the world never held as high the reverence of heroic and self-sacrificing love and service of truth as they hold it to-day. Let any test be suggested and instantly you can see that it is so. A missionary dies at his post in western Persia; his brother rises up at once to take his place. A little band of missionaries fall in southern China; one and another and another, missionaries on the field, students at home, friends, relatives it may be of those who have fallen, rise up at once to take the place of the dead. You might wipe off the face of the earth the whole missionary body to-day, and we would replace it within a few years. The young men and young women of the land who follow Jesus Christ are now one in their ideals of high and right character. They are one in their ideals of service. They relish tasks, as Stanley said of his lieutenant, Glave, for their bigness, and they greet hard labor with a fierce joy. And what has bound these movements together, as Mr. Mott was suggesting, has been their common participation in the largest visions. They dream, as Christ dreamed, of the saving of a world, and their ideals of service are ideals that run with the ambition of the missionary spirit which Christ fired when he set the Church's eye upon the uttermost parts of the earth. We are as one now as we ever can be in our ideals of Christian character and of Christian service.

We are one already in our consciousness and our conviction of human need. We are one in our consciousness of human need.

Men and women sometimes think that the young men and women of this day are satisfied with themselves. There never was a time when young men and young women in the Christian Church were as discontented with themselves as they are to-day, when they hungered more than young men and women hunger to-day for the glimpse of the highest possibilities and for the realization of those possibilities in their own lives. I believe that we are as conscious as the Christian Church ever was of our need of a standard above the whims and the vagaries of our own hearts, and of a power somewhere in this universe capable of enabling us to realize that standard in ourselves. We are one already in our consciousness of what it is that we need, and we are one also in our conviction of the whole world's need. I heard in this hall, the other afternoon, one of the speakers pointing out that the great need in this land of ours is salvation, and he spoke of one regard after another in which this country needs salvation, to all of which I suppose every heart here gave assent; but when he had finished I thought I could have put it all in one monosyllable; the land needs salvation from *sin*, and the whole world needs salvation from *sin*; and never, I believe, did any men and women in the Christian Church believe more in the reality and horror of sin than the Christian of to-day, or in the opening of a salvation from sin in the one source of which President Wilson was speaking, and of which I have to say as clear a word as I may before I am done. The young men and young women of this day are one now in their consciousness of their own personal need and of the whole world's need.

And in the third place, we are one already in our sense of duty and in our will to help. You show the young men and young women of this day the thing that ought to be done, and anybody who knows their heart can guarantee that you will call from it an instant and full response. The young men and young women of this day are not less prepared than their fathers to do whatever is shown to them to be their duty. They are eager to join in great and aggressive movements. These movements of which Mr. Mott was speaking are all of them movements of aggression; they are movements designed to overthrow these enemies that wage their warfare against the highest life of man; and the young people of our day in the Churches are gathering in increasing numbers under the banners of these great aggres-

sive movements against evil. These things, this warfare, are their life.

And what is it that is drawing them together in these movements? It has not been any ignoring of the intellectual groundwork on which their movements rest. Men and women say sometimes that the hope of Christian union is to be found in the exclusion of the whole realm of opinion on subjects of religion and the coöperation of men and women in good work. But what good work? What is good work? What is to be accomplished by the good work? Why should we do good work? The moment we begin to answer these questions we are making definitions. We have to state convictions. It is impossible for us ever to gather men and women together on the theory that their intellects must first of all be annihilated, and that then they will join in a movement from which all thought has been expelled. The young Christian men and young Christian women of our day are gathered together in these great movements, not because they have eliminated their opinions, but because they have discovered that in the fundamental things they are at one in their opinions. We are at one—I am sure I am speaking in this for the young Christian men and women of our day—we are at one in our opinions on the things that are essential.

We believe with all our hearts in one fundamental thing. Our view and conviction with regard to Jesus Christ is absolutely clear and unshakable. We believe that Christ is undetachable from His Gospel; that so long as we follow His Gospel we follow Him; that the gospel was not His message nor His character, but the sum total of His impact on the world and the secret and the consequence and the significance of that. President Wilson said that young men and young women are conservative. In this regard we are conservative. You can give us—yes, I will say it—what theory of inspiration you please, you may raise what debates you want over questions of divine sovereignty and human freedom, but you cannot touch with the consent of the young men and the young women of the Church the holy ark of all, the person and the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. We believe with all our hearts that you cannot state His Gospel except in Christological terms. We believe that His incarnation is absolutely essential. We believe that His deity is a fundamental thing which we dare not compromise or surrender. You may make what propositions you

please to the young men and young women of the Church looking toward Christian union; so long as they trifle with the deity of our Lord you waste your breath and your propositions are futile things.

I am sure that I am speaking in this for the great mass of young men and women in the Christian Church. I do not intend to be disputatious; I am not saying these things for the sake of accentuating an issue. I am the mouthpiece, I know, of the great mass of young Christian men and women; and I am speaking simply what they believe. These great organizations of theirs have grown up on this one central fact. They believe in Christ, they love Christ, they want to serve Christ, they want to make Jesus Christ the Lord of all mankind; they call Him first Lord and Saviour, and Teacher afterwards; and it is because they are united in these great convictions that the degree of unity that we have attained to-day is a possible thing. We are one now, one in our ideals, one in our consciousness and conviction of need, one in our sense of duty and our will to help, one in our view and conviction with reference to Jesus Christ our Lord.

And yet however one we are, we should be more one than this. There are expressions which this unity has not received which it should receive, and there are many regards in which this unity should be confirmed and enlarged among us. And there are three reasons why it should be confirmed and enlarged among us now.

We should cultivate a larger Christian unity because it is essential to our apprehensions of truth, to those larger apprehensions of truth which it is our duty to bring in. It is true that the work of critical construction belongs to the older men, but we are preparing to become older men and we hope that the duty is to be ours to bring in by our experience and the work that we are to do in the world larger comprehensions of the truth of Christ. And how can larger comprehensions of the truth of Christ come except as men draw together? We have reached the limit of individual apprehensions of Christ; we shall only know more of Him as we draw together for those social visions of Him that are only possible to all the saints, the realizations of that love that is to be revealed to us never alone but with all the saints, that unity of the faith that we are to attain never separately but only when we all come to it. It is essential that we

young men and young women should draw together in a unity closer than our fathers knew, that we may do our duty to this world in bringing to it those larger comprehensions of Christ that are only possible when the young men and the young women of America, and the young men and the young women of Japan, and the young men and the young women of China, and the young men and the young women of every land, who have come to Christ, bring all their distorted and partial visions of Him into one, and arrive at last all together at the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God.

And in the second place, a larger measure of unity is necessary among us because it is essential to the service for which the world is waiting—the service that needs to be done here in our own land, the evil that needs to be slain here. I ask you to think here this afternoon of what sin has done in this land of ours. There is not a household represented in this hall to-day across which sin has not drawn its trail; there is not a heart here that does not have to-day its sorrow that it is the child of sin. Let us think for just one moment of all that needs to be done in this land of ours to stamp sin under foot, to bring purity and righteousness and honor and justice and highmindedness and the kingdom of God here. And then think of the work to be done in all the world, all the error of men to be corrected, all the sin of men to be healed, all the wrong of men to be undone, all the institutions of men so far as they are composed of error and antagonistic to the spirit of Christ to be transformed—not in one nation alone, but the whole world over—a thousand millions of sinning and suffering men and women, each one of them akin to us, waiting to be told of the Saviour who died for them as He died for us. When we think of the magnitude of the task that is before us, and not of its magnitude alone but of its difficulties as well, we realize how necessary it is that we should come together into one. This is no time for waste. I will not speak of internecine warfare. I do not believe it is possible any longer that there should be hostility within the camps. We are appealing for Christian union not because Christians are quarreling with one another, for they are not; we are appealing for Christian union because there is waste where there should not be waste, because the army should be one army, because brother should now clasp the hand of brother, that alike through the

daylight and the night the whole army may step forward to its mighty world-wide task. The larger measure of unity is essential among us because it is required by the service for which the world is waiting.

And in the third place, it is necessary because it is essential to resistless power in prayer. There is in a sense no such thing as individual Christian experience. Every man's relation to Christ conditions every other man's relation to Christ. There is no such thing as the tearing loose of one human unit and conceiving as possible a full relationship between that unit and the heart of God. We shall, each of us, come to our right relationship to God only as we all come. And that power in prayer for which the Church and the world are waiting is dependent entirely upon that unity among Christians which brings them all together in the right relationship to God and which lends to prayer its absolutely irresistible power. We ought to come together into one in order that as one we may release by prayer the powers which will effect the will of God, that we may secure at last those great things that Christ said are ours when with united faith we come to claim them for the world.

And the achievement of this unity, let me say last of all, is not an impracticable thing. There are ways in which even now we are drawing near together. Those paths that lie behind us we see, as we look back over them, to be converging paths, and each one of them addresses to us an appeal to fidelity, calls us to pass right on to the point where they all at last shall meet. It is very easy to point out ways in which we young men and young women can hasten that day. I suppose the best way to hasten it is just to practice the Christian faith. Most of the things that keep Christians apart are not points of Christian principle but defects of Christian practice. Once Christian men and women begin to practice the Christian faith of love and tenderness and kindness and self-repression and humility, they will find that the very practice of the Christian faith is itself a unifying power.

And there is, secondly, the eager fellowship in Christian service. I suppose no ideal has been as responsible for this unity or more responsible for this unity than the ideal of the evangelization of the whole world. At last the dormant duty of the Christian Church has come to view, and it has been kept for our gen-

eration, nineteen long centuries having intervened, to recover the great apostolic conception, to recover the great ideal that lay, the last moments of His life here on earth, upon the heart of our Lord Jesus Christ. You remember all of His last words: "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and among men: go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you all the days, even unto the end of the age. Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." These were the last words that our Lord spoke here upon the earth. Nineteen hundred years have had to pass until we should put first in the activities of the Church what was first in His thoughts and last upon His lips. And it is that great ideal that is doing more than any other to draw the young men and women of the Christian Church of our day together into one, the ideal of evangelizing great and difficult peoples, all peoples, the four hundred millions of China, the two hundred millions of Mohammedanism—I have wondered whether the Mohammedan missionary problem has not been reserved for this day in order that it might constitute the wall against which as the Christian Churches hurled themselves they should discover that only as they fused together into one and then smote would they be able at last to penetrate that wall and to conquer for Christ the two hundred millions who have known His name and exalted above it another name. It is the eager fellowship of a great service that is to draw us together into one. When we think of a world that knows nothing whatever about Christ, the petty differences that have separated our denominations in the past seem to us unworthy of continued justification, and we are drawn together by the sheer desire to be one army against our mighty foe.

And in the third place, the approach to Christ draws always together those who draw near to Him. It is that that accounts for the spirit of affectionate friendship among us. I look down on your faces this afternoon and see many here from Churches calling themselves by different names, and yet we are one. We could not discover if we sought for it any lines of cleavage between us, and we know that what makes us one is that we are all of us controlled by one great common passion. As Zinzendorf

used to say, "It is He, only He." As we draw near to Him and He controls our hearts, and His passion fills our wills, we find ourselves one with one another because we are one with Him.

And the last thing that is drawing us together is that great thing of which St. Paul speaks as the communion of the Holy Spirit. We look back over the history of the church and we see that Spirit's long delayed and lonely task as He draws together the scattered fragments of Christ's body into one. We look in upon our own hearts, and our own experiences tell us of the working of that Spirit in our own lives, drawing us close together in proportion as He gains control over our habits, our intellects, our hearts, our wills and all our ways. We know here to-day that just in proportion as we submit ourselves to Him shall we be drawn away from the unholiness of our dissension, the un-Christlikeness of our separations, into the one great body which bears His name and of which Christ our Lord shall be the head. To some generation this privilege is to be given; some day the Church will come that shall realize at last in itself the blessed vision of our Lord, when all His people shall be one. I speak to you, young men and young women here to-day. This is our gathering. We have let these older people come, but we are met here to-day to think for a little while together, and to speak for a little while of our day that is beginning to dawn, the day when we shall bear the responsibility, when the guidance of the Christian Church shall be in our hands. Oh, that it might be in our day that at last the expectant Christ should see of the desire of His soul and be satisfied, that in our day at last, for the conviction of the world, for the full setting forth of the divine unity of the Son with His Father, those who call Him their Master might in Him be one. I do not know how practically we can draw near to it save as in all simplicity we take up as the rule of our relationships, of our work and all our life, what He Himself described as His new and great commandment: "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also should love one another"—the same word that the disciple who loved Him best kept repeating again and again and again until it became the characteristic message of his older years, "Little children, love one another." We can obey that rule. Nothing can prevent our doing

so, and if we do so nothing can prevent the ultimate oneness of love.

My friends—I mean you of the generation for which I am speaking now—why should we not begin now, even now, that real unity which shall bring us in our day—shall we not dare to hope for that for which Christ prayed?—that shall bring us in our day all together, as we are in one Lord and one faith, also into one Church.

MEETING IN BROADWAY TABERNACLE

ADDRESS BY THE CHAIRMAN, MR. VON OGDEN VOGT

As a preliminary to the main thought of the hour I ask your indulgence for a brief statement of three remarks.

Whatever young people's organizations we represent, we are here first as members of the Church.

We are practically interested in the main purpose of this Inter-Church Conference, namely, the more effective disposition of the Kingdom's energy. The readjusting programmes of social institutions make a fascinating study. The needs of men, physical, mental, moral, religious, must be met. From age to age, even from decade to decade now, these needs are having more adequate attention. This requires the change or expansion of some social forms and the displacement of others. One good work is begun here, another there. By and bye they come to overlap, to duplicate service. A comprehensive survey is needed to readjust effort and release some power for other labors.

The present machinery of Christian organization is largely the result of natural development. To-day is the day to stop and enquire—Is this machinery anything like what we would build if we had a clean field and a fresh start?

Australia is troubled by an out-of-date railway scheme. The railroad systems of the different States use tracks of a different gauge. At the borders of each province the traveller must change cars in the middle of the day or of the night. This is the result of natural development. Shall they wait for this to work itself out to a better method? They are afraid some of those narrow gauge tracks would have to evolve a long while before becoming