18th Sunday after Trinity
Sunday School Rally Day
Rolling Meadows - 1964

Rev. Carl F. Thrun

IN NOMINE JESU

Ephesians 6: 4 And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring the up in the nurutre and admonition of the Lord.

BRING UP YOUR CHILDREN — DON'T DRAG THEM UP

Over in Russia it is different. After 46 years of intensive atheistic propaganda, Soviet communists are still puzzled by the persistence of religion, particularly among children. In every Soviet school the teacher's aim is to produce atheists. Every subject must be taught from the godless viewpoint; hundreds of manuals outline the atheistic approach to each subject. Yet communist papers continue to complain that all too many young people and children are believers. N legal regulations forbid children between the ages of 3 to 18 to go to church or receive any formal religious training, giving as the reason that the school alone responsible for the education of children. Yet Soviet authorities admit that even today 75 to 80% of all Russian children are baptized. A recent communist publication, The Leningrad Pravda, asserts, We cannot and must not be reconciled to the fact that young parents are still having their children christened, and are observing this obsolete religious ceremony. Even more disconcerting to Communist Youth leaders is the fact that when examined, children knew the Bible accounts of Creation, Redemption in Jesus Christ, and the promise of heaven and eternal life through faith in Him. How could this happen - after 46 years - when Christianity has been declared illegal for children? There is, of course, only one explanation: parents are fulfilling their God-given responsibility — they are bringing up their children in the fear and admonition of the Lord. The Holy Spirit of God is mightil blessing their instruction. What is more, Christian, believing children are witnessing to one another. This is brought out by a story recently to come out of Leningrad: A 9-year-old, coming home from school, asked, Mother, we don't believe in God, do we? The mother replied, Of course not! The child then asked, Mother, does God know we don't believe in Him?

For us the question might well be reversed: Mother, we believe in God, ~~We live in a land where our Christian faith can be freely expressed~~ don't we? — Of course, child! — Mother, does God know we believe in Him? When the family Bible is seldom opened - when parents and children no longer search the

Scriptures - when there are no longer any family devotions -- does God know that we believe in Him? When church attendance and worship - when Bible classes and Sunday School are no longer relevant in our lives -- does God know that we believe in Him? We live in a land where our Christian faith can be freely expressed! No one tells us or a part of our family that we cannot go to church on Sunday! When we relegate God, and Christ, and Scripture, and Worship - our Christian life - to second and even third or fourth place in our daily living -- does God know that we believe in Him? When we are seemingly unwilling to make great and even tremendous sacrifices to provide the necessary facilities and equipment that our children may be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord -- does God know that we believe in Him?

Surely the Church is here to help and give good counsel to guide & instruct in the care and feeding of children. But the Church cannot do it alone. The sad truth is that parents can destroy in a split second - by their attitudes and actions - by what they do and what they say - all that the Church endeavors to build -- faith and love, devotion and loyalty and commitment to the Savior. Nothing - absolutely nothing - neither church nor state nor school nor anything else can substitute for the role of parents. That is why St. Paul directed his admonition to fathers as the head of the home: And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Moses, spokesman for the Most High God, declared: These words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children.

To be a good parent requires a maturity of growth which has not been stunted somewhere along the way. Stunted emotional and spiritual development has produced many parents whose only evidence of maturity is that they know what kind of breakfast food to prescribe for their children. Otherwise they are ill equipped for anything but the most arbitrary attitudes and actions. Having little understanding of what makes for a mature personality, they are at a loss when their children look to them for mature direction. Children are quick to sense the difference between

arbitrary consideration and mature judgment. Faced with the immaturity of their elders, children often rebel - with the result that family ties are broken and parents ask in confused bewilderment, What did we do? We gave our boys and girls everything they wanted, and now they won't listen to us!

Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath. There must be something in the character of parents which enables them to temper firm discipline with patienc and love. This is the ideal climate for the raising of children - the kind of cli mate children are looking for. Children do not expect their fathers to be pals. They expect them to be fathers, with all the maturity of fathers. They do not expect their parents to be perfect, but they do expect them to act as parents... Wha kind of man are you fathers at home? What kind of woman are you mothers? Are you a husband, father, and friend - or a little Napoleon, a dictator, a strutting boss Are you a wife, mother, and counselor - or a nagger, clothes horse, or pampered doll? Do you expect your little world to revolve around you as the earth revolves around the sun - or do you take the place that belongs to you, confidently without assertiveness? Does your family dread the arrival of father from work, or does it anticipate it - joyfully? Do your children hang around after school wishing they did not have to go home to a disgruntled and complaining mother? -- What kind of parents are you, anyway? Do you expect more from your children that you give them? Are you telling them how to act instead of showing them how to act? Do you demand their respect or do you earn it? Some men are more interested in bowling than they are in they boy. Some women are more interested in their gossiping coffee-clutches than they are in their children. Should we then wonder that a generation should arise rebellious against society and heedless of the common standards of ordinary decency?

There is an old addage that says, One father is worth more than 1000 teachers. One mature man taking his place at the head of the household where he belongs makes the biggest contribution he can possibly make in our complex world. The fact that this sounds like starryeyed idealism shows how far away we have drifted from the basic fundamentals of life in our time. Fathers look upon themselves

today as providers, just that and nothing more. They direct large organizations with the utmost executive acumen, but they are not able to manage their own house holds. They leave the training and upbringing of children to mothers, and then o Saturday afternoon try to be buddies with their boys. Too late! They have lost executive touch where it counts the most — right at home.

St. Paul aimed his advice directly at fathers: Be fathers! Provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lo How can fathers bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord unless they are close to the Lord themselves? Too many men are close to everythin but to the Lord. Some of them build a thin veneer of religiosity about their live and others don't even bother to do that. Children have clear eyes to see right through this transparent superficiality. They know what's cooking, and they proceed to do a little cooking themselves. The result is another boy or girl gone wrong, and the whole world is the loser - to say nothing about heaven and a blessed eternity

Boys and girls are human beings in the fullest sense of the word. Every child, even during infant years, has an individuality all his own. You cannot fit your children into a mold of your own making. They are meant to grow up. Help the to grow up - bring them up - with the nurture and discipline they require if they are not to become rank weeds instead of the lovely flowers God intended them to be. It takes nurture to grow a tree that bears fruit, and it takes nurture to bring up a boy or girl as a responsible human being. This involves education or instruction which is just what the word admonition means. Children need to be taught how to read and write and count. The point of the apostle, however, is that they should learn to read more than the stock reports, to be able to write more than checks, an to be able to count more than their money. No education is complete without education for life - full, satisfying, productive life - here and hereafter. Parents who care about their children don't drag them up, but they bring them up. They don't control every thought, but they help children to think for themselves. They help them to learn to think the way a human being has to think if he is going to be a mature man or a mature woman.

Bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The Lord, in the apostle's language, is Jesus Christ. We are all incomplete with the God who has made us and given us life. We don't really know God until we know Je: Christ. We don't really grow in the knowledge of God until we grow in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. By Him we stand forgiven, and in Him there is li Miracles happen when Christ enters a home. His presence does something for parent and it does something for children. It leads to righteous living and it puts spiritual starch in the rising generation. It introduces love, and it lives by lo

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

No teacher, no minister, and no psychiatrist can do it for you. This is one job you have to do for yourself. No one can take the place of father or mothe in a family. No one expects you to be perfect, but you can be expected to do what you can. You can be a mature man, a mature woman, close to the Lord, reflecting His glory in your home. You can raise your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, without apology to a world that pays very little attention to Him. In their later years they will thank you for it. They will rise up to call you blessed. What more could you ask?

Amen.