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Radio Address of J. Strom Thurmond, Governor of South Carolina to Baptist Young People Over WKIX

Strom Thurmond

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It is a pleasure and inspiration to be here in this great church, The First Baptist Church of Columbia. Tonight in my brief message, I would like to stress what to my mind is one of the strongest challenges to us in our time. It is a challenge which this church has done much toward meeting, and my purpose tonight is to urge the young people to continue in their efforts and church accomplishments. If we can all rise to meet this need, much will have been done toward insuring a Christian and Democratic way of life, not only for this nation, but for the world.

Our nation can be no greater than its foundation; and the youth of this country is its foundation. They are the very future of our civilization and the principles and ideals for which the civilization of the future stands will be the principles and ideals which we instill in the young people of today. During the past decade, a great and sinister enemy to our way of living arose in the East. Shortly, it was joined by another threat to the Christianity in the West. The Youth of this country, without hesitation or fear, marched upon far flung battle fields to perform acts of courage and sacrifice which will constitute an everlasting part of this great country's history. If these young people of the last generation had not been well guided by the Church and family, I hesitate to think of what our fate would have been today.

All of man's knowledge is divided into two great fields--the scientific and spiritual. In the past few years the scientific world has made terrific progress.

Within the modern history of our western world, learning can be divided into two great fields. The first of these for the purposes of our thoughts tonight, let us designate as the field of science. The second, we will call the spiritual and cultural field.
Within the cultural and spiritual field, we group those subjects which pertain to man and his moral welfare. Here we find the work of the moral philosopher, the theologists, the political philosopher, the social worker, the writer and the artist. The essence of our problem today is: Has education progressed in this great field as compared to its progress in the scientific world? The only truthful answer is that man has gone far toward conquering the elements, but he has not conquered himself. Our physical life contrasted to that of our ancestors two thousand years ago, is beyond comparison. Physically, we live in another world. But the hatred, jealousy, the avarice, the greed that were present in man at the dawn of modern civilization are still present. Witness the last seven years of our history.

What difference does it make if the great medicines and physicians save a life, if that life is later taken? Our problem is not altogether to prolong life, but to make it worth living while we have it. The work is not longer with the elements, but with the soul. We need no longer concentrate our energies upon how man reacts to nature, but how man reacts to man. The same intensity of effort, the same devotion to truth, the same sacrifices, must be made by those employed in the cultural and spiritual work as have been made by those employed in the field of science. It is the work of the minister, the lawyer, the welfare worker and the statesman.

Today these two great fields are dangerously out of balance. Unless the cultural and spiritual field is equally developed with our scientific endeavors, the last great peace for the world may be destroyed.

The only way of instilling into the hearts of mankind the principles and ideals which will insure its development in the field of humanitarianism is by religious and moral education. The German nation was one of the best educated of any in the world. From a technical standpoint, no nation was better equipped; however their education was confined to the scientific, and
was non-existent as to the humanitarian. In our second great field, her people were deluded by their historians and betrayed by their political philosophers. Education must be based upon the truths of the humanities and directed in this field. Man's eternal and everlasting source of truth for spiritual and cultural development is the church.

The work of the Baptist young people in educating the minds of those who are on their way toward developing into future citizens of this country should be looked upon with admiration by all associated with the Church. To those of you who are actively engaged in carrying on the work of this organization should go commendation as you are leaders in the activities of the Church.

About four months ago the National Conference on prevention and control of Juvenile Delinquency met in Washington, D.C. I have recently studied the report submitted by the Chairman of this Conference. One complete chapter in this report was devoted to the church's responsibilities in the prevention of Juvenile Delinquency. The Committee on church's responsibilities emphatically stated that in dealing with this problem, religion was of importance, not as an adjunct or ally, but as a fundamental in building good citizens. It was continually stressed that juvenile delinquency is not a problem restricted to the law enforcement and judicial branches of government, but a problem which requires the co-ordinated efforts of all institutions of public importance. The spiritual development of the young people of this country must receive the closest attention of all of our leaders. In this program the churches have in the past and will continue in the future, to spearhead this effort.

From the recommendations and action of the Conference, I quote "the members and lay officials of the local church should help tackle the problem of juvenile delinquency by supporting social activities of church groups, especially of youth organizations in helping the ministers and youth
leaders reach more young people". Our church is making great strides in this direction by the activities of the Baptist young people.

It is now our duty and responsibility to educate and prepare the Youth of today. However great our history; however deep our pride, we cannot rely upon the past achievements of even those living today. I can recall a quotation from Samuel Johnson's Life of Milton which warns us against any loss of vigor in our religious education. The Great Man of Letters said, "Religion, of which the regards are distant, and which is animated only by faith and hope, will glide by degrees out of the mind unless it be invigorated and re-impresed by external ordinance, by stated call to worship, and the salutary influence of example".

We must make certain that the great Christian religion is constantly invigorated and re-impresed in the souls of our youth. This is fostered by the work of the Baptist young people. I wish to heartily commend them upon their accomplishments and sincerely extend my wishes for their great success in the future.