

## 'WHAT IS CHURCH FOR?' DR. PATTON INQUIRES

### Answers Own Query by Declaring Church Has Purpose of Cultivating Religion

From the enthusiastic reception which has been given Dr. Carl S. Patton in each of the five lectures which he has delivered under the joint auspices of Christ church and Winnetka Congregational church, it is evident that it is one of the most successful programs of the kind ever carried out co-operatively by the local churches.

Last Wednesday evening, Dr. Patton again addressed a large group at Christ church Parish House on the very pertinent subject: "What is a Church For?"

"Dr. Patton," comments a listener, "combines so much of clear thinking and good common sense, with a pleasantly informal and often humorous touch that his audiences have taken a fresh, practical point of view from his talks."

In developing his subject, Dr. Patton said in part:

"A little knowledge of the history of the Christian Church would do people no harm—and would have the charm of novelty to most folks.

"A good woman who had been a member of a New England Congregational church, said recently to her pastor, 'Sometime, when you have time, will you tell us what happened between Acts of the Apostles and the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers?' I believe some little knowledge of what did happen can be taught to everybody.

"It is probably best taught in connection with certain turning points in the history of Christianity and around the lives of certain great Christian leaders. The period between the New Testament times and the conversion of Constantine, constitutes a chapter by itself. With the conversion of Constantine the Church ceased to be a hunted and persecuted institution, and entered upon its career of conquest in the Roman Empire. The changes for good and evil involved in this transi-

tion should be easily grasped. The Middle age, with the struggle between the Popes and the Emperors, constitutes another distinct epoch. So does the period of the Reformation. The lives of such leaders as Augustine, St. Francis, Bernard of Clairvaux, Luther, John Calvin and John Wesley, let one into the secret of what was happening in the development of religion and the Church in their times. A little knowledge of these things would have a broadening and liberating effect.

#### Must Develop Religion

"As to 'What a Church Is For', some people would say it is first of all for the conversion of sinners. But formation is better than reformation. The Church exists not so much for the creation of religion, as for the cultivation. The whole movement of 'Religious Education' rests upon the fact that religion does not have to be created, that it is natural to people, and

that what it needs is to be developed and cultivated.

"But this is not true of young people alone; it is true of all people. So the Church exists for the education of the people in morals and religion. There is a sense in which Christianity is the same in all generations; and there is a sense in which it changes with every generation. People need constant instruction, not only in what they are to believe, in view of changes

in our knowledge of the world in which we live, but instruction also in the duties which the Christian man owes to the world in his own particular time.

#### Exists as Inspiration

"The Church exists also for the comfort and inspiration of the people. People are 'up against it';—not poor people alone, but all sorts of people. They

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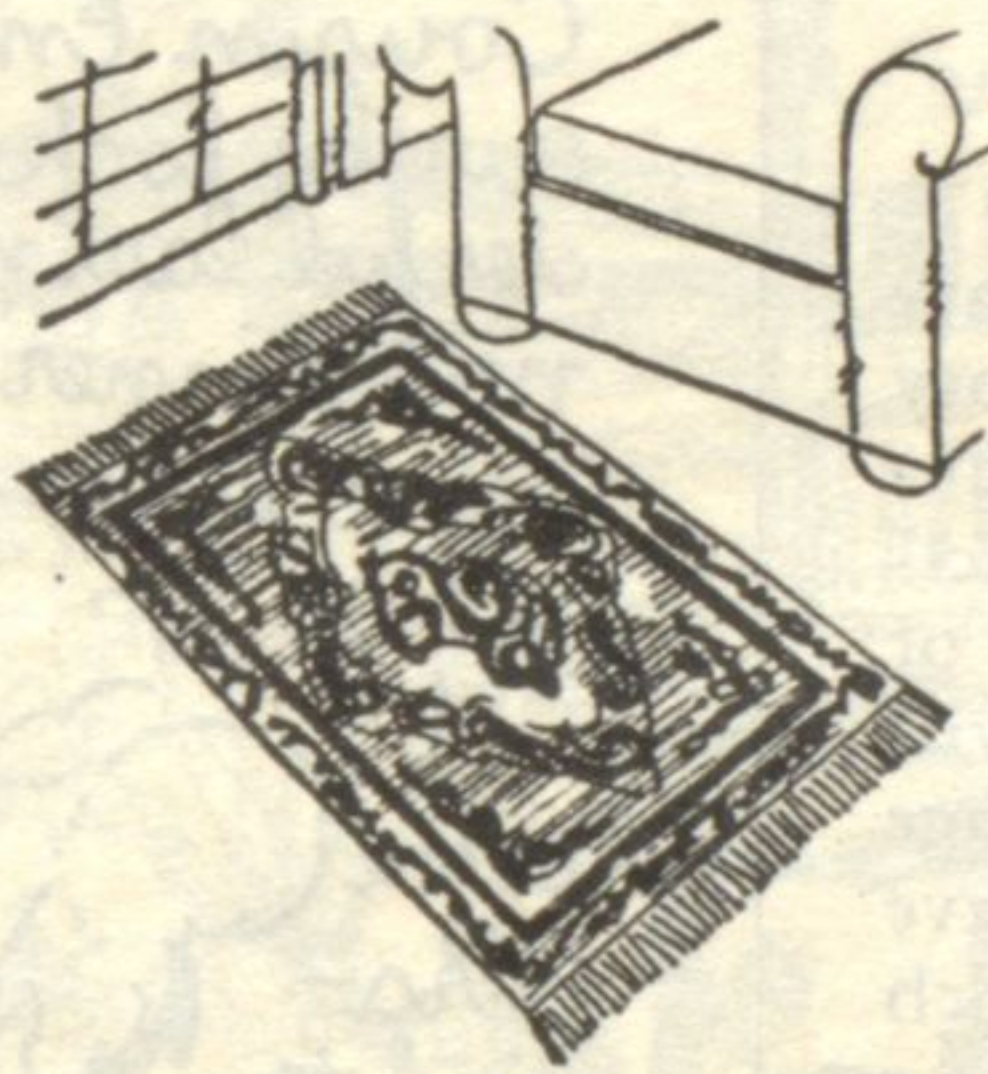
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