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### The Development of the Youth Leadership Training in the Walther League

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**THE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH LEADERSHIP TRAINING  
IN THE WALTHER LEAGUE**

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**A Thesis Presented to the Faculty  
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Department of Practical Theology  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Bachelor of Divinity**

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by

**Samuel J. Roth**

**June 1951**

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
II. EARLY STAGES (1893-1919) . . . . .	4
The Birth of the League . . . . .	4
Rapid Expansion . . . . .	12
III. FURTHER DEVELOPMENT (1920-1933) . . . . .	20
General Background . . . . .	20
Publications . . . . .	26
The School of Correspondence . . . . .	32
Summer Conference Camps . . . . .	36
Winter Conferences . . . . .	40
Other District Projects . . . . .	44
Conventions . . . . .	45
Officer's Conferences . . . . .	46
Junior Work . . . . .	48
The League and Synod . . . . .	54
IV. COMPREHENSIVE REORGANIZATION (1934-1940) . . . . .	59
Far-reaching Changes . . . . .	59
Leadership Institutes . . . . .	62
Officer's Conferences . . . . .	67
Summer Conference Camps . . . . .	68
Convention Program Sessions . . . . .	69
The National Committees . . . . .	70
Publications . . . . .	75
Unite the Youth Endeavor . . . . .	77
The League and the Clergy . . . . .	80
V. THE PAST DECADE (1941-1950) . . . . .	85
The Golden Anniversary Fund . . . . .	85
Lutheran Service Volunteer Schools . . . . .	86
Summer Conference Camps . . . . .	91
The Christian Growth Program . . . . .	93
Youth Workers Conferences . . . . .	96
Youth and Evangelism . . . . .	98
Regional Youth Work . . . . .	99
Christian Youth Emergency Action . . . . .	100
Training in Synodical Schools . . . . .	102
VI. CONCLUSION . . . . .	107
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	113



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Recently an authority in church youth work addressed a conference of Lutheran youth leaders with the words, "No secular organization ventures to conduct a youth program without trained leadership. It is high time for us to stop thinking that we can."<sup>1</sup>

The type of training which the speaker had in mind was specialized youth leadership training in group techniques, worship, recreation, and other endeavors in the youth work field. The Walther League, which is "an international association of young people's societies within the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference,"<sup>2</sup> is at the present time engaged in just such a program of leadership training.

But the recognition of the need of a trained leadership in young people's work is not new. Those who guided the destiny of the Walther League and its program in the past often voiced the cry, "We must train leaders!" What was done about it? That is the question which this thesis attempts to answer. It is a search into Walther League history

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<sup>1</sup>O. H. Theiss, "The Walther League and Its Future," Agenda, Lutheran Youth Conference (January 20-22, 1950), p. 38.

<sup>2</sup>"Constitution of the Walther League (International)" (Walther League, Chicago).



to determine to what extent facilities were made available for the training of leaders of young people's societies in the League, and it is an attempt at the same time to briefly analyze those facilities.

The phrase "leadership training" can have, and has had in the course of League history, at least two meanings. Conceived of in a broad sense, it can mean training the young people of a Walther League society to be future leaders in the life of their congregation and the Church at large. Conceived of in a narrower sense, it can mean training leaders to assume the responsibility of planning and executing the current society program, and at the same time helping them to learn the skills necessary to do it well. This paper treats "leadership training" in the latter sense: training leaders for the present youth program.

This in turn can mean two things: first, training the young people themselves; and second, training the counselors of the young people's societies, usually slightly older individuals, and sometimes much older individuals than the young people of the societies. This paper attempts to trace the efforts of the League in both these areas.

Since the Missouri Synod in 1947 recognized the program of the Walther League as its youth program,<sup>3</sup> the fifth chapter

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<sup>3</sup> Clarence Peters, "Developments of the Youth Programs of the Lutheran Churches in America" (unpublished Doctor's thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1951), p. 125.



includes other synodical efforts at leadership training besides those of the League. During the years following Synod's action (and already for several years preceding it), a very close connection has existed between League and synodical youth endeavors.

Finally, it should be said that this paper does not attempt to give a complete picture of Walther League history. Many projects of great importance to the total League picture, e.g. Bible study, missions, the Hospice department, and the Talent Quest, have been omitted in the interest of focusing attention only on those endeavors which involved leadership training most directly. Moreover, attention is centered chiefly on international activities. To go into district, zone and society projects in great detail would necessitate a much more extensive study. However, frequent samplings of such localized projects are given, in order to keep the picture in its proper perspective.



## CHAPTER II

### EARLY STAGES (1893-1919)

#### The Birth of the League

✓ May 23, 1893, is the birthday of the Walther League. It was on this day that delegates representing seven young people's societies from various points in the East and Midwest signed the newly-adopted constitution which banded them together in the "General Organization of the Young People's Societies of the Synodical Conference."<sup>1</sup> The following year, at its convention in Fort Wayne, the organization adopted its present name, "Walther League." Six years later, in 1900, the organization numbered fifty societies, and most of these had in turn been divided into five districts: Indiana, Milwaukee, Cleveland, New England and Southern California.<sup>2</sup>

The purposes of the Walther League were stated frequently in the early issues of Der Vereinsbote, its official publication, and may be summarized as follows:

1. To keep the young people with the Church.
2. To enable the young people to meet with others of the same faith.

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<sup>1</sup>O. H. Theiss, "The Way of the Years," Walther League Messenger, LI (May, 1943), 482. Hereafter referred to as WY.

1-<sup>2</sup>ABC of Youth Work (Chicago: Walther League, c.1949), p. 153.



3. To further the cause of and strengthen existing societies.
4. To found new societies.
5. To publish a joint newspaper.

At this early stage in the life of the Walther League as a national organization, its proponents seemed to sense no need for a planned program of training for society leaders. Interest of the society members was at a high pitch, and since the societies were made up of young men, and not many years later of young women, who were well beyond the adolescent stage, there seems to have been no felt need for guidance or control by a leader specifically trained for that role. Natural leaders from among the ranks of the Leaguers stepped forward to direct local societies in their program of fellowship and service.

A large part of that program was the support of needy theological students. Organized young people's societies in the Missouri Synod had from the very beginning included such support among their chief projects. The constitution of the first young people's society ever to be organized in the Missouri Synod, the Juenglingsverein of Trinity Lutheran Church in St. Louis, Missouri, stated that its purpose was "to provide one or more students desiring to prepare themselves for the ministry with the necessary means."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>H. E. Simon, "Background and Beginnings of Organized Youth Work in the Missouri Synod" (unpublished Bachelor's thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1944), p. 27.



The program of most young people's societies around 1900 also included intellectual and social pursuits. This, too, had been true from the very beginning. Early meetings of the Trinity Juenglingsverein consistently included debates, declamations, and short discourses by the pastor. This pioneer society started a library early in its career, and made use of its contents at society meetings, where members were entertained "by the reading of a practical or useful book."<sup>4</sup> The Walther League continued this tradition; early issues of Der Vereinsbote indicate that libraries played a big role in local society programs. A. Senne outlines a six-point program for society entertainment in the January issue of 1893: debates, reading exercises, declamations and dialogues, singing, question-box, and lectures by pastors, other professional men, and government officials.<sup>5</sup>

Articles in Der Vereinsbote give us an indication of what was expected of the young people's societies in addition to carrying out a program of support for indigent students, entertainment, and general sociability. "Belehrung" is the title of an article appearing in II (September, 1893). In V (October, 1896) there appears an English article on "Missionary Work of Young People."

The bulk of the programs of most League societies still consisted in entertainment, however, according to reports

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>5</sup>WY, p. 482.



from the various member societies in their official publication. This seemed sufficient to fulfill the chief purpose of the League: to keep the young people with the Church.

Who was responsible for guiding this program? For the most part, the members themselves. But as shepherds of their respective flocks, and responsible for the spiritual welfare also of their young people, the pastors also played an important role in the function of the societies' programs. Some clergymen of this period lent whole-hearted support to the cause of young people's societies. A. Sonne, pastor of Trinity Church, Buffalo, at the time of the League's organization, has been called "the father of the Walther League" because of the prominent part he played in its formation.<sup>6</sup> A. T. Hanser wrote in the August, 1892, Vereinsbote of "The Concern of the Congregation for Its Youth." Hanser later served as a member of the first Executive Board of the Walther League and as editor of Der Vereinsbote.<sup>7</sup> Reports of society programs show that many pastors were intimately connected with their young people's societies, regularly delivering addresses and standing by with advice.

But the clergy was by no means unanimous in its support of the Walther League. In an anniversary article of 1918, looking back on twenty-five years of League history, Hanser

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 481.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 482.



recalls the need for tracts and articles "as campaign ammunition in breaking into the trenches of such who at first could not recognize the Walther League as a friend of young people."<sup>8</sup> Some synodical papers showed reluctance to include reports of Walther League conventions in their columns.<sup>9</sup> Some feared that the League, with its organization and program, was invading the realm of the supremacy of the congregation. Said F. A. Klein in an address to the 1929 convention, "Again and again we had to hear the warning: Keep away from the Walther League!...Opposition developed, not because of anything we had done, but because of what might happen...It was said: 'The Walther League is taking the money out of the church!'"<sup>10</sup>

Such an attitude on the part of those who by virtue of their naturally prominent position would have been leaders in young people's organizations not only retarded the growth of the League, but multiplied the problems of leadership training.

What were the possibilities of leadership training for those who were interested? The chief instrument for such a purpose during this time was the printed publication of the

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<sup>8</sup>A. T. Hanser, "The Walther League - A Fruitful Tree," Der Vereinsbote, XXVI (June and July, 1918), 324.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>F. A. Klein, "In Retrospect," Convention Year-Book (1929), pp. 67 ff.



national organization, Der Vereinsbote. Already at the first convention in 1893, the delegates resolved to assume the responsibilities of publishing the paper and to make it their official organ.<sup>11</sup> Herman C. Gahwe, of Buffalo, who had earlier in the convention been elected national president, agreed to serve as the first business manager, and A. T. Hanser was the paper's editor. Subscription price: twenty-five cents per year.<sup>12</sup>

The first issue of Der Vereinsbote (June, 1892) carried, in addition to an appeal and reasons for a general organization, notices of meetings of various societies in Buffalo, a section of "Vereins Korrespondenzen," and two short stories. The next issue featured an article by J. Sleck, pastor of St. Andrew's Church, Buffalo, on "The Duties of Young Men's Societies over against Their Congregations."

Succeeding issues carried out this same general pattern: a feature article on some topic of interest to the societies, e. g. missions;<sup>13</sup> other announcements and news relative to the national organization; a section of correspondence, listing portions of letters from member societies; and general features. The correspondence section often included reports on society programs, and the Vereinsbote in this way served

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<sup>11</sup>Der Vereinsbote, II (July, 1893). Vereinsbote hereafter referred to as V.

<sup>12</sup>WY, p. 482.

<sup>13</sup>V, I (March, 1893).



as an instrument for sharing suggestions among the various League societies.

Other program helps from time to time in the early history of Der Vereinsbote included an article on debates, with suggested topics;<sup>14</sup> ideas on entertainment from the Unterhaltungskomitee (begun in 1895);<sup>15</sup> emphasis on Belehrung ("Gute Vortraege; Die Bibliothek");<sup>16</sup> and a suggested list of books which the Leaguers might read and place in their society libraries.<sup>17</sup>

✓ For many years Der Vereinsbote was the only publication of the Walther League, making it the sole contact of the national officers with the local societies, and of the local societies with each other. Therefore, until the publication of another periodical specifically designed to give program helps and other assistance to leaders, the Vereinsbote continued to serve the Leaguers with articles like: "Programs for Young People's Societies - How to Make All of Our Young People Active Workers in Our Church through Carefully Planned and Well-prepared Programs."<sup>18</sup>

<sup>14</sup>v, III (October, 1894).

<sup>15</sup>v, IV (December, 1895).

<sup>16</sup>v, II (September, 1893).

<sup>17</sup>v, IV (September, 1895). A regular feature in following issues.

<sup>18</sup>v, XXV (October, 1916), 106-7.



Societies were invited to send delegates to the conventions of the Walther League, which were held annually. Not until 1920 did the convention programs formally include discussion of techniques in League work,<sup>19</sup> but before that time such annual meetings provided opportunity for League leaders to talk over mutual problems and discuss their solution both in business sessions and in informal groups. Der Vereinsbote always included a detailed report of the yearly conventions, and in addition often carried the minutes of District conventions, which served the same purpose in regard to leadership training as did the national conventions.

✓ Chiefly with these two means, the Vereinsbote and annual conventions, the national Walther League supplied its local society and district leaders with the information they needed to conduct a young people's program. Only in a general sense can this be called leadership training; yet it seemed to be sufficient in a day when the chief purposes of young people's societies were to keep youth away from evil companions, to "maintain decency and moderation among themselves," to make regular contributors of the young people,<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Walther League Messenger, XXIX (August, 1920), 6. Messenger hereafter referred to as WLM.

<sup>20</sup> V: Buffalo, III (June, 1895); Indiana, IV (February, 1896); Milwaukee, VI (October, 1897); Michigan, VI (November, 1897).

<sup>21</sup> Simon, op. cit., p. 17.



and to "strengthen each other to remain true to their confirmation vow, and to Christ...and not to become a prey of the devil."<sup>22</sup>

### Rapid Expansion

✓ By 1910, the Walther League was at a low ebb. After thirteen years of existence, it could claim a membership of sixty-nine societies. Its finances were depleted; it had many opponents, and few friends. Moreover, the League was meeting competition. Organizations were springing up all over the country. At one time, there were ten organizations of young people's societies inviting the allegiance of Missouri Synod young people.<sup>23</sup>

✓ F. A. Klein reports that when the Executive Board met in May, 1910, they asked this question of themselves: "Shall we quit or go on?" They decided to put the question to the convention, which met that year at Jackson, Michigan. The decision of the Leaguers at that convention marked one of the turning points in the organization's history. Not only did they decide to continue, but they created the office of Field Secretary, and asked Klein to serve in that

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>23</sup>Klein, op. cit., pp. 69-70. Some of the organizations were: The League of the New England States; the Association of Young People's Societies of Greater New York; the Concordia League of Baltimore; the Concordia League of Cincinnati; the League in Arkansas; Die Kansas-Liga; Der Buehlerbund of San Francisco.



capacity without pay.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, each district was to appoint a field secretary.<sup>25</sup>

From that point on, the League experienced a period of rapid expansion. By 1912, the League numbered a hundred societies. That figure grew by 1914 to 191; and by 1918, 302 societies had enrolled.<sup>26</sup>

The instruments for leadership training remained largely the same during this period of rapid growth. By virtue of their position, field secretaries made many personal contacts with Leaguers and potential Leaguers, but their chief task was to promote the organization and form new societies wherever possible, not to train leaders of existing societies. And this had to be done, as the first national Field Secretary observed, mostly on weekends, when they could spare the time.<sup>27</sup>

Any appraisal of a program of leadership training must constantly take into consideration the purposes which the organization is attempting to fulfill. What is the group trying to achieve? What are its goals and purposes? Then, does such a program need trained leaders? Does the organization recognize the need? If it does, what is it doing to train the necessary leaders?

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> V., XIX (November, 1910); XIX (December, 1910).

<sup>26</sup> WY., p. 509.

<sup>27</sup> Klein, op. cit., p. 69.



✓ What did the Walther League consider its aims at this time? "Walther League Facts," a leaflet published in 1915, lists three objectives: Keeping young people with the Church, Christian fellowship, and charity. The August issue of Der Vereinsbote of this same year gives as the League's current project the planning of an endowment fund to help Concordia Seminary graduates to continue studies at universities.<sup>28</sup> The report of the Executive Board in 1916 reveals that at that time Leaguers were supporting four hospice homes throughout the country, and were contributing to a Lenten offering for charity. The national Walther League was planning an illustrated lecture course, and was contemplating publication of a life of Luther for 1917. Theodore Graebner, in a summary of this program, notes that no mention is made of organized Bible study, topic study, or mission endeavor.<sup>29</sup>

✓ On its 25th birthday in 1918, the League briefly reviewed and evaluated its history up to that time with a Jubilee Edition of Der Vereinsbote, now known as the Walther League Messenger. Wrote Oscar Gotsch, president of the League:

The very incipient purpose (for calling the League into existence) was to keep our young people, individuals

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4-28 Theodore Graebner, "The Need of a Unified Educational Program," Agenda, National Committees on Christian Knowledge and Christian Service (1942), p. 31.

29 Ibid., p. 32.



as well as societies, from joining organizations at variance with the Word of God and sound Lutheran principles. This is its endeavor to the present day. We thereby assist in keeping the young people with the church of the true faith, our Lutheran church.<sup>30</sup>

The same writer speaks of the League as a school to help in the proper training of youth. Training in what? To "take active part in the work of their own congregations; the contribution of funds for benevolent purposes, and especially the introduction of systematic hospice work."<sup>31</sup>

W. H. T. Dau, in the same issue, considered the Walther League valuable because it kept young people loyal to the Church. "Whatever good there is in a single young Christian becomes useful at every place where the society is represented." The Church needs youth in its flower, he went on, and the League keeps them active in church work.<sup>32</sup>

Primary among the reasons for the League, then, was still the need of "keeping young people with the Church." This meant keeping them away from other influences, which in turn meant involving them in activity which absorbed their attention. No special importance seems to have been attributed to the form this activity took, nor was there an evident sense of need for any trained leadership to guide this activity along constructive lines.

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<sup>30</sup> O. Gotsch, "Our League Today," WLM, XXVI (June and July, 1918), 324.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> W. H. T. Dau, "An Appraisalment of the Walther League's Value," WLM, XXVI (June and July, 1918), 328-32.



Partly responsible for this attitude, no doubt, was the fact that the national League itself had no full-time leadership. The officers, including the field secretaries, were all men who could devote only part of their time to the organization. Moreover, there was no central office to serve as a clearing-house for League information and activity.

1918 and World War I brought a partial solution to this problem. During this critical period in the history of the country, there was a new awakening to the potentialities of the Walther League for service. The organization set up an Army and Navy Program which enlisted hundreds of Leaguers in its attempt to aid the men in service, and which in turn brought the League into contact with all areas of the Missouri Synod.<sup>33</sup>

During this time, and continuing into the post-war era, there was a re-emphasis of hospice work. Bible study was systematically urged, and a topic study plan evolved. Prominent in the promotion of this new life in the League, and prominent also in the production of program materials, as well as acting as a representative for the League in its important Army-Navy work, was a young pastor from Evansville, Indiana, W. G. Polack.<sup>34</sup>

Consistent with this new life in the League program, there came a recognition of the need for greater direction

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<sup>33</sup>Graebner, op. cit., p. 32.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.



from a central source. As a result, the 1918 convention at Buffalo resolved "that a paid secretary be appointed." The amendment was defeated "that the secretary shall devote all his time to the work." It was further resolved: 1) that the secretary maintain an office; 2) that the office be called the Walther League office; 3) that the title of the incumbent be Executive Secretary; 4) that his duties be: a. have charge of the publication of the Messenger; b. manage the business affairs of the League; sell emblems, stationery, pamphlets, etc.; c. relieve the general officers of detail work. The Executive Secretary would be under the jurisdiction of the International Executive Board.<sup>35</sup>

The man chosen to fill this new office was A. A. Grossmann, who had already in 1913 been appointed business manager of the Vereinsbote, and was serving as secretary of the Army and Navy Board of the League. The Executive Board also voted to rent and equip an office and to engage an office assistant. 3504 Lisbon Avenue, Milwaukee, was the address of the new home of the Walther League.<sup>36</sup>

The following year at the annual convention, Executive Secretary Grossmann could report:

As was to be expected, our executive offices have become the center of most Walther League activities - and properly so. Our work is not confined to the features enumerated, but extends into every phase of League work.

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<sup>35</sup> WLM, XXVII (August, 1918), 36.

<sup>36</sup> WY, p. 509



The office is becoming a veritable information bureau ...the correspondence it entails occupies a great deal of our time.<sup>37</sup>

The importance of the establishment of this central office and the appointment of an executive secretary cannot be overlooked in the history of leadership training. The results of the action soon became evident. By 1920, the following tracts were available from the League office in Milwaukee:

The Walther League of the Synodical Conference  
Lutheran Travelers Welfare Work  
The Walther League Society  
The Walther League District  
Did You Ever Stop to Consider (Hospice Work)  
The Walther League and the Minister<sup>38</sup>

Beginning in November of that same year, the Messenger began printing regular topics for discussion. The year 1920 also marked the first year that group conferences were planned in connection with the annual convention (that year at Evansville, Indiana). At these conferences, the various district officers were enabled to meet and discuss the problems of their respective offices.<sup>39</sup>

O. H. Theiss makes the following observations about the program of the League during this period of birth and rapid expansion:

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<sup>37</sup>A. A. Grossmann, "Annual Report of the Executive Secretary," WLM, XXVIII (August, 1919), 16.

<sup>38</sup>WLM, XXIX (August, 1920), 7.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 6.



It is interesting to note the shift of emphasis and of purpose which the program of the League has made during the years in order to meet more adequately the varying demands of different generations of the church's youth. For the first twenty years of its history, the first purpose of the League was to protect the young people's societies of the Synodical Conference against affiliation with heterodox groups. The reasons for this purpose arose out of the situations in the Lutheran Church at that time and out of the cultural and social forces at work among the Lutheran youth during these decades. In the next twenty years, under the impact of the change from German to English in its meetings and literature and the rapid expansion consequent upon World War I and the wartime project it developed, the League went through a period of testing its newly found strength in big undertakings and of laying the foundations for the building of a solid program. This period, too, was a reflection of the world and of the church in which the young people then lived.<sup>40</sup>

A decade after the leaders of the Walther League had asked themselves the question, "Shall we quit or go on?" the organization was growing steadily and enlarging its program confidently. In 1920 it decided that its existing facilities were inadequate, and planned even further expansion.

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6- (40) O. H. Theiss, "The Development of Christian Growth in the League Program," Agenda, Christian Growth Chairmen's Conference (1949), p. 7.



### CHAPTER III

#### FURTHER DEVELOPMENT (1920-1933)

##### General Background

On October 7, 1920, Walter A. Maier was installed at Fort Wayne as the first full-time Executive Secretary of the Walther League.<sup>1</sup> Two years later, in January, 1922, P. G. Prokopy took the newly created office of Assistant Executive Secretary, and assumed the direction of the educational department. That same year Hulda Kickhoff began her duties at headquarters as the first full-time Junior Secretary, and Erwin Fischmann joined the staff as business manager.<sup>2</sup> The Walther League was growing by leaps and bounds. In connection with the additions to the staff, the League moved its office to Chicago, Illinois, where its address was 6438 Eggleston Avenue.<sup>3</sup>

When Maier left to join the faculty of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, in 1922, Prokopy accepted the position of Executive Secretary. Maier retained the editorship of the

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<sup>1</sup>"Notes of the Executive Board," Walther League Messenger, XXIX (November, 1920), 106. Messenger hereafter referred to as WLM.

<sup>2</sup>ABC of Youth Work (Chicago: Walther League, c.1949), p. 154. Hereafter referred to as ABC.

7-<sup>3</sup>O. H. Theiss, "The Way of the Years," Walther League Messenger, LI (May, 1943), 509. Hereafter referred to as WY.



Walther League Messenger, which had been part of his duties as Executive Secretary. In 1923, Erwin Umbach accepted the positions of Junior Secretary and Hospice Secretary; and when, in 1929, Prokopy accepted a call into the parish ministry, Umbach became Executive Secretary.<sup>4</sup>

The Field Secretary's report for 1926 showed that the League consisted of 1,171 Senior and 336 Junior societies. Only seven states were without a Walther League society.<sup>5</sup>

What about the program of the League during this time? "The Walther League Program," a pamphlet published in 1925, listed these as the objects of the League:

1. Keep the young people with the Church.
2. Bible Study.
3. Train church workers.
4. Hospice work.
5. Create love for and participation in mission work.
6. Fellowship.
7. Charities.<sup>6</sup>

The executive secretaries had developed a unified program, which they urged all societies to adopt, or, where this was impossible, at least adapt to a program which would

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<sup>4</sup>WY, pp. 509-10.

<sup>5</sup>E. H. Engelbrecht, "Annual Report of Field Secretary," Convention Yearbook (1926), p. 54. Yearbook hereafter referred to as CYE.

<sup>6</sup>Theodore Graebner, "The Need of a Unified Educational Program," Agenda, National Committees on Christian Knowledge and Christian Service (1942), pp. 32-3.



include some higher endeavor (topic, mission, etc.), business, and social activity.<sup>7</sup> The Messenger printed topic meetings regularly. Slide lectures, speakers, book lists, and summer conferences held a prominent place in the League program. The educational program was "second only to Bible study" (an educational secretary was added to the staff in 1924). Missions were beginning to assume prominence. The hospice work was greatly developed. The Wheat Ridge Sanatorium, an object of the League's support since 1904, came under the ownership and control of the League in 1927, and was valued at \$250,000.<sup>8</sup> Says Theodore Graebner of all this activity:

In the five years from 1926 to 1930, the program of the League had taken on tremendous proportions. It is safe to say that with this multiplication of projects, the societies were definitely placed before the choice of using this and rejecting that in the program offered by the Walther League.<sup>9</sup>

This greatly enlarged program brought with it advances in leadership training. The expansion of the office gave its staff more time to concentrate on the organization of individual districts, zones, and societies. Through the "Greater Service" endeavor of this period, zone organization in particular assumed far more prominence than it had

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<sup>7</sup>E. J. Gallmeyer, "Annual Report of Executive Secretary and Executive Board," GYB (1926), p. 54.

<sup>8</sup>Graebner, op. cit., p. 33.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 37.



before. More and more zones organized, and conducted rallies with well-planned programs. By 1926, twenty-three districts could claim efficiently operating zones.<sup>10</sup>

Said the Executive Secretary and the Executive Board in 1926 about their work:

For several years your executive department has concentrated on development from within and in line with this effort has sought to give helps to the district boards, the zones, and society workers. Efforts for standardization and unification were continued, and while it was not our aim to seek new fields of activity nor achieve startling accomplishments, yet the forward spirit was constantly borne in mind.<sup>11</sup>

Typical of the help which the League headquarters offered to societies was that of the Recreational Department. It divided its work into five categories:

1. Providing suitable material for montly recreational meetings in the society.
2. Suggesting plays.
3. Providing material for special occasions, such as rallies, banquets, etc.
4. Offering suggestions and answering inquiries of individual recreational leaders.
5. Spreading recreational information.<sup>12</sup>

Most of the leadership training which the Recreational Committee offered, then, was in the form of printed suggestions or correspondence. In 1927, for instance, the Committee

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<sup>10</sup>Gallmeyer, op. cit., pp. 49-50.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 49.

<sup>12</sup>W. F. Weiherman, "Annual Report on Recreation," CYB (1929), p. 49.



prepared socials for each month of the year and sent them to member societies along with the Quarterly Letter. That same year, the Committee received and answered 1059 inquiries about recreation. Directions for games, suggestions for planning socials, and lists of acceptable plays were mailed on request.<sup>13</sup>

Part of the report of the Recreational Committee at the 1928 convention was an appeal to pastors, teachers and leaders to regard highly the social values of play. The leaders should learn to know the young people by playing with them. They should meet with the recreation committee and help plan; societies needed good leadership in recreational planning. And they should train leaders among the young people. "It takes originality and effort to plan a social hour."<sup>14</sup>

How widely felt was this need for trained leadership? Time and again the Executive Secretary said with emphasis, "Good leadership is necessary!" Prokopy's message to the 1927 convention included this paragraph:

After all, Coworkers, especially District Leaders, the success of a society and other organizations depends largely upon the leaders. Give us young men and young women who have the right spirit and are trained for

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<sup>13</sup>J. M. Bailey, "Annual Report of the Committee on Recreation," CYB (1927), p. 55.

<sup>14</sup>"Annual Report of the International Recreation Committee," CYB (1928), pp. 65-6.



the work and give us societies that strive for higher endeavors, and we can do wonders.<sup>15</sup>

Prokopy's successor, Erwin Umbach, repeated the importance of leadership to League work, and followed with the optimistic statement:

Leadership, while always a matter of concern, is, nevertheless, being made more possible today than ever before due to our officers' conferences, our summer camps, our educational efforts and our School of Correspondence. There will always be a need for capable and efficient leaders, but the number of young men and young women who are rising to the top and displaying all the requisites of wise leadership is constantly increasing.<sup>16</sup>

Two years later, he editorialized on "Training for Leadership," stating that "Leaders make or break the young People's society."<sup>17</sup> In 1932 he listed the following as leadership training means currently available:

1. Responsible positions in societies, on committees.
2. Literature: The Walther League Messenger, Workers Quarterly.
3. The educational program.
4. The School of Correspondence.
5. The activities contests.
6. League gatherings: Conventions, rallies, conferences and camps.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>p. G. Prokopy, "Message of the Executive Secretary," CYB (1927), p. 31.

<sup>16</sup>Erwin Umbach, "Message of the Acting Executive Secretary," CYB (1928), p. 33.

<sup>17</sup>"Training for Leadership," Workers Quarterly, I (January, 1930), 3. Quarterly hereafter referred to as WQ.

<sup>18</sup>Erwin Umbach, "On Training Leaders," District Worker's Bulletin, VI (February, 1932), 2-3.



We can pick out and discuss briefly some of these means, chiefly those which the national organization most directly influenced and those which are in the most direct sense leadership training.

### Publications

The Walther League Messenger continued as the chief publication of the League, under the editorship of former Executive Secretary Walter A. Naier.

The 1922 convention in Omaha resolved to publish a periodical particularly designed for Junior Leaguers.<sup>19</sup> As a result, the first issue of the Concordia Junior Messenger appeared in January, 1923, under the editorship of Alfred Doerffler.

A more exact view of the function of the new magazine can be gained by a glance at the contents of the first issue: Several articles of a general nature, e. g. "The Verbal Inspiration of the Scriptures," "Our Church at Work" (in China), "The Joy of Christian Service;" a short story; a section on the Junior Walther League (which had been organized at the Omaha convention, 1922), including "What is the Junior Walther League" and "Bible Study;" a section on mission work; a suggested program for an educational meeting; a letter from the Field Secretary; a report of the

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<sup>19</sup>ABC, p. 154.



Junior sectional meeting at the Omaha Convention; correspondence from various Junior societies; and other brief, miscellaneous articles of a general nature.<sup>20</sup> Later issues also included a section on society entertainment.

W. G. Polack of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, succeeded Doerffler as editor of the Concordia Junior Messenger in 1928, and stated that his editorial policy would remain fundamentally the same as that of his predecessor.<sup>21</sup>

By 1929, the International office offered thirteen different pamphlets, folders and charts specifically designed as aids in Junior work. In addition, it published in 1923 the Junior Bible Student, a companion volume to the Bible Student, as an aid to Bible study both for leaders and Bible class members.<sup>22</sup>

The publication which is most important of all for our consideration of leadership training is the Workers Quarterly, since it was particularly aimed at meeting the needs of League leaders. The first issue appeared in July, 1929. The Executive Secretary of the League, Erwin Umbach, was its editor.

In the first issue of the Workers Quarterly, Umbach gave as its purpose, first, to unify and simplify the

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<sup>20</sup> Concordia Junior Messenger, I (January, 1923). Hereafter referred to as CJM.

<sup>21</sup> CJM, V (December, 1927), 272.

<sup>22</sup> "Walther League Literature," WQ, I (July, 1929), 15.



voluminous mailing that went out from League headquarters, e. g. the Quarterly Letter, the "Unified Monthly Program," and the recreational programs; and second, to provide space for additional helps, particularly in regard to Bible study and topic discussions.<sup>23</sup>

That same issue, in fulfilling the stated purpose, carried an administrative section, offering suggestions to society officers for the conduct and program of their meetings, material on reading courses, and a list of Walther League literature available. A section on Bible study followed, including suggestions and helps for organizing and conducting Bible study in the local society. A similar section on topic study was next; and the final feature was a section on recreation, which outlined several monthly programs and gave the explanation for the necessary games.<sup>24</sup>

The administrative section, mentioned above, outlined the principles of parliamentary procedure for the benefit of officers in an article entitled "Conducting the Meeting in Order." It advanced complete and detailed rules of order, and suggested "parliamentary drills" as a device to help the group learn the procedure. Similar helps for society leaders occurred in succeeding issues, thus offering in effect a course in leadership training to the readers of the magazine.

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<sup>23</sup>"The Purpose of the Quarterly," WQ, I (July, 1929), 3-4.

<sup>24</sup>WQ, I (July, 1929).



A case in point is an article by W. F. Weiherman in January, 1933: "Some Thoughts for the Junior Leader." The article gives: a. The Proper Approach; b. Doing and Don'ting; c. A Progressive Program; d. The Counselor's Job.<sup>25</sup>

The Quarterly offered relief in the form of helpful material and suggestions to program committees of societies, including Bible study, topics, and entertainment. Each issue, too, contained editorials on topics of current League interest. Still another important feature of the magazine from the very beginning was the review of plays, and a statement from time to time of the principles by which plays should be censored.<sup>26</sup>

The publication of primary importance to those who had positions of leadership in the Walther League districts was the District Worker's Bulletin. Executive Secretary Prokopy inaugurated this publication in January, 1926, intending it to replace individual department mailings. The Bulletin was issued monthly, and included sections for each League department: Executive, Hospice, Junior, Educational, Mission Endeavor, and Publications. During its history, the publication has been issued under three different names: the

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<sup>25</sup>W. F. Weiherman, "Some Thoughts for the Junior Leader," WQ, IV (January, 1933), 17-18.

<sup>26</sup>"Fundamental Principles for the Censoring of Plays," WQ, III (July, 1931), 57-8.



District Worker's Bulletin,<sup>27</sup> the District Leader's Bulletin,<sup>28</sup> and the District Officer's Bulletin.<sup>29</sup>

By this time in its history, the Walther League itself had not published a comprehensive manual for its leaders. Instead, the League office recommended the Manual for Young People's Societies, written by E. H. Engelbrecht of Concordia Teacher's College, River Forest, Illinois, and published by Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis.<sup>30</sup> Engelbrecht acted as president of the Walther League from 1918-1921, and later served for more than twenty years as general field secretary.<sup>31</sup> He produced his Manual in 1920.

The Manual is divided into four sections: Educational, Active Work, Social Activities, and Organization. In the Educational section, Engelbrecht discussed methods of Bible study, lectures, and suggested topics. The chapter on Active Work treated the problem of involving all the young people of the congregation in Christian service, under such headings as "Work in the Congregation," "Church Publicity," "Care of the Newly Confirmed," and "Junior Societies." In the section on Social Activities, the author included "Hints

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<sup>27</sup>District Worker's Bulletin, I-IX. Hereafter referred to as DWB.

<sup>28</sup>District Leader's Bulletin, X.

<sup>29</sup>District Officer's Bulletin, XI-XXIII.

<sup>30</sup>"Walther League Literature," p. 15.

<sup>31</sup>WY, p. 509.



for Planning," "Debates," "Concerts and Entertainments," and "Social Evenings;" and listed and explained parties and games. The last section, on Organization, discussed "How to Start a New Society," "The Officers and Committees" (their duties and functions), and "Rules of Order." The Manual also furnished a model Constitution and By-Laws.<sup>32</sup>

Another major periodical produced by the Walther League for leaders during this period was the Bible Student. Begun in 1922 with Theodore Graebner as editor,<sup>33</sup> the quarterly publication was designed to relieve leaders of work in preparation for their meetings with their respective groups.<sup>34</sup>

By 1929, the Walther League office listed as available thirty booklets, folders, pamphlets and charts other than those mentioned above, all intended to help carry out the League program most efficiently.<sup>35</sup> At least some of them were directed specifically at leaders, e. g. "Knowing and Doing," a handbook for educational leaders, published in 1923.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>E. H. Engelbrecht, Manual for Young People's Societies (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1920).

<sup>33</sup>WY, p. 509.

<sup>34</sup>Graebner, op. cit., p. 38.

<sup>35</sup>"Walther League Literature," p. 15.

<sup>36</sup>P. G. Prokopy, "Message of the Executive Secretary," CYB (1927, p. 27).



### The School of Correspondence

At its 1926 convention, the Walther League passed the following resolution:

Whereas the Walther League Correspondence School courses will not be an overlapping of effort, but will be an extension of our great work of discovering, developing, and training leaders, therefore, be it

Resolved: 1. That a Walther League Correspondence School be established as a part of the work of the Educational Department of the Walther League. 2. That three courses be provided and that necessary outlines and literature be prepared and published. 3. That \$5000 from the non-administrative budget be set aside for the Walther League Correspondence School as a revolving fund to be used for preparing outlines and courses and literature for the Walther League Correspondence School.<sup>37</sup>

From that time on till its termination in 1940, the School of Correspondence was consistently listed as one of the chief means of leadership training offered by the Walther League.<sup>38</sup>

Prepared by P. E. Kretzmann of the faculty of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, the School of Correspondence eventually offered six courses, the first three being specifically concerned with the Walther League and its function, and the last three of a more general, informational nature. Enrollees were required to enroll for two courses, one from the first

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<sup>37</sup>"Official Minutes of the Thirty-Fourth International Convention," CYB (1926), p. 18. Convention minutes hereafter referred to as "Official Minutes."

<sup>38</sup>Umbach, "On Training Leaders," p. 2.



three and one from the last three. The fee for enrollment was \$5.00.<sup>39</sup>

The outline of the courses was as follows:

I. Walther League Administration.

- A. Psychology of Leadership.
- B. Walther League Organization.
- C. Parliamentary Law and Procedure.
- D. Reports, Addresses, and Speeches.

II. Walther League Methods.

- A. Objects of the Walther League.
- B. Methods in Educational Work.
- C. Methods in Mission Work.
- D. Methods in Junior Work.
- E. Methods in Hospice Work.
- F. Methods in Recreational Work.

III. Better Church Work.

- A. The Organization of Synod and Our Relation to our Church Today.
- B. Some of the Chief Enemies of Church Work.
- C. The Young Christian in His Home.
- D. The Young Christian and His Money.
- E. The Young Christian, His Time and His Companions.

IV. Bible Study.

- A. Survey of the Bible.
- B. Old Testament History, Institutions, and Types.
- C. The New Testament.
- D. Fundamental Doctrines.
- E. History of the English Bible.
- F. Historical Geography of Bible Lands.

V. Church History.

- A. Survey of Church History.
- B. History of the Reformation.
- C. American Lutheran Church History.

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<sup>39</sup> Walther League Manual (Chicago: The Walther League, 1935), p. 195.



## VI. History of Missions.

- A. Survey of Mission History.
- B. Lutheran Missions.
- C. Some Great Missionaries.

The correspondence course required readings from various sources such as Kleiser, Training for Power and Leadership; Tralle, The Psychology of Leadership; Kirkpatrick, Public Speaking; Stearns, The Challenge of Youth; and League and synodical materials.<sup>40</sup> On the basis of these readings and the material in the course manuals, the enrollee answered questions and sent them to St. Louis for processing.

At the 1933 convention, a committee appointed by the President's Conference to survey the entire League program recommended that the School of Correspondence be discontinued because "no matter how well a School of Correspondence is conducted it can never be the substitute for personal instruction and contact." Leadership courses in various sections of the country "under the personal direction of local leaders in Walther League work" were to be substituted.<sup>41</sup>

Moreover, a resolution to that effect was passed at the same convention, to be carried out as part of a general reorganization plan for the General Offices and the Walther League program:

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<sup>40</sup> Walther League School of Correspondence (The Walther League), pp. 5, 23, 26.

<sup>41</sup> O. P. Kretzmann, "Report of the Committee on Survey," CYB (1933), p. 30.



Resolved that the materials for the Correspondence School shall be transferred to the General Offices. In larger centers, as well as in all places where a number of societies can join hands, leadership courses shall be organized under the direction of local Walther League leaders. Material for such schools is to be furnished by the General Offices.<sup>42</sup>

In spite of this action, the School of Correspondence was continued unchanged the following year and strengthened by two resolutions, one by the 1934 convention, and the other by the National Committees on Christian Knowledge and Christian Service, meeting in October, 1934. The former read as follows:

Resolved that we encourage the enrollment of new students in the School of Correspondence by offering awards and scholarships to those who complete certain required courses.<sup>43</sup>

The latter said:

Resolved that we suggest that additional courses in the Walther League School of Correspondence furnishing the background for the Forty-Eight Topics be prepared; that Valparaiso University be encouraged to offer correspondence school work in secular subjects; and that the correlation of the Walther League and tentative Valparaiso Correspondence Schools be given further study.<sup>44</sup>

P. E. Kretzmann reported in 1934 that in the seven years of the school's existence, four people had finished all courses, thirty had finished one or more courses, and a

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<sup>42</sup>"Official Minutes," CYB (1933), p. 101.

<sup>43</sup>"Official Minutes," CYB (1934), p. 99.

<sup>44</sup>"Minutes of the Joint Session of the National Committees on Christian Knowledge and Christian Service of the International Walther League" (1934). Hereafter referred to as NCM.



hundred students were enrolled at the time.<sup>45</sup>

The School of Correspondence was finally eliminated in 1940, because "the day of correspondence work is past."<sup>46</sup> Personal work was to be substituted in the form of institutes in various parts of the country.<sup>47</sup> As far back as 1927, Executive Secretary Prokopy had recognized the necessity for such personal work when he included among his suggestions for the curing of the League's ills:

1. Direct information brought in person to various gatherings.
2. Visitation, at least once a year, of societies by executive district officers.
3. Executive committees and training of officers in local society.
4. Inter-society officers' meetings.
5. Meetings of officers and committees at rallies and district conventions.<sup>48</sup>

#### Summer Conference Camps

The third important medium of leadership training during this time, in addition to publications and the School of Correspondence, was the conference program. This included both summer conferences, usually in a camp setting, and winter conferences at home.

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<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>O. P. Kretzmann, "Our Present Status," Agenda, National Committees on Christian Knowledge and Service (1940), p. 22.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

<sup>48</sup>p. G. Prokopy, "Message of the Executive Secretary," CYB (1927), p. 31.



The summer conference program began in 1923 when the Walther League opened its own summer camp at Arcadia, in northwestern Michigan, on the shores of Lake Michigan.<sup>49</sup> At the 1922 convention, the League had accepted a grant of land at that spot from Charles Starke and his associates.<sup>50</sup> W. F. Weiherman was appointed camp manager.<sup>51</sup>

The daily program of Camp Arcadia included a Bible Hour, a lecture and discussion period on Walther League methods, a feature lecture on a religious or historical topic, and a recreational program.<sup>52</sup> After 1933, the second of those four features disappeared from the daily schedule, and the educational side of the program included only Bible study and a lecture on a religious or historical topic.<sup>53</sup>

The program of lectures for the season of 1927, taken as a sample, was as follows:

Important Cities in Reformation History  
 Jewels of the Lutheran Crown  
 Highlights of Church History  
 Christian Living  
 Music and the Church  
 Five Outstanding Characters of the New Testament  
 Great Missionary Women  
 Every Leaguer a Bible Student  
 Stewardship in the Life of Youth<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>WY, p. 509.

<sup>50</sup>NCM (1934).

<sup>51</sup>WY, p. 509.

<sup>52</sup>Arcadia Camp Manager's Report (1927), p. 7.

<sup>53</sup>Cf. Arcadia Camp Manager's Reports, 1934 ff.



The yearly attendance at Arcadia grew from sixty-five in its opening season to an average of one thousand five years later.<sup>55</sup>

After Arcadia inaugurated the summer conference program, individual districts took up the idea and also began to sponsor camps. By 1926, eleven summer conference camps were in operation at various spots in the country,<sup>56</sup> including Lutherland (Pennsylvania), Southern California, Kansas, Dixie, and Arkansas.<sup>57</sup> In 1929 the International Walther League Summer Conference Committee adopted a "Handbook for Summer Conference Workers" in an attempt to standardize and improve summer camp programs. The handbook listed a seven-point standard of requirements, and official camp charters were granted to all summer conference camps meeting that standard.<sup>58</sup> In 1929, the League issued nineteen such camp charters;<sup>59</sup> in 1930 the number increased to twenty-one; and in 1931 it granted twenty-seven charters.<sup>60</sup> The roster for

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<sup>55</sup>W. F. Weiherman, "Annual Report of the Conference Director," CYB (1928), p. 55.

<sup>56</sup>J. M. Bailey, "Annual Report of the Secretary of the Educational Department," CYB (1927), p. 46.

<sup>57</sup>J. M. Bailey, "Annual Report of the Secretary of the Educational Department," CYB (1926), p. 63.

<sup>58</sup>W. F. Weiherman, "Annual Report of the Conference Director," CYB (1929), p. 55.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid.

<sup>60</sup>W. F. Weiherman, "Annual Report on Summer Conferences," CYB (1931), p. 53.



1931 camps was as follows:

Camp Arcadia, International Walther League; Lutherland Senior Camp, Metropolitan and New Jersey Districts; Cloghorn (Senior and Junior), North and South Wisconsin; Edmonton Beach, Alberta; Petit Jean Mountain, Arkansas and Western Tennessee; Seymour, Central Illinois; Mandeville, Dixie; Clifty Falls, Indiana; Okoboji, Iowa; Cauble, Kansas; Rio Frio, Lone Star; Bay View, Minnesota; Black River Lodge, Missouri; Vigilante, Montana; Horkoy's Park, Nebraska; Asilomar, Northern California and Nevada; Blue Ridge, North Carolina; Lakewood, North Dakota; Cisco Beach, Northern Illinois; Linwood (Senior) and Northfield (Junior), Ohio; Muskogee, Oklahoma; Sparrow Lake, Ontario; Estes Park, Rocky Mountain; Wenatchee, Washington; Pioneer, Western New York.<sup>61</sup>

What was the primary purpose of these many camps? "To offer opportunities for the youth of our church to increase their knowledge, to enlarge their vision, and to prepare their minds and bodies for greater service in the Kingdom."<sup>62</sup> The camps demonstrated that "the best leadership training can be promoted through the exchange of personal experiences and by a well prepared course of topic discussions at these conference sessions." Bible study, topic study and recreation all came in for their share of discussion and demonstration.<sup>63</sup>

Conferences for the benefit of camp leaders, called Camp Councils, were begun in 1926. The first Camp Council was held in Chicago and was attended by five people. That number included camp workers from Missouri, Northern Illinois,

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<sup>61</sup>Ibid.

<sup>62</sup>"Manual, Summer Conference Camps," p. 1.

<sup>63</sup>Weiherman, "Annual Report on Summer Conferences," CXB (1931), p. 53.



and New York. The second Camp Council, held in St. Louis in January, 1928, had a total attendance of nineteen, with eleven districts represented. The following year the Council went back to Chicago, where thirty people met; and the next eight Camp Councils were held at the International camp, Arcadia, where those in attendance could observe a conference program in operation, in addition to having their own special program of essays and discussion. Attendance at these Councils averaged about eleven.<sup>64</sup>

During this period the Walther League also published a mimeographed manual for summer conference camps. It included chapters on:

1. The Aims and Objects of our Summer Conferences.
2. How to Organize and Conduct Summer Camps.
3. Camp Rules and Regulations.
4. Summer Camps and the Walther League Program.
5. Suggestions for Social Activities.
6. Camp Paper.
7. Charter Requirements.
8. Worship at Camp.<sup>65</sup>

#### Winter Conferences

Winter conferences also held an important place in the leadership training program of the Walther League. Since

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<sup>64</sup>"Camp Councils," p. 4.

<sup>65</sup>"Manual, Summer Conference Camps."



such conferences were held by individual districts, zones, or even smaller groups of societies, and from 1926 on were extremely numerous, it is impossible to give anything but a small segment of the winter conference picture. The first winter conference given recognition in League periodicals was held in Chicago, 1925.<sup>66</sup> After that, frequent references to winter conferences occurred. Six conferences were listed for the period of January-March, 1926, to be held in the following cities: Calgary, Canada; Edmonton, Canada; San Francisco, California; Denver, Colorado; Fort Wayne, Indiana; Chicago, Illinois ("Q" Zone).<sup>67</sup>

At the 1926 convention, Educational Secretary J. W. Bailey could report about the winter conferences:

The results achieved show that a winter conference is one of the most valuable means at our disposal for training leaders and acquainting our members with the program, aims and ideals of our organization. Winter Conferences can also be conducted with a very small outlay of funds and usually a larger ratio of attendance may be obtained than at the summer conferences.<sup>68</sup>

By 1928 the summer and winter conference program had expanded to such an extent that it was organized as a separate department at League headquarters. W. F. Weiherman, who had been in charge of Arcadia since it inaugurated the summer conference program in 1923, was placed in charge.

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<sup>66</sup>DWB, I (April, 1926), 3.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid.

<sup>68</sup>Bailey, "Annual Report of the Secretary of the Educational Department" (1926), p. 63.



Said Director Weiherman in his first report in that capacity, "Five years of summer conference work and several years of winter conferences have demonstrated, beyond a doubt, that this method of training for leadership in the League is not only desirable, but very necessary."<sup>69</sup> The convention emphasized the same point with a resolution that districts and zones be encouraged to inaugurate "well-planned and efficient Winter Conferences, or institutes," since "the Winter Conference is one of the best agencies for raising the society standard," and is more effective than a rally or a district convention, because it can study various phases of League work more thoroughly and reach more members of individual societies than rallies and conventions.<sup>70</sup>

Winter conferences generally took one of two forms. The first type is illustrated by a conference at Calgary, Canada, in January, 1926. Leaguers met for three days, hearing lectures on all phases of League work and conducting demonstrations of business meetings, topic meetings, mission meetings, and socials. The average attendance at the Calgary conference sessions was one hundred and fifty.<sup>71</sup>

A similar conference was held that same year, in February, at San Francisco. Eighty society officers from the

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<sup>69</sup>W. F. Weiherman, "Annual Report of the Conference Director," CYB (1928), p. 55.

<sup>70</sup>"Official Minutes," CYB (1928), p. 108.

<sup>71</sup>DWB, I (April, 1926), p. 3.



Northern California District met for two days and listened to lectures on educational work, hospice work, and social work.<sup>72</sup>

The other type of winter conference followed the form of lectures one or two nights a week, for from two to six weeks. Such conferences were held in 1926 at Fort Wayne, Chicago "Q" Zone, and Denver.<sup>73</sup>

Winter conferences discussed every phase of Walther League endeavor during this period with a view toward more efficient service. At a conference held by the Northern Illinois District in September, 1926, there were discussions on conducting society meetings, recreational work, higher endeavors, encouraging Juniors, hospice work, finances, rally problems, and Systematic Mission Endeavor, the latter being a prominent League project at the time.<sup>74</sup>

The value of winter conferences was highly estimated throughout this period, not only when they were started. In May, 1932, the District Worker's Bulletin named among the "Duties and Obligations of Zone Presidents" that they should conduct "an annual winter conference of all society officers wherever this is possible."<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>72</sup>Ibid.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid.

<sup>74</sup>DWB, I (September, 1926), 5.

<sup>75</sup>DWB, VI (May, 1932), 2.



### Other District Projects

Reports in both international and district periodicals during this time show that the individual districts were carrying on other projects which furthered the cause of leadership training. By 1926, twenty-three districts had their own printed publications to bring vital information to local societies.<sup>76</sup> Many districts held fall conferences for district leaders and committee chairmen, and found them an "excellent device for more effective district work."<sup>77</sup>

The work of the districts was considerably strengthened by the organization of zones within their areas, which served as centers for rallies and institutes.<sup>78</sup> The Executive Secretary urged in 1926 that demonstration Bible study and topic meetings, as well as mission study periods, be made part of the program of zone rallies.<sup>79</sup> The 1928 convention passed a set of zone regulations which provided for personal contact between local societies and the district executive board.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>76</sup>P. G. Prokopy, "Message of the Executive Secretary," CYB (1926), p. 50.

<sup>77</sup>DWB, VII (October-November, 1928), 1.

<sup>78</sup>Prokopy, "Message of the Executive Secretary" (1926), p. 50.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid., p. 46.

<sup>80</sup>"Official Minutes," CYB (1928), p. 101.



Some districts carried on specialized leadership training projects. For example, the local Walther League of St. Louis conducted a hospice training class in the fall and winter months of the year 1929. A similar class had been conducted at Buffalo, New York, in 1927-8, by H. Wind.<sup>81</sup>

### Conventions

National conventions became a more direct means for leadership training when, in 1920, sectional conferences were made a regular part of the convention program, giving League officers and other interest groups an opportunity to discuss their particular problems and techniques for solving them. At the 1926 convention, for example, four such sectional conferences were held, for the following groups: Bible Students and Missionary Workers; Junior Workers; Educational Workers; and District Officers, Field Secretaries, Walther League Secretaries and other Society Officers.<sup>82</sup>

Pertinent essays were read and discussed at each of these sectional conferences. The Bible students and missionary workers heard papers, for instance, on "Putting the 'I' into the Bible," "My Experience in Conducting an Adult Bible Class," "Let's Study Missions;" and also had practical demonstrations of Bible study and mission study. The Junior

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<sup>81</sup>DWB, IV (March-April, 1929), 4.

<sup>82</sup>CYB (1926), pp. 32-44.



workers considered "What the League Expects of the Juniors," "The Junior League in 1925-1926," and other related topics. The educational workers discussed "Conducting Systematic Study Classes," "How We Conduct Our Summer Conference Camp," "How We Plan Our Church Socials," and other essays. The officers' group talked about "Our Budgets and Our Districts," "Efficient District Organization," and "Square Pegs in Square Holes" (a discussion of the preferability of electing or appointing officers).<sup>83</sup>

#### Officer's Conferences

Another medium of leadership training on the national scale begun during this period was the officer's conference. The first Conference for District Presidents was held in Chicago on October 26, 1924, and was attended by eighteen presidents.<sup>84</sup> These were made an annual affair, and have been continued to the present time. The 1930 conference might be used as an example to illustrate the subjects discussed at President's Conferences. At that meeting, with thirty-one district representatives in attendance, essayists discussed "High Spots in District Visitation," "Where the Leaders Have Not Vision, the People Perish," "Education - the Heart of our Program," "How Can We Get More Delegates

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<sup>83</sup>Ibid.

<sup>84</sup>ABC, p. 155.



to Our Conventions?" In addition, the presidents also talked about Bible and topic study, publications, finances, summer conferences, hospice work, "expansion," and Wheat Ridge.<sup>85</sup>

Beginning in 1930, the Walther League also held departmental conferences in connection with the President's Conferences. The first of these was a Junior Worker's Institute, which served as a clearing house for Junior problems on organization, administration, and program. In attendance were twenty district presidents, ten district Junior Chairmen or substitutes, and two district Junior Committee members.<sup>86</sup> In subsequent years, departmental conferences were held for education workers and hospice workers. After three years, the departments rotated again, so that each had its chance.

What did these departmental conferences do in the way of leadership training? Again, they permitted discussion of problems. The General Educational Conference, held in 1931 immediately after the President's Conference, had on its program discussions of: Bible study, Lyceum Lecture Course, School of Correspondence, Educational meetings, the Junior League and Education, topic study, recreation.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>85</sup>DWB, V (March, 1930), 1-2.

<sup>86</sup>W. F. Weiherman, "Annual Report of the Junior Secretary," CYE (1930), p. 43.

<sup>87</sup>DWB, V (March, 1931), 2.



### Junior Work

Because of their lower age level, generally speaking, Junior Walther Leaguers need a greater amount of guidance. For that reason, the training of leaders for this age group merits special consideration. And since Junior work has been organized as a separate department in the Walther League office since 1922, it is not inconsistent to single it out from the other areas of leadership training and treat it in somewhat greater detail.

Already in 1906, Junior work attracted considerable attention, as the number of young Leaguers increased steadily.<sup>88</sup> No Junior work was systematized, however, and in 1916 the Executive Board asked that the status of Junior societies be defined. Should Junior societies operate through Senior societies, or be given the rank of full-fledged societies themselves? It was the opinion of the Board that Junior societies should be treated as a part of Senior societies because they feared that "if we put Junior Societies on the same footing with Senior Societies it might lead to unpleasant situations, and it might open a way for severe criticism." The chief concern of the Board seems to have been the fact that Junior Leaguers were not old enough to travel, and thus should not be allowed to attend conventions

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<sup>88</sup>L. Honsbehn, "Interesting Events in Walther League History," WLM, XXVI (June-July, 1918), 357.



as delegates, a situation which would be permitted should they be given the status of full-fledged societies.<sup>89</sup> The 1916 convention consequently resolved that Junior societies should be considered sections of Senior societies.<sup>90</sup>

The 1919 convention authorized the Executive Board to appoint a special committee to outline a plan of organization for Junior societies and consider "how to make their meetings interesting and instructive." The League was then to elect a national Junior Committee to carry out the program outlined. The Executive Board turned the task over to the Executive Board of the Western New York District.<sup>91</sup> As a result of their recommendations, the 1920 convention adopted a set of resolutions that again urged Leaguers to establish Junior sections, each section to form a branch of the Senior society, be included in its membership, and supervised and assisted by it. The period of Junior membership was fixed at the three years following confirmation, after which period the Junior members would automatically become Senior Leaguers. The greatest possible emphasis was to be laid upon securing proper leadership; but no suggestions

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<sup>89</sup>WLM, XXV (August, 1916), 7.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., pp. 27-8.

<sup>91</sup>WLM, XXIX (August, 1920), 5.



were made as to the source of such leadership, except, as mentioned above, that the Seniors should supervise and assist the Juniors.<sup>92</sup>

The Junior Walther League was organized as a separate branch of the Walther League at the Omaha convention in 1922. Hulda A. Bickhoff became the first Junior Secretary in the League office. By 1923, the Junior Walther League numbered 154 societies, and by 1926, the number had grown to 333.<sup>93</sup> The report of the Junior Secretary in 1926, Erwin Umbach, showed that on the basis of 239 society reports sent in, 136 Junior Leagues had a program of Bible study, and 103 had none; 146 used educational topics, 93 did not; 184 assisted the congregation in some way, 55 did not.<sup>94</sup>

Year after year the problem of leadership for the Juniors was posed. Said Secretary Umbach, 1926: "The real solution of every junior problem in the final analysis will be to obtain active and capable leaders for junior work."<sup>95</sup> The following year he reported:

One of the difficult problems confronting the Junior League from the very start was the question of leadership. It was realized from the beginning that pastors and teachers are the ideal leaders, but in many cases

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<sup>92</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>93</sup>Erwin Umbach, "Annual Report of the Acting Secretary of the Junior Department," CYE (1926), p. 57.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid.



these men are too busy with other duties of their office to give much attention personally to junior work. Junior counselors, or advisers, were, therefore, appointed from among the senior leaguers.<sup>96</sup>

And again in 1928:

One problem will continue to confront us no matter what the future may have in store for our Junior Walther League, the problem of providing adequate and capable leadership for our Junior Endeavor. Here we would encourage especially the young men (for we find that it is much easier to gain our young women for the task of junior leadership) to ponder the joys and blessings which are his who devotes his leisure hours to teaching the younger generation how to spend their leisure time profitably in healthful and instructive Christian work and play.<sup>97</sup>

The chief means for leadership training in Junior work have already been referred to. These were sectional conferences at the annual conventions, begun in 1920, and Junior Worker's Institutes, begun in 1930 and held at various intervals thereafter in conjunction with the District President's Conference.

The sectional conferences at conventions discussed such problems as "Efficiency among Junior Society Officers," "Methods to Gain and Hold Juniors,"<sup>98</sup> "Recreation for Juniors," and "Successful Junior Rallies."<sup>99</sup> The Junior Worker's Institutes, too, provided opportunities for the

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<sup>96</sup>Erwin Umbach, "Annual Report of the Acting Secretary of the Junior Department," CYB (1927), p. 38.

<sup>97</sup>Erwin Umbach, "Annual Report of the Acting Secretary of the Junior Department," CYB (1928), p. 44.

<sup>98</sup>"Program of the Conference of Junior Workers," CYB (1927), p. 110.

<sup>99</sup>"Program of the Conference of Junior Workers," CYB (1928), p. 113.



discussion of adolescent psychology and Junior League programs. The second such institute, held in Chicago on January 16-17, 1933, made an interesting experiment when it used the group discussion method throughout to illustrate in a practical way what group thinking could produce, and to show what was meant by developing individual initiative and responsibility.<sup>100</sup>

The publications produced by the Walther League specifically aimed at Juniors and their leaders were the Concordia Junior Messenger, begun in 1923, and the Junior Bible Student, begun in that same year under the editorship of P. E. Kretzmann. A regular column for Juniors had appeared in the Walther League Messenger since September, 1913.<sup>101</sup> By 1926, eleven reprints were available from the Walther League office which had originally appeared in the Concordia Junior Messenger.<sup>102</sup>

In 1931, Junior Secretary W. F. Weiherman reported that there were thirty-six District Junior Chairmen and Committees, and that nearly a thousand Junior counselors had worked in local societies. "The leaders of Junior work must ever be

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<sup>100</sup> Proceedings of the Second Junior Worker's Institute (1933), pp. 7-12.

<sup>101</sup> "Walther League Juniors - the Alumni Association of our Lutheran School," WLM, XXII (September, 1913).

<sup>102</sup> Erwin Umbach, "Annual Report of the Acting Secretary of the Junior Department," GYB (1926), p. 57.



the Seniors."<sup>103</sup> During the last five years of the period under consideration, the greatest growth of the Walther League occurred in the Junior Department, and in 1933, Juniors numbered one-third of the total League enrollment.<sup>104</sup> The number of Junior Walther Leaguers had grown tremendously, but the facilities for their guidance and leadership had not kept pace.

The Survey Committee reported to the 1933 convention that difficulties had arisen because of the sharp distinction between Junior and Senior societies, and recommended that the Junior Department in the International Office be eliminated as a separate department. Instead, the Junior Department should operate as a division under the Departments of Christian Knowledge and Service. From the point of view of the local society, the sharp distinction between Juniors and Seniors should not be emphasized too strongly; instead, there should be one Walther League, with a Senior and a Junior division.<sup>105</sup> While this would appear to be a reversion to the system revised in 1922, it still provided for emphasis of Junior work and at the same time attempted to eliminate the difficulties arising from the cleft between the two societies.

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<sup>103</sup>W. F. Weiherman, "Annual Report of the Secretary of the Junior Department," CYB (1931), p. 47.

<sup>104</sup>Walter Helmke, "Annual Report of the Executive Board," CYB (1933), p. 21.

<sup>105</sup>Kretzmann, "Report of the Committee on Survey," p. 32.



### The League and Synod

The picture of League leadership during this period would not be complete without a word about the relations between the Walther League and the Missouri Synod. By far the greatest number of the League's member societies were the young people's organizations of churches belonging to the Missouri Synod. The pastors were the natural leaders of all church organizations, including the Walther League, for, as the Survey Committee of 1933 reported:

In the final analysis the young people's work in the Church, more specifically the work of the Walther League, depends upon the cooperation and leadership of the pastors. It is generally known that the young people of the Church will make very little progress in adopting the Walther League program unless the pastor himself takes the leadership, at least in the beginning. Later on it may prove highly desirable to develop an efficient lay leadership, but the beginnings of such work must always remain in the hands of the men who have been trained for that purpose.<sup>106</sup>

From the standpoint of leadership, then, the relationship between the clergy and the Walther League was highly significant. The clergy feeling is for the most part reflected in the operations of the Missouri Synod. How did Synod and the League get along?

As previously stated, the Walther League met consistent opposition in its early years from those who feared that by forming League societies and joining a national

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<sup>106</sup>Ibid., p. 29



organization, the young people were in effect setting up a competitive "super-church" over against the local congregation and the synodical body. Yet, as early as 1883, the president of the Missouri Synod, H. C. Schwan, had answered the question, "Should societies be permitted in congregations?" by stating affirmatively that some were permissible, including youth societies.<sup>107</sup>

Opposition to the work of the Walther League did not mean in every case a complete lack of interest in young people's work in general. Various essays relative to youth work were read at district conventions from 1888 to 1907. But the interest was scattered, and the essays were not followed with action by the conventions.<sup>108</sup>

In 1908, Synod encouraged its districts and pastoral conferences earnestly to consider what could be done to carry on successful work among confirmed youth. The Atlantic District had suggested various materials for youth work, and the convention posed the question as to whether these materials could be used throughout Synod.<sup>109</sup> No specific action followed.

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<sup>107</sup> Clarence Peters, "Developments of the Youth Programs of the Lutheran Churches in America" (unpublished Doctor's thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1951), p. 110.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., pp. 110-12.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., p. 112.



In 1917, the English District memorialized Synod as follows: "Resolved, that we ask the General Body to appoint a committee to supervise the work among young people's societies." The General Body came to this conclusion at that convention:

We hold that the time is not here when Synod ought to concern itself with youth societies, and we recommend that the District Synodical conventions and pastoral conferences consider the matter...It is to be hoped that through such discussions a system will gradually be worked out, according to which such societies in their praiseworthy work can be encouraged, helped, and kept on the right paths.<sup>110</sup>

However, the request of the English District was finally realized three years later when Synod established its Board for Young People's Work.<sup>111</sup>

Up till this time, Synod had not given any official recognition to the Walther League or its program, however. Largely through the efforts of W. G. Polack and A. A. Grossman, who appeared as a Walther League committee before the body, Synod endorsed a resolution at the Fort Wayne convention of 1923 which endorsed the work of the League and recommended that all existing young people's organizations in Synod affiliate with the League.<sup>112</sup> Said the Walther League Messenger of this action: "This means that the period of misunderstanding is over for all times and that now the

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<sup>110</sup>Ibid., pp. 112-13.

<sup>111</sup>Ibid., p. 113.

<sup>112</sup>Ibid., p. 125.



Church is one hundred per cent in back of the Walther League."<sup>113</sup> Subsequent reports from League leaders proved this estimate to be somewhat over-optimistic.

The Board for Young People's Work, established in 1920, worked in increasingly close harmony with the Walther League executives as the years went by. In 1931, M. J. Roschke, a member of the Board, reported to the annual League convention that representatives of Synod's Board and the Walther League Executive Board sat in each other's meetings. He reported further that nearly every district of Synod had a young people's board or leader.<sup>114</sup> League leaders, too, praised the amicable relations existing between Synod's boards and their own. Executive Secretary Umbach pointed out in 1932 that the counsel and assistance of district boards for young people's work had been welcomed by the district leaders of the League. The League representatives had been cordially received at the synodical convention in Milwaukee that year; the secretaries from League headquarters had spoken at Synod's seminaries and normal schools; and the League publications were sent to all synodical

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<sup>113</sup>"Synodical Resolutions That Mark a New Page in Walther League History," WLM, XXII (August-September, 1922), 26.

<sup>114</sup>M. J. Roschke, "Message of the Board for Young People's Work," CYB (1931), pp. 60-1.



institutions.<sup>115</sup> Thus there was increasing contact between the League and Synod on many fronts.

The Survey Committee could report by 1933:

The hostility to the Walther League and its program which was noticeable a few years ago is slowly but surely disappearing. Undoubtedly it still exists in certain sections of the country but it is not nearly so strong as it has been.<sup>116</sup>

A glance at the preceding pages of this chapter makes evident the fact that the program of the Walther League had expanded to an almost phenomenal extent after World War I. The 1933 Survey Committee was of the opinion that "No young people's organization in the country offers to its constituency a richer and fuller program than the Walther League." Yet the crying need was for leaders for that program. "One of our most vital needs today is more intensive leadership training," said the Committee. "It has been pointed out to the Committee time and again that the League needs for its district and zone work a practical course in leadership training."<sup>117</sup> The Survey Committee set the stage for a comprehensive reorganization of Walther League administration and program, and laid the basis for a plan which recognized the need and provided the means for leadership training.

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<sup>116</sup> Kretzmann, "Report of the Committee on Survey," p. 28.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., p. 30.



## CHAPTER IV

### COMPREHENSIVE REORGANIZATION (1934-1940)

#### Far-reaching Changes

In January, 1933, the District President's Conference appointed a committee to survey the entire League program in an effort to determine to what extent the League was fulfilling its purpose and to propose necessary changes in the interest of progress.<sup>1</sup> As a result of the Survey Committee's report to the 1933 convention in Chicago, the League adopted far-reaching changes affecting both program and administration.

The reorganization plan adopted at the 1933 convention and implemented by the new Executive Secretary of the following year, O. P. Kretzmann (who had also served as chairman of the Survey Committee), aimed at a dual goal: 1. The unification of League administration. 2. The expansion of the League program.<sup>2</sup>

The first goal was accomplished within a year.<sup>3</sup> It

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<sup>1</sup>O. P. Kretzmann, "Report of the Committee on Survey," Convention Year-Book (1933), p. 27. Yearbook hereafter referred to as CYB.

<sup>2</sup>O. P. Kretzmann, "The Annual Report of the Executive Secretary," CYB (1934), p. 20.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 19.



included the unification of the various program and administrative endeavors under the Executive Secretary, the merging of all existing departments into the Departments of Christian Knowledge and Christian Service, the expansion of the cultural side of the League's program, the termination of the hospice program, and other equally revolutionary changes.<sup>4</sup>

The second goal was to be achieved over a period of four years by the Comprehensive Program 1935-1939, which was passed at the 1934 convention in Omaha. Major points in the Comprehensive Program were the series of forty-eight topics "designed to build a philosophy of living for the four contacts which we have, 'with God, Society, the Church at large, and the Congregation;'"<sup>5</sup> the national activities contest, later known as the Talent Quest; the Choral Union; the publication of a comprehensive manual; and, most important for our study, the division of Leadership Training.<sup>6</sup>

As has been pointed out, the Survey Committee realized the vital part that leaders would play in any program of the

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<sup>4</sup>Resolution on "Reorganization of Program and Administration," "Official Minutes of the Forty-first Annual Convention of the International Walther League," CYB (1933), pp. 101-2. Convention minutes hereafter referred to as "Official Minutes."

<sup>5</sup>Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee of Christian Knowledge (October 20, 1934).

<sup>6</sup>"Comprehensive Program 1935-1939," in "Official Minutes," CYB (1934), pp. 98-101.



League, and realized further that more direct methods of training such leaders were necessary if the League's program was to be successful.<sup>7</sup> For that reason, one stipulation of the Comprehensive Program was:

That the division of Leadership Training include Officer Institutes throughout the country in order to develop the proper personality of leadership; courses on the stewardship of personal talents and time; positive instruction outlines on cooperation and integration of organizations in the Church and in relation to the local congregation. In order to create a widespread interest and disseminate these leadership ideals, the institutes shall at first offer courses in a general and broad way and gradually build up more definite and specific courses for advanced leaders in order that initiative may be built up in local leaders for more efficient work in the local group.<sup>8</sup>

Other units included under the Division of Leadership Training were those already in operation, and which were treated in Chapter II: Summer Camps, Winter Conferences, District and Zone Officer's Conferences, and the School of Correspondence.<sup>9</sup> These methods were to be intensified and used more specifically for leadership training.

Before examining any of these methods more carefully, it might be well to note some League statistics at the beginning of the new program. In 1934, Field Secretary Engelbrecht reported that the League numbered 1287 Senior

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<sup>7</sup>Gf. Chapter II, p. 58.

<sup>8</sup>"Comprehensive Program 1935-1939," in "Official Minutes," CYB (1934), p. 99.

<sup>9</sup>"Walther League Organization Chart for Local Societies," Walther League Manual (Chicago: The Walther League, 1935), p. 36.



societies and 592 Junior societies, a total of 1879.<sup>10</sup> The operating budget adopted by the 1934 convention totaled \$24,700, not including such major endeavors as Wheat Ridge and the Walther League Radio Fund.<sup>11</sup>

### Leadership Institutes

As stated above, the chief methods of leadership training in the Comprehensive Program was to be leadership institutes. That emphasis indicated a growing appreciation of personal instruction and contact in the training of leaders. The School of Correspondence days were over; instead, wherever societies could join hands in such an endeavor, Leaguers were to organize leadership training courses under the personal direction of local leaders in Walther League work. The material for such schools was to be furnished by the international headquarters.<sup>12</sup>

The purpose of such institutes was "to offer definite and specific training to those who are vitally interested in improving their talents for the purpose of placing them directly into the service of the Church." The sessions were to be conducted during the fall, winter or spring; and

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<sup>10</sup>E. H. Engelbrecht, "Annual Report of the Field Secretary," CYB (1934), p. 22.

<sup>11</sup>"Official Minutes," CYB (1934), p. 92.

<sup>12</sup>O. P. Kretzmann, "Report of the Committee on Survey," CYB (1933), p. 30.



wherever possible, faculty members of Synod's colleges and seminaries and Valparaiso University were to be used on the staff. A series of five or more sessions on successive Wednesdays or other week-day evenings was suggested as the most useful plan.<sup>13</sup>

The Walther League Manual also suggested a program for the proposed leadership institute, a condensed outline of which follows:

#### I. The Christian as Leader.

Introductory: Qualities for Christian leadership (living faith, Bible knowledge, courage). Examples of Christian leaders.

1. Personality.
2. Knowledge.
3. Will Power and Self-Confidence.
4. Administration.
5. Parliamentary Law.
6. Social Feature.

#### II. The Challenge of the Walther League.

1. The Challenge in Administration.
2. The Challenge in Christian Knowledge.
3. The Challenge in Christian Service.<sup>14</sup>

Such leadership institutes had been conducted previously in scattered places. They had been tried on a national, and also on a district scale. The intention of the Comprehensive Program was that leadership institutes should be held by zones and other smaller groups, all over the country, so that more society leaders would be reached personally.

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<sup>13</sup>"Leadership Institute," Walther League Manual, p. 190.

<sup>14</sup>Walther League Manual, pp. 191-5.



No statistics are available on the number of such institutes held during the ensuing years, and it would seem virtually impossible to get a really accurate tabulation, since the institutes were a result of local initiative, planning, and sponsorship. However, that the program must have been successful to a reasonably large degree is evident from the Executive Secretary's report in 1937 that "throughout the length and breadth of the Walther League hundreds of training institutes have been conducted during the past year."<sup>15</sup>

At least a sampling of local leadership institutes can be presented here. In the fall of 1934, the Twin City Walther League of St. Paul, Minnesota, sponsored an eight-week course of leadership training. Lecturers were P. Lindemann ("My Life") and E. B. Glabe ("Our Times").<sup>16</sup> The League office considered their material worthwhile enough to be duplicated and sent to other League societies.

In January, 1935, the South Wisconsin District Walther League sponsored a leadership institute for the Milwaukee Zones. W. F. Weiherman served as discussion leader for the topic, "The Christian as Leader." Under that general heading the following points were considered: 1. Knowledge and

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<sup>15</sup>O. P. Kretzmann, "Annual Report of the Executive Secretary," CYB (1937), p. 14.

<sup>16</sup>Cf. mimeographed outlines, "My Life" and "Our Times," issued at the Twin City Leadership Institute (1934).



Preparation. 2. Developing of our Talents. 3. Building Will-Power and Self-Confidence. 4. Application of Leadership.<sup>17</sup>

The City Walther League of Indianapolis sponsored an institute for four weeks in January and February, 1936. Topics of lectures were: "Why Young People's Activity," "W's of the League," "Our League Meetings," and "Guides for 'U'."

In September, 1938, a Lutheran Youth Forum was conducted at the Hotel Stevens in Chicago. On three different nights the following topics were discussed: "Fundamental Christian Truths," "Social Background of American Youth," "The Confirmed Youth in Our Lutheran Church Today."<sup>18</sup>

The Metropolitan and New Jersey Districts sponsored a Youth Clinic during the summer of 1940 at Camp Beaverbrook, Lutherland, Pennsylvania. The program ran for nine weeks. Discussions centered around the Walther League Organization Chart; each phase of the League's work was examined, and practical ideas were exchanged. E. H. Ruprecht, the director of the project, suggested at the time that the following guidelines be used for the following year:

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<sup>17</sup>"Leadership Institute," program of Institute sponsored by South Wisconsin District (January, 1935).

<sup>18</sup>"Lutheran Youth Forum," program for three sessions (September 11, 14, 16, 1938).



1. Schedule discussions around the topics of Administration, Christian Knowledge and Service.
2. Limit material to practical lines; solve problems and always strive to be positive, concrete.
3. Provide materials: recreational, musical, Sunday School, etc.
4. Discuss overview of work first, then split into interest groups: music, Sunday School workers, press, handicraft, leadership.
5. Demonstrate the principles taught in a practical way, through the camp program.<sup>19</sup>

The Kansas District of the Walther League, in cooperation with St. John's College, Winfield Kansas; the Oklahoma District; the International Walther League; and the Board of Foreign Missions; sponsored an Institute for Church Workers and Walther Leaguers during two successive summers, 1940 and 1941. G. A. Kuhlmann directed the Institutes, which were held at St. John's College. The Institute offered fifteen different courses in 1940, and seventeen in 1941. The wide range of subjects is illustrated in this sampling: "The New Testament World;" "Contemporary American Literature;" "Personal Evangelism in the Congregation;" "Recreational Leadership;" "Walther League Methods;" "Religious Implications of Present Social, Economic, and Political Trends;" "Handicraft."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>E. H. Ruprecht, "Youth Clinics at Summer Camps," Agenda of National Committees on Christian Knowledge and Service (1940), pp. 63-4. Agenda hereafter referred to as NCA.

<sup>20</sup>"Institute for Church Workers and Walther Leaguers" (June 17-22, 1940; June 9-14, 1941).



### Officer's Conferences

While such institutes were springing up all over the country, the previous agencies for leadership training were functioning as usual. International continued to sponsor District President's Conferences, Junior Worker's Conferences, and Camp Councils, and added the Field Secretaries' Conference in 1936, the Christian Knowledge and Christian Service Conference in 1937, and the District Treasurer's Conference in 1938. It conducted the First Annual District Workers Seminar in July, 1937, at Camp Arcadia.

Moreover, the International League urged districts and zones to conduct similar officer's conferences.<sup>21</sup> A Contact Survey Committee, reporting to the 1937 convention, revealed that much improvement was necessary regarding contacts between district officers and societies, in order to check on and improve society programs. One of the suggested means for carrying out such contact procedure was an annual zone officer's conference.<sup>22</sup> The National Junior Secretary reported to the same convention that a beginning had been made in the systematic training of counselors in various districts through Junior Worker's Institutes, and he suggested that

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<sup>21</sup>"District Officer's Conference" and "Zone Officer's Conference," Walther League Manual, pp. 188-90.

<sup>22</sup>Resolution 3, "Society Contact," "Official Minutes," GYB (1937), p. 63.



these be provided on a larger scale.<sup>23</sup>

### Summer Conference Camps

The summer conference camp program had been considered a vital cog in League leadership training from its inception. The Survey Committee Report of 1933 indicated, however, that the conference camps had not been used definitely enough for leadership training. The Committee suggested that advertising and actual camp courses should emphasize more directly this vital need.<sup>24</sup>

Following this lead, the Conference Director announced in 1935 that camps would be used more definitely that year as training schools for League and Church workers. Young people were to be given courses "covering the many problems which confront our youth at the present time." Moreover, they were to be given a "background for their society work during the ensuing year."<sup>25</sup> The topics of lectures at the International Conference Camp, Arcadia, during that year show that leadership training was thought of in a very broad sense:

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<sup>23</sup>W. F. Weiherman, "Report on the Junior Department," GYB (1937), p. 59.

<sup>24</sup>O. P. Kretzmann, "Report of the Committee on Survey," GYB (1933), p. 30.

<sup>25</sup>W. F. Weiherman, "Progress in Leadership Training at Our Summer Camps," Minutes of National Committees on Christian Knowledge and Service (1935), p. 10. Minutes hereafter referred to as NCM.



The Christian as a Leader  
 World Trends  
 Personal Evangelism  
 Christian Service  
 Problems of Life  
 My Life  
 Modern Literature  
 Do We Think  
 How People Lived in Bible Times<sup>26</sup>

General informational and background material was given, rather than specific techniques. The topics for district camps in 1935 were of the same general nature: "Christian Youth and World Problems," and "Challenge of the Walther League."<sup>27</sup> The total attendance at all League camps, including Arcadia, in 1934 was 3,500.<sup>28</sup>

#### Convention Program Sessions

Departmental conferences had been a regular program feature of the annual conventions since 1920. In 1938, the idea of "Program Sessions" was instituted. Sessions were organized under the three headings of Administration, Christian Knowledge, and Christian Service. They were planned as round table discussions and designed to furnish a means of exchange of thought and experience by the entire group. No long addresses or papers were included on the agenda.

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<sup>26</sup> Arcadia Camp Manager's Report (1935), pp. 12-13.

<sup>27</sup> W. F. Weiherman, "Progress in Leadership Training at our Summer Camps," NCM (1935), p. 10.

<sup>28</sup> "Camps," NCM (1934).



The leader presented the topic, read questions pertaining to it, suggested several avenues of approach, and started discussion. The group was urged to discuss questions rather than make speeches. Several discussion leaders were appointed for each meeting, who were to have thought through the topic, and who would present facts, offer experiences, raise questions, and in general keep the discussion alive. Each session was summarized by a special recorder, who was allowed seven minutes to present his report to the entire convention later in the day.<sup>29</sup> Districts were urged to include program sessions as a part of their conventions, too, since "this is essentially a phase of leadership training."<sup>30</sup>

As the size of conventions increased from year to year, however, the program sessions became more general in character and less useful for specific leadership training. Huge attendance at the sessions made efficient discussion virtually impossible.

### The National Committees

Soon after he took the office of Executive Secretary in 1934, G. P. Kretzmann organized the National Committees on Christian Knowledge and Christian Service. The National Committees consisted of prominent leaders in the Missouri

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<sup>29</sup>Mimeographed program, 1939 Convention Program Sessions.

<sup>30</sup>District Officers Bulletin, XIII (March, 1941), 1.



Synod, clergymen, professors, and laymen, who were to lend counsel and guidance in the formation of League policy and in the planning of its course. Although acting in a purely advisory capacity, these Committees exerted considerable influence on the program and policy of the Walther League during the years in which they met, and a perusal of their agendas and minutes gives the reader a fairly accurate index of the thinking behind League activities from 1934-42.

It is significant to note how often the subject of leadership training was treated in the meetings of these men. Year after year, their resolutions show what importance they attributed to this phase of the League's program:

1934: Resolved that we request the International Board to appoint a special committee to study the question of the training of lay leaders and to make concrete suggestions as to how the agencies of the Walther League and Synod may be utilized to this end... Resolved that we recognize the need of more formal and definite instruction in the methods of conducting Bible classes... Resolved that we recognize the great importance of the wide field of cultural activities in the Walther League program of today, and that we urge the training, through every possible means, of leaders, both laymen and pastors, in the proper use of leisure time through these means.<sup>31</sup>

1936: Resolved that we recommend to the Executive Board the appointment of a committee, drawn chiefly out of the membership of the National Committees, which is to work out plans and programs for regional leadership institutes... Resolved that the Walther League Executive Board immediately take steps to put the League program for Juniors on a scientific basis and provide, if possible, for the education and

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<sup>31</sup>"Resolutions Adopted by the Two National Committees on Christian Knowledge and Christian Service," NCM (1934).



training of the individual who is to have charge of this department...Resolved that we suggest to the Executive Board that it offer its fullest cooperation to the Curriculum Committee of the Missouri Synod and to the faculties of other Synodical Conference institutions in order that a study of young people's work may be included in the curricula of preparatory schools and seminaries within the Synodical Conference.<sup>32</sup>

1937: Resolved that we bring to the attention of Synod's Committee on Higher Education the desirability and the necessity of inaugurating courses for the training of Junior Counselors and leaders in various departments of youth endeavor.<sup>33</sup>

Each year at least one major essay dealt specifically with some phase of the problem of leadership training. The titles of some of these papers serve as an indication of their thinking:

The Walther League and the Teaching Office of the Ministry  
 Progress in Leadership Training at Our Summer Camps  
 Principles of Christian Recreation  
 Leadership Training  
 Place of the Lutheran Teacher in the Post-Confirmation Youth Program of the Church  
 Training Leaders of Adolescents  
 The Juniors  
 A New Appreciation of Junior Leaders  
 Leadership Difficulties  
 Outline of a Program for Leadership Training for Our Youth<sup>34</sup>

Their essays showed that these men felt that the young people of their day were in greater need of patient and intelligent guidance than those of any other age. Some of their thoughts were these: The young people of our day are

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<sup>32</sup>NCM (1936), pp. 5-6, 8.

<sup>33</sup>NCM (1937), p. 10.

<sup>34</sup>cf. NCA (1934-1942).



confronted with many tempting influences in the use of their leisure time, most of them commercialized and many of them pernicious. The Church has a responsibility toward these young people.<sup>35</sup> Often it is just at the most crucial period in their lives that a program of Christian instruction and training is lacking.<sup>36</sup> But in order to fulfill their responsibility, the leaders of the Church must be trained. Many men in positions of leadership are not qualified to direct the development of personality in others.<sup>37</sup> Introspection alone will not serve as an adequate guide for understanding adolescents. Leaders must use the experience of trained observers in determining the needs and problems of youth, particularly youth in the adolescent age. What youth needs is not regimentation and domination, but sympathetic guidance and patient understanding.<sup>38</sup> Intelligent leaders will help young people to help themselves - equip them with the knowledge and skills to see the problems in their own life and solve them, help them "to budget their time, efforts and interests so that they may shape their lives into

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<sup>35</sup> NCM (1934), p. 3.

<sup>36</sup> W. F. Weihorn, "A Program for the Junior Age," NCA (1937), pp. 82-4.

<sup>37</sup> P. E. Kretzmann, "Leadership Difficulties," NCA (1940), pp. 59-62.

<sup>38</sup> P. E. Kretzmann, "Training Leaders of Adolescents," NCA (1937), pp. 74-5. Cf. also P. E. Kretzmann, "A New Appreciation of Junior Leaders," NCA (1940), pp. 54-7.



an harmonious whole, and...place their talents wholeheartedly into the service of the Church."<sup>39</sup> Hand in hand with such training, then, must go the opportunity for youth to express itself and assume responsibilities of Christian service.<sup>40</sup>

To meet this challenge of leadership training, the clergy particularly must be alerted to a consciousness of youth and its problems. Conferences, institutes, seminars, retreats, and also synodical seminaries and normal schools must be utilized to this end.<sup>41</sup> The complexity of a pastor's duties often makes it impossible for him to give sufficient time to his teaching ministry with youth, and thus parochial school teachers should assume responsibilities, too, in post-confirmation youth work.<sup>42</sup> Pastors and teachers can train other counselors in their own midst from among the laity, also, to assist them in their duties, and in this field the Walther League program, with its facilities for leadership training at camps, conferences, and institutes,

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<sup>39</sup>P. E. Kretzmann, "Progressive Collectivism or Regimentation in Our Church," NCA (1939), pp. 26-7.

<sup>40</sup>Weiherman, "A Program for the Junior Age," pp. 88-9.

<sup>41</sup>P. E. Kretzmann, "The Relation of the Clergy to the Program for Loyalty Training," NCA (1942), pp. 47-8.

<sup>42</sup>S. J. Roth, "The Place of the Lutheran Teacher in the Post-Confirmation Youth Program of the Church," NCA (1936), p. 53.



can be of great help.<sup>43</sup>

While many men must be given credit for this vigorous promotion of intelligent leadership, particularly the Executive Secretary, the most dominant figure in the field was P. E. Kretzmann. Almost all of the essays on the subject during this period were from his pen, and the entire leadership program of institutes and other personal work was under his direction.<sup>44</sup> His essay on "Leadership Training"<sup>45</sup> was incorporated into the Walther League Manual; his pamphlet on "Guiding the Junior" was the standard reference work for Walther League Junior counselors,<sup>46</sup> and his book on The Psychology of Adolescence was recommended reading. Moreover, his articles on youth leadership appeared frequently in the Concordia Theological Monthly.<sup>47</sup>

#### Publications

Some of the new literature produced on the subject of

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<sup>43</sup>Weiherman, "A Program for the Junior Age," p. 87.

<sup>44</sup>O. P. Kretzmann, "Our Present Status," NCA (1940), p. 22.

<sup>45</sup>NCM (1935), pp. 40-6.

<sup>46</sup>Weiherman, "A Program for the Junior Age," p. 87.

<sup>47</sup>Concordia Theological Monthly: "Leadership Training in our Church," VI (October, 1935), 739-46; "Fallow Field - the Church's Youth," XI (July, 1940), 514-22; "The Lutheran Pastor as Teacher," XII (July, 1941), 523-8; "Youth Leadership," XIII (December, 1942), 881-7.



leadership training during this period has already been referred to. The most important work was the comprehensive Walther League Manual, originally conceived of as a "brief, inexpensive manual...covering all fundamentals of Walther League leadership,"<sup>48</sup> and eventually produced as a 290-page book of sizeable proportions. The purpose of the Manual, as stated in the preface, was to "present sufficient practical information to the pastor and the local society to enable them to begin any particular project or activity." In accomplishing this purpose, the Manual offered guides and helps in all three departments of the League: Administration, Christian Knowledge, and Christian Service; and had a separate section for each branch of the Organization Chart. In short, as the enabling resolution of 1934 stated, it was:

A comprehensive manual of information on the aforementioned program; offering briefly all available guidance for the efficient carrying on of the indicated features of the program; defining positions and limitations of endeavors; giving concrete suggestions for meetings of every description, and appending a bibliography of available program materials and helps to each section.<sup>49</sup>

Other relevant publications were the Junior supplement to the Walther League Manual; the Manual for Advanced Groups (1940); the Manual for District Junior Committees; and Bible

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<sup>48</sup>"Official Minutes" (1933), p. 101.

<sup>49</sup>"Official Minutes" (1934), p. 100.



study sheets, topic study material, Talent Quest folders, and Choral Union folders, offered free of charge.<sup>50</sup> The periodicals for leaders already treated (Workers Quarterly, Bible Student, District Officer's Bulletin) were continued and remained as standard reference material.

A district publication in this field worthy of note was The Junior Counselor, issued by the Missouri District Junior Committee beginning in August, 1939. The paper was a revival of a publication issued by former committees that "for some reason had to be discontinued." Such material was to be included "as specifically concerns Junior Counselors, items that have no place in more general periodicals." It was to be supplementary to the Missouri District Bulletin, "which is for officers as well as counselors of our junior societies, and it will in no sense take the place of any of the other bulletins and publications already serving our leaders."<sup>51</sup>

#### Unite the Youth Endeavor

A major project of the Walther League during this period that should be mentioned is the Unite the Youth Endeavor. While its influence in the field of leadership

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<sup>50</sup>G. P. Kretzmann, "Report on the Department of Christian Knowledge," CYB (1938), p. 16.

<sup>51</sup>The Junior Counselor, I (August, 1939).



training was indirect, it nevertheless played an important role. Its general object, as stated by its director, O. E. Feucht, was:

To help the congregations bring our Lutheran Youth face to face with the challenging task of the Church and help our young Christians through an organized, spiritualized post-confirmation program, find their place in this century and adopt in word and deed a Christian philosophy of life.<sup>52</sup>

Referred to generally as the UYE, the endeavor was first proposed at a joint meeting of the Board for Young People's Work and the Expansion Committee of the Walther League on April 14, 1936, and was later sponsored jointly by the Young People's Board and the League. The League adopted the UYE at its 1936 convention.<sup>53</sup> It grew out of a recognition of the fact that not all the young people of the Synodical Conference were being reached by the program of the Walther League. It aimed to intensify the youth program of those congregations which already had Leagues, and to begin an organized youth program in those congregations which did not. The UYE was the moving force in causing many congregations to select their own young people's committees and participate in youth work, and it brought young people's work to the attention of many Synodical district

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<sup>52</sup> O. E. Feucht, "The Future of the United Youth Endeavor," NCA (1937), p. 94.

<sup>53</sup> "Official Minutes," GYB (1936), p. 41.



conventions.<sup>54</sup>

The implementing force in the Unite the Youth Endeavor was the UYE Workers Institute. It was particularly here that the UYE served as a means for leadership training. The plan was to have UYE meetings in zones, with the pastor and two society members from each congregation present. They were in turn to conduct institutes in their own congregation.<sup>55</sup> During the year preceding the 1938 convention, approximately eight hundred UYE Workers Institutes were held. In Nebraska alone, the figure reached 125. In Southern Illinois, sixty-four out of seventy-seven congregations participated, with two thousand in attendance. In the state of Washington, where institutes were held in every congregation, the attendance reached fifteen hundred.<sup>56</sup> These meetings of UYE workers "very readily developed into a society leadership training institute."<sup>57</sup>

After the first year of the Unite the Youth Endeavor, Director Feucht reported that the endeavor was enjoying an unprecedented reception in the church. "Synods (conventions)

<sup>54</sup>Feucht, op. cit., pp. 91-95a.

<sup>55</sup>District Worker's Bulletin, XI (October, 1937), 3.

<sup>56</sup>O. E. Feucht, "Report on the Unite the Youth Endeavor," CYB (1938), p. 20.

<sup>57</sup>O. E. Feucht, "Report on the Unite the Youth Endeavor," CYB (1937), p. 18.



heard and endorsed it; pastoral conferences subscribed to it; congregations welcomed it; pastors renewed their interest in youth; societies and whole districts were revitalized by it."<sup>58</sup>

### The League and the Clergy

What was the relation between the Walther League and the clergy in general by this time? Executive Secretary O. P. Kretzmann, because of his extensive travels throughout the country, was in an unusually opportune position to gauge this opinion. From his annual messages to the National Committees, it is evident that the vestiges of the fear of organization that blocked the Walther League in its early years still remained in some quarters. The fact that it was necessary to include in the Walther League Manual an article on "The Walther League Endorsed by Synod" supports this fact.<sup>59</sup>

In 1934, the Executive Secretary listed three types of churchmen facing the League:

1. Those who hold that such organizations (as the League) becloud the concept of the Church and of the local congregation, especially in the minds of the rising generation; all are therefore eo ipso to be condemned.
2. Those who believe that these organizations are a

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Walther League Manual, pp. 21-3.



necessary evil demanded by modern conditions and are to be accepted with extreme caution.

3. Those who blindly accept their existence and over-emphasize their place in the life of the Church.<sup>60</sup>

The following year Kretzmann reported that the greatest difficulty in the further development of the Walther League program lay in the clergy. Many openly opposed the program, or were unwilling to see the full possibilities of young people's work. Said Kretzmann:

The defeatist attitude which was mentioned in former meetings of the Committees is still very evident throughout the Synodical Conference. It is particularly distressing with regard to the problem of the younger generation. Entirely too many pastors have adopted the attitude that very little can be done, and that they must be satisfied with small results.<sup>61</sup>

O. E. Feucht, in reporting on the Unite the Youth Endeavor in 1937, supported that opinion by stating that many pastors and congregations had no plan or program around which their young people could rally. "To many pastors and congregations young people's work is still an unnecessary or at least optional item of the Christian ministry, despite the fact that it is specifically written into almost every ministerial call."<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>O. P. Kretzmann, "Brief Statement of the Principles and Objectives of the Walther League," NCM (1934).

<sup>61</sup>O. P. Kretzmann, "Our Present Status," NCA (1936), p. 19a.

<sup>62</sup>Feucht, "The Future of the Unite the Youth Endeavor," p. 95.



In order to endorse the Walther League unequivocally and clear up much of the opposition to it among the clergy in connection with the Unite the Youth Endeavor, the Board for Young People's Work submitted "An Opinion" in 1936. The essence of the paper stated that in their opinion the League with its present program was not detrimental to the Church, or subversive, but on the contrary was the best possible means for fulfilling the Church's obligation of leading its youth into loyal adherence to their Church and intelligent service to their Lord. Moreover, it was efficient and economical as well as Scriptural, and thus was deserving of the wholehearted support of the entire Church.<sup>63</sup>

In 1938, the Executive Secretary continued to strike a pessimistic note with his observation that there was a great need for rehabilitating the clergy. The lethargy in youth work was understandable, he said, when one considered current conditions. The clergy was beaten down by financial difficulty and congregational problems. Kretzmann continued:

It is probably true that 50 or 60% of the clergy in the Synodical Conference would welcome a change in pastorate. Our present system of calling has so completely broken down that the results are thoroughly tragic. Problems of this nature...directly affect the spirit and attitude of the pastor in his dealings with youth.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup>"Unite the Youth Endeavor - An Opinion," NCM (1936), p. 12.

<sup>64</sup>10. p. Kretzmann, "Our Present Status," NCA (1938), p. 24.



The following year, 1939, brought a more optimistic report that "opposition to the Walther League is gradually disappearing even in those circles where it was most evident in the past." Kretzmann noted that at a synodical convention of the Joing Synod of Wisconsin, an essay was presented which created misunderstandings of the Walther League and its program; but he added that a paper was read and accepted at a pastoral conference in Minnesota which "directly and effectively refuted" those misunderstandings.<sup>65</sup>

The problem with the clergy, both of the Missouri Synod and its sister synods, had not entirely been eliminated; but during this period great progress had been made in clearing up misunderstandings.

A review of this period shows that those who were guiding the policy and destiny of the Walther League were keenly aware of the importance of leadership training for the future of the League. But while great strides had been taken in finding ways and means for developing the force of leaders which was necessary, the methods had not yet caught up with the sense of need. This was particularly true of the training of leaders for individual congregations. Thus it was that in 1940, Executive Secretary Kretzmann had to say: "The youth problem which is still farthest from an acceptable

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<sup>65</sup>C. P. Kretzmann, "Our Present Status," Agenda, President's Conference (1939), p. 21.



solution is the problem of leadership in our societies."<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>66</sup>O. P. Kretzmann, "Our Present Status," NCA (1940), p. 21.



## CHAPTER V

### THE PAST DECADE (1941-1950)

#### The Golden Anniversary Fund

With the fiftieth anniversary of the Walther League approaching in 1943, its leaders saw an opportunity to combine the celebration of this occasion with a project that would herald a new and still greater chapter in League history. Thus the convention assembled at Chicago in 1940 passed the Golden Anniversary Fund resolution, which provided for the collection of \$100,000. The greater part of this amount was to be used for the purchase of property and the erection of a Lutheran Youth Building, which would serve as a new office and headquarters building.<sup>1</sup>

But the leaders of the League knew that some provision had to be made for implementing the program of the League through more than an expanded staff and a new office building, and so it specified that approximately one-fourth of the Golden Anniversary Fund, or \$25,000, was to be used "as the basis for a Youth Fund which would permit continued study, support, and expansion of youth work and programs in the future."<sup>2</sup> Thus was to be inaugurated a new and expanded

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<sup>1</sup>"The Official Convention Minutes," Convention Year-Book (1940), p. 24. Year-Book hereafter referred to as CYB.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.



system of leadership training. In 1941, the New Orleans convention declared by resolution:

Building for tomorrow means not only proper equipment and facilities at headquarters, but the careful planning and functioning of leadership training facilities as outlined in the purposes of the Youth Foundation and made possible through this fund in its fully completed form.<sup>3</sup>

But financial difficulties arose before the new program could be set up. Building costs rose on the Youth Building, and the building would have had to wait indefinitely if the purpose of the Golden Anniversary Fund to include a sizeable amount of money for leadership training was to be carried out. For this reason, the Board for Young People's Work of the Missouri Synod lent its assistance and requested permission from the Board of Directors of Synod to sponsor two synod-wide offerings, the first in May, 1942, and the second in May, 1943. The two offerings totalled \$20,263, and constituted the Lutheran Youth Fund, which supported the leadership training endeavor. A later offering sponsored by the Board for Young People's work in 1948 totalled \$18,000.<sup>4</sup>

#### Lutheran Service Volunteer Schools

With the financial means for inaugurating the new leadership training enterprise now at their disposal, League

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<sup>3</sup>"Lutheran Service Volunteer Manual," p. 2.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.



leaders began more definite planning. They believed that the specific objectives of the new plan embraced two possibilities: 1. Continuing what had been done in the past with institutes, seminars, conferences, retreats, and literature. 2. Embarking on a program of training for a limited number of young people. H. F. Wind suggested to the National Committees that a combination of these two possibilities might be best suited to their present needs. With the co-operation of pastors, teachers, parents, and others, the League should select as unobtrusively as possible young people best qualified with talents for leadership. A Director of Leadership Training in the international office should work with district leaders in setting up courses for these young people which would be both theoretical and practical. Teachers should be recruited and trained at various centers.<sup>5</sup> Such was the plan submitted to and approved by the National Committees in 1942.

The immediate project growing out of this plan was the Lutheran Service Volunteer Program. In an article entitled "Lutheran Service Volunteers" in the golden anniversary issue of the Walther League Messenger, E. L. Roschke, chairman of the Board for Young People's Work, appealed to all young people "who are willing to devote special time and

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<sup>5</sup>H. F. Wind, "Outline of a Program for Leadership Training for Our Lutheran Youth," Agenda, National Committees on Christian Knowledge and Service (1942), pp. 49-52.



effort for a course of training in the youth work of the Church" to "declare their readiness to attend youth institutes and to enlist for special training."<sup>6</sup>

Before long, 1400 Lutheran Service Volunteers had responded to the call. Those who applied were sent a questionnaire, on the basis of which the leaders of the project planned five Lutheran Service Volunteer Schools for the summer of 1944. The schools were held at Camp Okoboji, Iowa; Camp Cisco, Wisconsin; Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Indiana; St. John's College, Winfield, Kansas; and Concordia Collegiate Institute, Bronxville, New York.<sup>7</sup>

The men picked for the staffs of these schools met in May, 1944, at Valparaiso, to discuss organization, courses, methods, and objectives. They also listened to papers by specialists in group work, religious testing techniques, and psychology.<sup>8</sup>

The LSV schools, as they were popularly referred to, aimed at personally involving the young people who attended in a program of leadership in youth work and loyalty to the Kingdom of God. It was their purpose to refresh and revitalize the youth program of the Church in the light of the

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<sup>6</sup>E. L. Roschke, "Lutheran Service Volunteers," Walther League Messenger, LI (May, 1943), 484.

<sup>7</sup>"Lutheran Service Volunteer Manual," pp. 3-4.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.



changed situation of the world and the Church.<sup>9</sup>

LSV schools sought to "draw out the capacities and potentialities of the individual and to use them for the achievement of the purposes of the group." In line with this aim, it allowed the young people to volunteer for that field of work in the school in which his interests, experience, and talent lay. On the first day, three committees made up of volunteers on recreation, demonstration period, and volunteer period, planned their respective parts of the five-day program, then brought back their ideas to the entire group for approval. This procedure allowed for full participation on the part of the individuals and at the same time placed the responsibility for the program of the schools upon the volunteers themselves. Members of the staff served as counselors and were available for suggestions, but the students themselves planned and carried out the program.<sup>10</sup> All sessions were made as informal as possible.

The day's program provided for a demonstration period in which various phases of the League's program, e. g. topic study, model society and executive board meetings, etc., were presented and discussed by the students themselves. The daily Volunteer Hour gave each student an opportunity

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 6.



to present a short, original expression on a particularly spiritual moment in his life, on a favorite Bible passage, or some related topic. The recreational periods were planned on the basis of the principle that play and social periods are also a means of Christian education, developing "group consciousness and solidarity upon a soundly Christian basis." Students were also trained by actual experience to prepare for worship with moments of concentrated meditation, and were asked to write prayers and short devotional paragraphs.<sup>11</sup>

The Lutheran Service Volunteer School staff presented four lecture courses during the week. Some of the topics listed in the "Lutheran Service Volunteer Manual" were:

The Gospel and Modern Youth  
 The Techniques of Group Work  
 Worship  
 The Bible - A Living Book  
 Christian Personality  
 Recreating Body and Mind

Although these lectures formed the basis of the material presented at the schools, the LSV program was "an attempt to get beyond verbalization to the testing by the individual of the principles of youth work applied and to the discovery that they were not only workable but validated by rich personal experience."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., pp. 6-7.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., pp. 6, 8.



The "Lutheran Service Volunteer Manual," prepared after the first summer's experience for the benefit of future LSV school faculties, discussed the history, objectives, and methods of the schools. It also included sample course outlines; sample schedules for schools; and selected committee reports, volunteer hour presentations, meditations and prayers prepared by the students, as well as some of the students' reactions to their first LSV experience.

The number of Lutheran Service Volunteer Schools rose steadily until in 1950 nineteen schools were conducted. During the period of 1944-50, 3,800 young people attended the schools.<sup>13</sup> At first, the schools were financed almost completely by the Lutheran Youth Fund, the students being asked to pay only the nominal fee of \$5.00 for the entire week. As living costs rose and the Youth Fund was depleted, students were asked to pay more; in 1950 the cost per student was \$18.00.<sup>14</sup> At this writing, twenty-four schools are planned for 1951, at a cost per student of \$16.00.<sup>15</sup>

#### Summer Conference Camps

With World War II in 1941, there came a new surge of

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<sup>13</sup> Clarence Peters, "Letter to Samuel Roth" (May 2, 1951).

<sup>14</sup> Mimeographed letter from the Executive Secretary of the Walther League (April 4, 1950).

<sup>15</sup> Enlistment blank, 1951 Lutheran Service Volunteer Schools.



interest in summer camps. The interest of the young people was heightened by the military emphasis during the war; young people were earning their own money and could afford a camp vacation; restrictions on travel made them seek vacations close to home, and most district camps were within striking distance. This wave of interest coincided with the tremendous camping movement in the country at large, reflected in the C. C. C., the National Camping Association, and other organizations.<sup>16</sup>

In 1941, thirty-six Walther League summer camps had a total attendance of over five thousand.<sup>17</sup> Reports from twenty-nine of the thirty-seven camps conducted during 1949 in the Walther League districts revealed an attendance of 3,105 campers. The total with Arcadia was over five thousand.<sup>18</sup> In 1950, 2482 full-time campers attended district camps (not including Arcadia). That year, forty-three camps were held.<sup>19</sup> A new "Manual for District Summer Camps" appeared in 1947.

The program for summer camps remained basically the same as it was in previous years. Arcadia's lecture program

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<sup>16</sup>O. H. Theiss, "Development of the Summer Camp Program," Camp Council Proceedings (1946), p. 2.

<sup>17</sup>"Camp Councils," typed report.

<sup>18</sup>Clarence Peters, "The Camp Program and the Youth Work of the Church," Camp Worker's Council (1950).

<sup>19</sup>Walther League Summer Camp Report (1950).



for 1944, for instance, was:

On the Way Up  
 Youth Builds for the Future  
 Our Mission Work  
 Debtors to Christ  
 Children in Wartime  
 The Church and Its Armed Forces  
 Lutheranism Marches Forward  
 Education for Peace  
 Our Greatest Hymns  
 Youth's Opportunities  
 Education for Life  
 What Can I Believe?<sup>20</sup>

#### The Christian Growth Program

O. H. Theiss, formerly professor at Concordia College, Oakland, California, became Executive Secretary of the Walther League in 1941, upon the resignation of O. P. Kretzmann to become president of Valparaiso University.<sup>21</sup> Under his direction, the League adopted a new program organization in 1947 which brought all endeavors formerly divided into Christian Knowledge and Christian Service under the one heading of Christian Growth. The new organization chart divided all activities into three categories: Administration, Christian Growth, and International and District Endeavors. All activities of the society, from Bible study to recreation, were considered as contributing to the total educational process, which meant "growing up into Christ in

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<sup>20</sup> Camp Arcadia Manager's Report (1944), pp. 17-19.

<sup>21</sup> AEC of Youth Work (Chicago: Walther League, c.1949), p. 156.



all things," or Christian Growth.<sup>22</sup>

In order to coordinate the planning and effort of the new youth program with the total church program, the Board for Young People's Work and the Walther League proposed Christian Growth Conferences, to begin in the fall of 1948. Material was to be discussed at these Conferences which would "give to the young people a vision of the vast endeavors of the Church and of the almost limitless opportunities for thrilling service," and at the same time "to bring the adult membership a fuller appreciation of the youth program of the Church and of its unbounded possibilities for the Christian Growth of the young people of the Church." The chairman of the Synodical District Youth Committee and the Walther League District Presidents were to see that such discussions of youth work would be held at conferences of pastors and teachers, at meetings of synodical district officers, at circuit meetings, at all Walther League gatherings in the district and zones, and at all meetings and conventions within the district of the Lutheran Laymen's League and the Lutheran Women's Missionary League.<sup>23</sup>

As a basis for discussion, the Young People's Board and the League jointly prepared a manual entitled Christian

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<sup>22</sup> Cf. "The Walther League Program Chart," reprint available from the Walther League, Chicago.

<sup>23</sup> Christian Growth, Discussion Guide and Manual (Chicago: The Walther League, 1948), pp. 3-4.



Growth. Included were articles dealing with the subjects of recruitment, recreation, Church work, parish help, counseling, and family problems.

The Walther League also continued to sponsor annual President's Conferences, Treasurer's Conferences, and Camp Councils, and in addition hold a Christian Growth Chairmen's Conference in February, 1949.<sup>24</sup>

To effect closer coordination between Synodical District Youth Committees and Walther League officers, the League and the Board for Young People's Work also inaugurated Lutheran Youth Conferences in 1946. Present at the 1946 conference were the Chairmen of Synodical District Youth Committees and the Walther League District Presidents.<sup>25</sup> In 1950, the Walther League District Pastoral Advisors also attended.<sup>26</sup>

The most important publication by the Walther League during this period was the ABC of Youth Work, a manual in encyclopedic form, listing key words encountered in the Walther League program and related topics, and explaining them. An important feature of the new manual was a complete list of all literature available, particularly Walther

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<sup>24</sup>Agenda, Christian Growth Chairmen's Conference (February 19-20, 1949).

<sup>25</sup>Agenda, Lutheran Youth Conference (January 19-20, 1946).

<sup>26</sup>Agenda, Lutheran Youth Conference (January 20-22, 1950).



League reprints from the Workers Quarterly, under each related word.

### Youth Workers Conferences

One of the most significant youth leadership endeavors of this period had its beginnings at the 1947 convention at Buffalo, where the following resolution entitled "Training for Youth Workers" was passed:

Whereas, the demand for training in the principles and methods of effective youth work is becoming increasingly apparent, and

Whereas, the request for such training is being made also by a growing number of pastors and teachers, therefore be it

Resolved, that the Walther League in collaboration with the Board for Young People's Work set up special schools for a period of at least one week which would offer instruction and experience in conducting the youth program of the Church.<sup>27</sup>

The first of these schools, known as the Youth Workers Conference, was held at Druce Lake Camp, Lake Villa, Illinois, for two weeks, June 7-18, 1948. Its purposes, as outlined in the announcement folder, were:

1. To discuss and try methods of young people's work that promote Christian Growth.
2. To offer guidance and help in the organization and administration of a youth group in accord with Scripturally sound principles.
3. Practical assistance in specific phases of the program: worship, recreation, etc.

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<sup>27</sup>"Minutes," Convention Annual (1947).



4. To provide opportunities for Conference members to operate with these principles.
5. To develop more effective workers for the youth program in the society, zone, district and international organization.<sup>28</sup>

The Conference members heard presentations on Worship (A. R. Kretzmann), Group Work in Theory and Practice (Janina Adamczyk, Toledo University), Recreation (Marjorie Main, University of Illinois), Dramatics (Georgine Theiss, Northwestern Group Work Associates), Community Singing (Ariel Lovelace, A. N. M. College of Pine Bluff, Arkansas). During the second week, Conference members participated in an LSV school conducted on the premises.

The success of the first conference encouraged League leaders to plan two conferences for the following year, one at Arcadia, Michigan (June 6-17), and one at Seward, Nebraska (August 15-26). Many of the principles and methods employed in connection with the LSV schools were also applied at these Youth Workers Conferences, particularly in the fields of worship and the Volunteer Hour. Many of the men attending Youth Workers Conferences later served on the staffs of LSV schools, and thus the Conferences became a training school for LSV faculties, as well as for camp workers and conference leaders.

Financial difficulties brought the number of Youth Workers Conferences down to one in 1950, held at Bowling

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<sup>28</sup>"Youth Workers Conference," mimeographed brochure.



Green, Ohio. Approximately 170 pastors, teachers and other youth counselors attended the four conferences held up till 1951.<sup>29</sup> At this writing, two Conferences are again planned for the summer of 1951, at Bowling Green and Seward.<sup>30</sup>

### Youth and Evangelism

The need for trained leadership was felt all the more acutely, too, as League leaders became increasingly conscious of the importance of youth work as a missionary agency. First of all, they reasoned, our young people must be given religious experiences which they can talk about to others. This is an essential part of their witness. Secondly, the youth group has a direct responsibility of evangelism to the unchurched youth. One way of reaching them where they are would be to establish a youth center in the church, through which our leaders could give the benefit of their training to the youth of the entire community, and thus gain an approach to their entire lives. Such a program of evangelization, however, would remain a dream as long as the League lacked qualified leadership to make it a reality.<sup>31</sup> Thus, to fulfill this essential purpose of the Church's youth program, too, leadership training was necessary.

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<sup>30</sup>"Youth Workers Conference Bulletin" (April, 1951), p. 1.

<sup>31</sup>O. H. Theiss, "The Walther League and Its Future," Agenda, Lutheran Youth Conference (January 20-22, 1950), p. 39.



### Regional Youth Work

If the Walther League had trained leaders, how would it use them? First of all, of course, in local societies. But such an ideal was still far distant. The next best thing would be to have trained youth leaders at the disposal of larger areas. This was the idea behind the Regional Youth Work movement, also begun during this period.

Already in 1941, Executive Secretary O. P. Kretzmann saw the possibility of such a program when he reported to the National Committees:

It is evident that our program for the future will make increasing demands upon the quality and quantity of our leadership. Perhaps the day is not far distant when the Walther League will find it desirable to employ full time regional workers in various sections of our country.<sup>32</sup>

During the month of April, 1948, Walter Wangerin of the League office staff conducted an experiment in regional youth work in the Seattle, Washington area.<sup>33</sup> That year the Portland convention resolved "that the Walther League Executive Board be directed to engage regional youth workers as funds allow and to assign them to such regions and for such a period of time as it will best advance the

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<sup>32</sup>O. P. Kretzmann, "Our Present Status," Agenda, National Committees on Christian Knowledge and Service (1941), p. 22.

<sup>33</sup>"Information for International Representatives" (1948), p. 6.



interests of the Walther League program."<sup>34</sup> Shortly thereafter Wangerin was assigned as Regional Youth Worker in the Northern Illinois District, where he began his work in October, 1949.<sup>35</sup>

Between October and June, 1949, Wangerin attended pastor's and teacher's conferences, district executive board meetings, other district committee meetings, zone rallies, zone board meetings, and various society meetings, in addition to delivering many sermons with youth work emphases throughout the Northern Illinois District. All meetings attended were by invitation.<sup>36</sup>

A high spot of his work with district leaders was the Officer's Conference held over the Reformation Day weekend at Lake Hastings. Twenty-seven district youth leaders gathered at the Conference, planned their own program list-  
int the problems and areas to be discussed, divided these problems among sub-committees, and planned their own worship and recreation.<sup>37</sup>

#### Christian Youth Emergency Action

Only a year after it was begun, however, the Regional

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<sup>34</sup>"Minutes," Convention Report (1948), p. 25.

<sup>35</sup>W. M. Wangerin, "Report of the Regional Youth Worker," p. 1.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., pp. 2-22.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 10.



Youth Work program was halted in the interest of an effort which was intended to be nation-wide rather than regional in its effects. With the possibilities of early military training for youth facing them, the League and the Board for Young People's Work saw the necessity for bringing the youth program to the attention of the entire Church once again with the greatest possible emphasis.

To accomplish this, the Board asked the League to release Regional Youth Worker Wangerin to become director of a synod-wide endeavor called "Christian Youth Emergency Action."<sup>38</sup> The purpose of the movement was "to alert our Church to the present crucial need of positive and prayerful attention to the youth of our Church, and to make every effort to provide as much training as possible for the leaders of youth groups in the local congregations."<sup>39</sup>

To initiate the endeavor, President J. W. Behnken of the Missouri Synod sent a letter to all pastors to be read to their congregations on Palm Sunday, March 18, 1951. Clarence Peters, chairman of the Board for Young People's Work, followed with letters to all Synodical District Youth

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<sup>38</sup>"Christian Youth Emergency Action" (unpublished report in the files of Clarence Peters, St. Louis), p. 1. Cf. also W. M. Wangerin, "Christian Youth Emergency Action, Report to the International Executive Board," p. 1.

<sup>39</sup>"Synodical District Youth Leaders Manual" (Walther League, Chicago), p. 3.



Committee chairmen and district presidents reminding them of the program and urging their cooperation. A "Synodical District Youth Leaders Manual" was sent to each of the district chairmen, also, which listed the objectives of Christian Youth Emergency Action, its plan of action, suggested procedures, and other pertinent information. Wangerin, who was to direct the entire program, conducted Regional Youth Conferences in Kansas City, Chicago, and Pittsburgh to further publicize and implement the program among district youth leaders.<sup>40</sup>

Projected plans were to bring youth work to the attention of all members of Synod with every possible means - conferences, conventions, rallies, and other meetings. A manual was to be prepared for local society youth counselors. Youth Counselor's Training Institutes were to be held in each district. Leaders were to be urged to make use of existing facilities for leadership training.<sup>41</sup>

### Training in Synodical Schools

As has been pointed out in previous chapters, the clergy plays a key role in the effort to make young people's

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<sup>40</sup>W. M. Wangerin, "Christian Youth Emergency Action, Report to the International Executive Board," p. 1.

<sup>41</sup>Clarence Peters, "Synodical District Youth Leaders Manual," pp. 4-6.



work effective in the local congregation. The same is true of other professional leaders in the congregation, particularly the parochial school teachers. The leaders of the Walther League had been aware, long before this period, of the fact that the success of the youth program of the Church ultimately depended on these men.<sup>42</sup> And, in most cases, unless they received specific training for that type of work, they would have neither the ability nor the interest necessary to carry out the type of youth program which the modern day demanded.

Courses on youth work in the seminaries and teacher training schools of the Missouri Synod had long been under consideration. The Board for Young People's Work discussed the matter already in 1925, and in 1926 prepared an outline of six lectures.<sup>43</sup> In that same year, 1926, the Executive Board of the Walther League reported to the annual convention that the eighteenth delegate Synod had "provided for lecture courses on young people's work at our seminaries."<sup>44</sup> The 1928 minutes of the Board for Young People's Work state

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<sup>42</sup>O. P. Kretzmann, "Report of the Survey Committee," CYB (1933), p. 29. Cf. Chapter III, p. 54.

<sup>43</sup>Clarence Peters, "Developments of the Youth Programs of the Lutheran Churches in America" (unpublished Doctor's thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1951), pp. 117-118.

<sup>44</sup>E. J. Gallmeyer, "Annual Report of the Executive Secretary and Executive Board," CYB (1926), p. 48.



that a course in youth work was being given at Synod's colleges and seminaries.<sup>45</sup> This "course" consisted of only a few lectures, however, and was more or less haphazard. The real need was for a regular course to be included in the curriculum, preparing the ministry and teaching professions for the post-confirmation educational work of the Church.<sup>46</sup>

Resolutions to that effect were passed year after year by interested groups. Upon the recommendation of the Survey Committee, the 1933 Walther League convention resolved to instruct the International Executive Board to confer with Synod's Board for Young People's Work "with a view toward memorializing the Synod for the introduction of courses in young people's work at our pastors and teachers seminaries."<sup>47</sup> In 1936 again the convention suggested to the Executive Board that it offer its fullest cooperation to the Curriculum Committee of the Missouri Synod and to the faculties of all Synodical Conference institutions, in order that a study of young people's work might be included in the curricula of their respective schools.<sup>48</sup> The National Committees had

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<sup>45</sup>Peters, "Developments of the Youth Programs of the Lutheran Churches in America," p. 118.

<sup>46</sup>O. P. Kretzmann, "Our Present Status," Agenda, National Committees on Christian Knowledge and Service (1938), p. 23.

<sup>47</sup>"Official Minutes of the Forty-first Annual Convention of the International Walther League," CYB (1933), p. 105.

<sup>48</sup>"Official Minutes of the Forty-fourth Annual Convention of the International Walther League," CYB (1936), p. 58.



likewise emphasized by resolution in 1936 and again in 1937 the desirability and necessity for inaugurating courses for the systematic training of leaders in youth work.<sup>49</sup> The District President's Conference had echoed their request at the same time.<sup>50</sup>

Not until 1949, however, did any synodical institution offer a regular credit course in this subject. Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, established a full semester credit course that year in "Youth Work," which was "a rapid survey of youth work in America with special emphasis on youth organizations in the Lutheran Churches of America, and specialized areas of their work," and a "review of skills and techniques in the administration of youth work." The course was elective, open to senior and graduate students.<sup>51</sup>

At the teacher training colleges of the Missouri Synod (located at Seward, Nebraska and River Forest, Illinois), and at Concordia Seminary, Springfield, material on youth work was included in certain classes already in the curriculum. Seward included a Junior and a Senior Walther League

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<sup>49</sup>Minutes of National Committees on Christian Knowledge and Christian Services: 1936, p. 8; 1937, p. 10.

<sup>50</sup>Minutes of District President's Conference (1936).

<sup>51</sup>Concordia Seminary Catalogue, September, 1948 to June, 1949, p. 30.



society among its extra-curricular activities.<sup>52</sup>

The St. Louis seminary conducted a Youth Workshop for its entire senior class on April 19, 1950,<sup>53</sup> and repeated the Workshop the following year, inviting the senior class from its sister seminary at Springfield to attend.<sup>54</sup> Both projects were supported financially by Synod's Board for Young People's Work.

Thus, in the decade following the Walther League's golden anniversary, other synodical agencies were adding their support to the League in a concerted effort to equip a force of leaders to assume responsibilities of youth guidance with better material and training than any other group in the history of synodical youth work.

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<sup>52</sup>Peters, "Developments of the Youth Programs of the Lutheran Churches in America," pp. 119-21.

<sup>53</sup>"Youth Workshop" (mimeographed handbook).

<sup>54</sup>"Second Annual Youth Workshop" (mimeographed handbook, April 6, 1951).



## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

From its very inception, the Walther League has realized, to a greater or lesser degree, that the secret of success for any young people's program lies in its leadership. It has learned that youth work flourishes in the Church to the degree that its leaders, both among the young people themselves and also their counselors, seize the opportunities offered for training in the youth work program.

The League itself has made such training available in varying degrees throughout its existence, particularly during the last thirty years. With the complexity of modern civilization, however, and the multiplicity of influences which affect the young people of today, it has become increasingly apparent that general training is not enough for those who are called upon to guide and counsel youth groups. For this reason, during the past twenty years, and in particular during the past ten years, the League has attempted to effect a program of more specialized training.

Modern group sociological studies have emphasized the fact that the entire youth program, with all its activities, must be an integrated educational program, for each activity leaves its impression on the participant.<sup>1</sup> The young people's

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. S. R. Slavson, Creative Group Education (New York: Association Press, 1945).



program of a Christian Church in our day, then, needs a leadership which, as one authority has put it, "is trained for the task of translating the Christian philosophy of youth work into practical principles and methods by which every activity becomes a way of growing up into Christ."<sup>2</sup> This implies specialized training in the techniques of group worship, discussion, recreation, administration, and every other field of youth endeavor, from the specifically Christian viewpoint.

How can such a program best be carried out? On the basis of the developments in League history and experience that have been outlined in the previous chapters, the following paragraphs contain some conclusions that might be drawn.

First of all, the young people themselves should be trained. They should be taught the significance that play, group projects, worship, have for their entire life. They should be trained to assume the responsibility of planning and conducting their own activities, and shown the values accruing to the group when they are planned and conducted in the proper way. Moreover, they should be given an opportunity to learn those principles through actual experience. With the proper guidance, the best training ground

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<sup>2</sup>O. H. Theiss, "The Walther League and Its Future," Agenda, Lutheran Youth Conference (January 20-2, 1950), p. 38.



is their own local society. Those who exhibit natural talents for leadership should be given more extensive training at schools specifically designed for that purpose.

As these young people approach maturity, their training for leadership should become more and more intense, until they in turn are ready to become counselors and guide intelligently and patiently the generation that follows. It seems reasonable to assume that from among the ranks of the tremendous army of young people who have been Walther Leaguers themselves, more than a few leaders should arise to assist later youth groups. But for such an ideal to become a reality, those who are at present guiding the young people's program should have in mind constantly the definite objective of training leaders, and plan their activities accordingly. Future leaders of young people's groups should be given the benefit of every technique that modern theology, psychology and sociology have discovered, translated into their own terms.

The program of the Walther League had not aimed at such specialized training before only a few years ago. That training has not been, and cannot be, given in the ordinary program of the League society which meets once or twice a month for a business meeting, topic study, and social hour. It cannot be given at camps as they are now conducted, or at one or two-day conferences. The Lutheran Service Volunteer Program is a giant step in the right direction. But it



alone will not achieve the hoped-for result. Leaders are not made in a week. Such a result will come only after a systematic and sustained period of training specifically designed for leadership in the local society.

This brings us to the second group who should be given specialized leadership training - the present Walther League counselors, sponsors, or whatever their title. No matter how extensive a training, no matter how thrilling an experience, the young people themselves receive outside of the setting of their home society, e. g. at camp, Lutheran Service Volunteer School, or elsewhere, that effort will achieve little good if their counselors at home are not trained simultaneously. Counselors who are not sensitive to the values of all League activities for Christian education, who are not trained in proper youth techniques, can effectively thwart the constructive efforts of the young people in their society who have been taught those principles elsewhere. And it is certain that they cannot convey any principles of Christian growth to those who have not learned them, unless they themselves have experienced the value of such principles personally.

The chief medium for that type of training for counselors now offered by the Walther League is the Youth Workers Conference. Until local society counselors attend such Conferences personally, the full possibilities of the Conference for good will not have been realized. Until local society



counselors get the training offered by the Conference, or its equivalent, the full possibilities for Christian growth in the local society will never be realized.

The greatest percentage of Walther League counselors is made up of ministers and teachers. At any rate, they are ultimately, if not always directly, responsible for the program. For that reason, it is especially important to see to it that this group of professional church workers gets the proper attitude toward youth work somewhere along the line of their training, and if possible be equipped with at least the basic techniques of group work, and youth work in particular.

The experience of a Youth Workers Conference would seem invaluable for this purpose. But it should be supplemented in the case of these men with a systematized course as a part of their regular professional training. This type of training will suffer from the same malady that affects all academic work which attempts to be practical. It will be outside of the actual society situation, and may resolve itself into abstractions. It may, because the men in training have no youth problems immediately confronting them, become routine and stale, and merely another course to be ground out for the sake of a diploma. On the other hand, it can be thorough; and, if combined with proper clinical training and class projects, can be interesting and concrete. Supplemented with the concentrated experience of a Youth Workers Conference,



it can be adequate to fill the needs of most men or at least stimulate enough interest so that the potential youth leader will seek further training.

Twentieth century American church people accept organizations as a necessary part of church life. American Protestantism has established a congregational structure with so many societies, clubs and classes that visitors from the Continent are amazed at our extreme activism. It is the task of those in the Church to make their organizations useful tools for the strengthening of the fellowship of Christ, the personal growth in Christ of the members of the organization, and as the end and aim of all of it, the witness of Christian people to the faith of Jesus Christ in their hearts. Also through Church societies, God "will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."<sup>3</sup>

Such a high and holy purpose demands men who have been well trained and thoroughly imbued with the proper philosophy of Christian group work - in this case, Christian youth work. When the fullest opportunities for such training are offered, and youth leaders are led by the Spirit of God to seize those opportunities - only then will God count His Church "worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness, and the work of faith with power; that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified" in us, and we in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>I Timothy 2, 4.

<sup>4</sup>II Thessalonians 1, 11-12.



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