

The University School of Bethany Lutheran Church
Report as of April, 1932

In presenting this report on the University School of Bethany Lutheran Church we shall first indicate the purpose of the School, secondly, give a summary of the work done in each department of the School, and finally, offer a criticism and evaluation of the work done thus far.

The University School is intended primarily for individuals of Young People's and Adult ages, although in certain cases it may include those of Senior age, and its aim is to foster both religious and secular education. In the case of those who are already enrolled in High School, College or University, the University School will studiously refrain from intruding its secular program upon them to the detriment of their primary obligation in this regard; in the case of those not so enrolled it will make the effort to interest them in furthering their secular education, particularly by means of University Extension work, Correspondence Schools, Night Schools, etc., as well as by means of certain reading courses which the University School itself will offer. It will also endeavor to give advice to each individual regarding the pursuit of further secular education, ascertaining the aims of the individual, seeking to inculcate desires, and recommending means whereby the desired end may best be pursued. In the case of all, the School will endeavor to promote increase in Christian nurture, taking thought for a sensible proportion of the religious and the secular in each individual, and endeavoring to offer the means whereby the desired growth may be fostered. Leadership training will come within the scope of the School. Naturally, major emphasis will be laid upon Bible reading and study.

The University School is divided into the following divisions and departments:

- A. Extension Division.
 - 1. University Department.
 - 2. High School Department.
 - 3. Correspondence School Department.
- B. University School Proper.
 - 1. Class-room Department.
 - 2. Home Department.

Division A.

We would consider the field of the Extension Department of the University School to be all those of Young People's age and over who are not regularly enrolled in a High School, College or University. The field of the University Department will naturally consist of those who have sufficient High School credit to enable them to enroll in University Extension work, the field of the High School Department will consist of those who do not have such credit, while the field of the Correspondence School Department may embrace both.

A:1. The field for the University Department of the Extension Division is rather limited, there being only 7 who have completed High School out of a membership of 109, of which 109 members 97 are 18 years of age or older. Out of these 7, one girl had promised to undertake University Extension work, but was unable to do so because of finances. One boy is enrolled in the Jefferson School of Law since September of 1931. Two have signified a willingness to do University Extension work, but scarcely have the time at present, and certainly not the finances. The remainder are not desirous of University Extension work, but are not averse to further study, one doing Correspondence School work in electrical engineering.

A:2. In the High School Department the following enrolments may be reported;

Ahrens' Trade School: 6 girls and 6 boys in the fall of 1931, all of whom had discontinued their work by February of 1932. In most cases, so it was said, the dropping out was due to the inability of the Ahrens' School either to accommodate more than an allotted number in certain classes or to enroll any at all.

Y. M. C. A. Night School: 1 girl enrolled since the beginning of the fall term of 1931, and 1 boy beginning February of 1932.

A:3. In the Correspondence School Department two have been enrolled since September of 1931, one girl, and the boy noted above in A:1.

We may add that during this time 1 boy has been enrolled in the University of Louisville; and 11 girls and 3 boys in the Senior High Schools of the city since September of 1931, with 2 additional boys in Senior High School beginning February of 1932.

Division B.

B:1. Not one of the plans for the Class-room Department of the University School, as outlined during the spring and summer of 1931, has been carried out. But the following has been done:

I. The proposed course in Christian Living was modified and introduced into the Senior Luther League. This began in January of 1932, and will continue through April. At the initial meeting slips

A:2 -- One girl who had been enrolled in the Ahrens' Trade School returned to the Louisville Girls' High School and will graduate in June of 1932.

of paper were distributed and each one present was asked to write down all the qualities in any individual of his choosing that caused him to esteem that person above the majority of others. The following, without any attempt at classification, are taken from the papers: Reliable, good character, kind, friendly, trustworthy, honest, thoughtful, good sport, courageous, well educated, good natured, not a snob, uses fair play, Christian gentleman, generous, has malice toward none (!), unselfish, not a braggart, helpful, "could be given any 'privilege' and still remain a steadfast friend", good loser (!), good citizen, matured, humble, considerate, manly, modest, sincere, honorable, reverent. In the ensuing discussion some few other qualifications were added. At the next meeting the salient ones of these characteristics were again copied on the blackboard and then examined in the light of the Ten Commandments, indication being made beside each of the Commandment or Commandments exemplified. It is interesting to note that the only Commandment not touched upon was that against adultery, and we accordingly added the ideal of purity to our list. At the third meeting we studied the characteristics in the light of the life of Jesus, and those present were led to cite instances to show how His life conformed to our highest ideals. In regard to that life we all concluded that the measure of the stature of His fulness is immeasurably beyond our own, and that He is infinitely more than all that we can think or desire. The remainder of the time in this course has been, and is being, spent in making practical application of these ideals to our every day life.

We had hoped that the attendance in this course would average about 15, the active enrolment of the League. Due, however, to much illness and to other causes, particularly folks moving away from the immediate neighborhood of the church, the number of those who have attended steadily throughout the course has been 8 or 9.

Because all in this course are below 18 years of age and are enrolled in one of the Senior High Schools of the city, we shall not stress the doing of any supplemental work whereby credit can be obtained toward a certificate in the University School, although we shall accord that opportunity to any who would wish it. We feel that the results so far are a more than sufficient reward for our efforts.

II. In our Alpha Luther League (chiefly Young People, with a few of young Adult age) we began a study of the Gospels in November. The League has met on an average of once a month since then for such study. The original plan was to study Matthew somewhat thoroughly, read the remaining Synoptics rather rapidly, and then again give thorough study to the Gospel of John. This plan has been followed in the main, and as the course grew we found it possible to adapt it to the Church Year, adding thereby to its interest and effectiveness. Some 12 to 15 have been rather faithful in attendance upon these meetings, and to each of them opportunity will be given at the close of the course to make a report whereby credit can be obtained in the University School.

III. The proposed course in Leadership Training has not been offered, due chiefly to the already full program of those chiefly concerned.

IV. We have been unable to inaugurate the course in Christian Worship as we had planned last spring and summer. We are hoping to begin it during April, adding to the course some practical work in the building of worship programs for Sunday School, Young People's meetings, etc. Unless present plans fail, we shall conclude this course in full time for the commencement, which has been set for Sunday, June 19th.

B:2. The work of the Home Department of the University School was planned to touch upon both the secular and the religious aspects of education. Chief in the secular was to be the use of lists of recommended reading in English and American literature. Some of these lists have been prepared, but their use has not been inaugurated thus far. One reason for the withholding of these lists has been the financial condition of the congregation at large and of its Department of Education in particular. The chief reason, however, has been the spiritual state of the congregation. Acute economic distress had without exception left its mark on every home, and had come to be reflected in a state bordering on apathy and worse. Accordingly the effort in this Department was centered upon the religious phase of its program, and the results have been happy beyond all hopes.

It had previously been planned to offer to the entire congregation lists of daily Bible readings on the Life of Christ. When this was discussed in the Board of Education request was made that a series of sermons accompany the Bible readings, moving along with them. This was done, the sermon series on the Life of Christ beginning on January 17th and continuing every Sunday through the first Sunday after Easter, together with the five nights of Monday to Friday inclusive in Holy Week. The number of sermons was 17, and the number of weeks 11. We have not yet ascertained the number of the congregation who kept up with the daily Bible readings, although we can certify that the number was rather large. It is certain that the attendances increased markedly and that a sustained interest was manifest. Toward the end of the series a number of folks asked that the plan be continued, and as a result a four-Sunday series of sermons on the Church was begun on the second Sunday after Easter, with collateral reading in the Book of Acts.

At its last meeting the Board of Education decided that those who honorably certify to the faithful reading of all the Bible passages set forth in the above-mentioned course of readings, together with the remaining portions of the New Testament, be given a certificate at the coming commencement. (Concerning this provision a word of further explanation will be given below.)

The Home Department of the University School has yet another course which it will offer between now and commencement. This will be a study course in the Life of Christ. It is designed for those who will have access only to their Bibles, although access to Bible dictionaries and other helps will add to the richness of the course. A fully articulated outline of the Life of Christ will be given to each pupil, together with a thorough list of questions based thereon, and these will be the pupil's guide for study.

An appreciable number have already signified a desire to enroll in this course.

The following analysis, which was reported on October 28th, may be of interest. The figures have not been closely checked since then, but nevertheless remain much the same, save that there is a substantial increase in inactivity due to distance from the church.

Congregational membership: 111 (Present: 109).
 Active members: 60%.
 Inactive: Through age and infirmity: 15%.
 Through distance from the church: 10%.
 Through spiritual inertia: 15%.
 Older members, 41%; younger, 59%.

In the group of younger members:

Married: 18 in number; unmarried: 48.	Total: 66.	
Enrolled in some educational effort:	Girls &	Boys &
High School, University, Night	Women	Men
School, Correspondence.	20	14
Analysis of the unenrolled:		
Married and un employed.	6	5
Married and unemployed.	5	0
Unmarried and employed.	4	8
Unmarried and unemployed.	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>
Totals	36	30

The changes in regard to those enrolled in some educational effort are indicated in A:1, A:2, and A:3 above.

The younger, unmarried group furnishes the best prospects for the University School. The response to its efforts in the Extension Division is at present entirely from this group, as is also the response to the class-room program of the School. In the Bible reading undertaking, however, the response seems to be about the same from each of the three groups, older, younger married, and younger unmarried.

Through the University School the matter of Bible reading is presented to EVERYONE in the entire congregation.

Criticism and Evaluation.

As we look back on the career of the University School during the first few months of its existence, we are far from satisfied, and in many ways quite disappointed. Although we have accomplished some things, we have not accomplished nearly all that we had planned and fervently hoped. We had hoped for larger results in the University Extension field, and especially in the High School and Correspondence School field, where there are such great opportunities. We had hoped to offer in the Home Department of the University School a large number of secular courses and an even larger number of courses of a religious nature, bearing on Church history, doctrine, life, worship, etc. We had hoped that the University School would be the mainspring of all our effort since September. But conditions have been such that the University School program has been forced into a secondary place, in spite of all that we could do to elevate it.

A number of factors have militated against the School. Its opening, which had been planned for the first week in October, was delayed by the urgent necessity of a financial effort which was to save the very life of the congregation. Uncertainty in congregational plans, especially as to continuance in the present location, has had an unsteady reaction on the people, and the administrative demands that this situation has made upon the pastor have distracted from his attention to other programs. The increasingly scattered condition of the congregation has lessened all attendances, and been a handicap to the class-room program of the University School. We have not had the finances to establish libraries as we had planned, either secular or religious, nor indeed to provide for the most necessary supplies. I feel that some well planned publicity would have done much to establish the School. But even this expenditure was not found well possible.

And yet I feel that we have gotten some results. In the class-room department we have by no means accomplished what we had hoped, but we have done enough to justify and repay all our effort. The congregation-wide undertaking in directed Bible reading correlated with preaching was also quite worth while. And especially would we mention one conclusion that has been forced upon us: In the original plan for starting and building up the School we laid a proportionately very large emphasis on the secular phases of the School. We have not found it possible to hold to this original plan. True, we had at the outset of our planning pondered the relative weights of the secular and the religious, and determined eventually to give the major emphasis to the latter. We little dreamed how soon this relative importance would be forced upon us. We have not been able to provide the books needed for our secular program: we still have our Bibles!

Quite early we sensed this need of a change in emphasis in the University School. But unfortunately provision therefor had not been made in the original plans for the opening period of the School, and during this opening period the administrative and pastoral needs of

the congregation were such that these requirements could not be cared for immediately. This will be given especial consideration as we plan for the work of the coming year. It does not mean that we shall plan to do any less work in the secular program; it does mean that we shall do abundantly more in the religious, especially in the field of Bible reading and study.

We have also come to wonder whether there ought not be certificates awarded for work done in courses that are pure reading courses. Some folks are frightened by the term "examination", or even by the milder term "report". Our Board of Education has consented to award certificates in certain courses without examination or report, making, however, a distinction between these certificates and those awarded upon examination. As to their bearing upon the ultimate award of a diploma, that will be problematical. We have in mind a two course plan whereby the entire Bible will be read. It may be well, not only to grant certificates in these courses without examination, but also to make them prerequisite to the award of any diploma. The courses, by the way, will not be a mere Genesis-to-Revelation reading of the Bible, but will begin with the Gospels and receive their entire orientation therefrom. The reading course in the New Testament mentioned above in B:2 (which also includes the Psalms together with important Messianic portions of the Old Testament) is the present form of the first of these two courses, and will be revised during the summer, in which time the second general course will be worked out, together with other offerings in Bible reading and study.

Because of our experience in getting detailed information concerning the educational past of individuals, and because lack of intimacy with this career has proven a handicap in the giving of advice, it has been decided to begin a record for each pupil entering Senior High School, and, by enlisting the interest and cooperation of the pupil, keep a record of his educational progress from then on. This will not only serve as a basis for future advice, but may well be made a point of contact in the present, and offer opportunity for present consultation and advice.

As we look forward to our Commencement Day, June 19th, we find there is the possibility of the following types of award:

1. Certificates granted in the class-room course in Christian Living, upon examination or report. Certificates granted upon the same basis in the class-room course in Christian Worship unless present plans fail. And certificates granted upon the same basis in the Alpha Luther League class-room course in the four Gospels, if by Commencement time we can round out the requisite number of class-room hours.
2. Certificates granted ~~in-a-reading~~ upon presentation of the work done in the Home Departmental study course in the Life of Christ.
3. Certificates granted in a reading course without examination, the reading matter being, as indicated above, the New Testament in its entirety if not in the canonical order of its Books, together with all of the Psalms, and important portions from other Messianic parts of the Old Testament.

(8)

In many ways we have not accomplished our heart's desire. But we still have the riches of grace in Christ Jesus our Saviour. And if through the University School the affections of people and pastor are led thither to tend, our University School will assuredly not have been utterly in vain.

Ivan Meft.