

PRESENT DAY YOUTH WORK
IN THE WISCONSIN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD
IN THE LIGHT OF THE SCRIPTURAL GUIDELINES
FOR YOUTH WORK OUTLINED BY PROFESSOR KOWALKE'S PAPER,
"THE CHURCH AND ITS YOUTH"

senior
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by

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Dr. Clarence Peters served the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod on its Board for Young People's Work for a number of years. In 1951, he wrote his doctor of theology dissertation, "Developments of the Youth Programs of the Lutheran Churches in America." In this thesis, he traced the history and development of youth work and youth programs in all the Lutheran church bodies of America, including the synods that merged to form the LCA and those that formed the ALC. Because of Dr. Peters' background, it was not surprising to find that his most detailed information had to do with the youth work of the Missouri Synod and, in particular, the youth program which found its greatest support in that synod, the Walther League.

With such a lengthy treatise in hand, the casual Wisconsin Synod reader would naturally ask, "What will the author have to say about my synod?" After paging through the table of contents of Dr. Peters' five hundred and some page book, the reader finds that he devoted all of three and a half pages to the youth program of the Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States. But this limited coverage stands to reason, for Dr. Peters quoted a letter which he received from Pastor John Brenner, President of the Wisconsin Synod:

The Wisconsin Synod does not have a synodical program for young people, believing that each congregation should take care of its own, of all of them, and not only those that get interested in an inter-congregational organization.

Dr. Peters then indicated that President Brenner's letter simply reflected the general sentiment which prevailed in the Wisconsin Synod, a sentiment which had been articulated in an essay written by Professor E. E. Kowalke and read before the 1937 synod convention. In this essay, entitled "The Church and Its Youth," Professor Kowalke did not attempt to establish church policy or hand down any hard and fast rules

for youth work in the Wisconsin Synod. He simply warned against the dangers which he saw in the kind of youth organizations that were developing in other Lutheran churches, and he set forth the scriptural guidelines for God-pleasing youth work in the Lord's Kingdom. Again, in receiving this essay, the convention by no means attempted to establish new doctrine but simply voiced its agreement with Professor Kowalke's message and resolved not only to adopt the essay, but also to send a copy to every pastor and teacher of the synod. The essay was also reprinted in volume thirty-four (1937) of the Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly.

Having briefly outlined the thoughts of Professor Kowalke's paper, Dr. Peters asked the appropriate question, "Does this thinking prevail today (1951) in the Wisconsin Synod?"² Since there was no synodical board for young people's work, and no recent synodical statement on the matter, he quoted President Brenner's letter again in support of Professor Kowalke's essay:

We have no statistics on young people's societies, and I can therefore, not tell...how many of our societies belong to the Walther League, but I am frank to say that we by no means advocate such affiliation...We certainly believe that the pastor should direct any society that₃ may exist in his church. He is and remains responsible.

But Dr. Peters also said, "There are those who favor a synodical youth organization and program and who favor affiliation with the Walther League."⁴ He then quoted William Keturakat, Alfred von Rohr Sauer, and A. L. Mennicke as those who were in favor of some kind of coordinated youth program either in connection with the Walther League or within the Wisconsin Synod itself. Strangely enough, all three of these men had close ties with the Missouri Synod. William Keturakat was serving a Missouri Synod congregation in Eldon, Missouri, in 1950; von Rohr Sauer had been a Wisconsin Synod pastor, but in 1950 was serving as a professor at Concordia

Seminary in St. Louis; Pastor Mennicke was and still is the pastor of St. Matthew Lutheran Church in Winona, Minnesota, but had been trained in the Missouri Synod (according to an interview with Professor W. Gawrisch, of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary).⁵ Lest we get too carried away with such coincidental associations, let us simply say that others with purely Wisconsin Synod training and affiliation no doubt shared the opinions of these three men, but by and large most pastors of the Wisconsin Synod held to the kind of thinking toward youth work outlined by Professor Kowalke and supported by President Brenner.

That was 1951. The information gathered by Dr. Peters indeed would interest the casual Wisconsin Synod reader. But his material also arouses our curiosity. We must now ask the same question which he asked, "Does this thinking prevail today (1980) in the Wisconsin Synod?" As of 1974, continuing to the present (1980), the synod has had a Committee on Youth Ministry functioning in its midst. On the one hand, their work has been well received in some quarters. On the other hand, a number of pastors and students question their very existence with a raised eyebrow and ask, "Why do we need a committee for young people's work when we never had one before? Whose idea was this committee anyway?" In this paper we will try to answer those questions stated in another form, "How does their existence and their work compare with Professor Kowalke's essay? Does youth work in the Wisconsin Synod in 1980 still follow the Scriptural guidelines outlined by Professor Kowalke? And if not, why not?"

These are the questions which prompted this paper. Our purpose is not to write a complete history of all youth work in the Wisconsin Synod since 1850. Nor do we intend to compile and compare statistics regarding the number and size of youth groups, individual congregational involvement, and the like. But rather, in order to limit the scope of the paper, we want to focus our attention of the general scrip-

tural guidelines for youth work "then and now." So, in this paper we will first examine the background of Professor Kowalke's essay; next we will give a brief overview of the essay itself; then we will look at the background of present day youth work in our Wisconsin Synod; and finally we will attempt to make some comparisons and draw some conclusions under the theme, "Present Day Youth Work in the WELS in the Light of Scriptural Guidelines for Youth Work Outlined by Professor Kowalke's Paper, 'The Church and Its Youth'."

I.

THE BACKGROUND OF PROFESSOR KOWALKE'S ESSAY

Lutheran youth programs in the Synodical Conference got their start in 1893 when the Walther League was organized. The Walther League was a separate organization within the Synodical Conference designed to assist congregations with their youth work. (Note that the terms "youth" and "young people" generally refer to the fourteen to eighteen year old age group). Most of the young people's societies which subscribed to the Walther League constitution were part of Missouri Synod congregations.

The 1920's saw increased interest and activity in youth work on a nationwide basis, both in secular and religious circles, as a natural consequence of World War I. Adults had made the mistakes which led to war. Everyone turned their attention to young people, "Save the youth," they cried, "They are the future leaders of the world." We are not surprised, then, to find that the Walther League enjoyed a good deal of growth and attention within and without its constitutional structure through the 1920's and into the 1930's. In fact, the Missouri Synod itself took steps to serve its young people in a more organized way by establishing a

Board for Young People's Work which was to coordinate the efforts of the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4-H clubs, and Walther League within its congregations. The elaborate constitution, membership manuals, and Walther League publications which were produced during this decade all bear witness to the fact that organized youth programs were rather popular in the ranks of the Missouri Synod.

The efforts of the Walther League did meet with some opposition. The 1935 Missouri Synod convention proceedings included this note:

(There have been) complaints of Walther League intrusion in the efforts of the local congregation by seeking to control its young people's work. Your Board does not agree to this view...the League has especially in recent years been painfully cautious to avoid even the appearance of officious and unwarranted intrusion in local affairs. It has repeatedly and consistently emphasized the principle that the pastor and the congregation are responsible for the welfare of their young people.

Less than one year later the same Missouri Synod Board for Young People's Work was shooting for bigger and better things. The Synod's Minnesota district convention report relates:

The (synod) Board for Young People's Work has gotten out a formal statement on unification of all young people's work in synod, dated April 17, 1936, and entitled, 'Unite the Youth Endeavor,'

Professor Kowalke's 1937 essay gives us more details in regard to this Endeavor:

The resolution that called this movement into being reads in part as follows: ...whereas unparalleled opportunities await the Lutheran Church in the world program which rightly belongs to it; and whereas the temptations of our modern age call for uninterrupted labor to consecrate youth against the forces of evil; and whereas the chief purpose of the Walther League is to serve the congregations and pastors for the enlistment of the forces of youth in the supreme work of the congregation, therefore be it resolved that the International Walther League enter upon an effort to muster all the forces of youth for greater service

to the congregation and pastor; and that the Executive Board appoint committees for every district; that the Executive Board provide plans, materials, and publicity, and above all collaborate with the Synodical Boards in whatever measures may be expedient for the effective promotion of this endeavor; ...The Endeavor is defined as 'an effort to unite all of our Lutheran young people, whether they belong to the Walther League or not, under a single program of Christian training for greater service to the congregation, the pastor, the Synodical Conference, and thus to the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ'."

However, trouble was brewing on the horizon. The years 1932-1938 proved to be years of remarkable and unfortunate change in the Missouri Synod. The synod began to shift from the firm confessional stand as expressed in the "Brief Statement" (1932) and began to hedge toward unionizing tendencies with the likes of the ALC. As a sister synod in the Synodical Conference the Wisconsin Synod sought to assist the Missouri Synod in holding to its scriptural and confessional stand. Much of the Wisconsin Synod's position and thinking on the fellowship debate with the Missouri Synod during the 1950's was shaped in these years, the late 1930's. The Wisconsin Synod remained wary of any "unionizing" or "uniting" efforts. Thus, any stirrings in the Wisconsin Synod for youth unity which bore the earmarks of Missouri Synod youth unity efforts called for careful study.

Such stirrings there were. Just as the Missouri Synod heard voices which resented the Walther League or opposed the Unite the Youth Endeavor, so the Wisconsin Synod heard from men who supported a synod wide youth program. The proceedings from a number of the 1936 district conventions of the Wisconsin Synod include the following memorial from Pastor William Keturakat:

Memorial on Young People's Work
To Joint Synod of Wisconsin a.o.s. (1936)
In care of President Brenner

Dear Brethren:

whereas, congregations and pastors ought to be conscious of the extreme importance of developing

the latent possibilities for the progress of our church which may be found in young people, and

whereas, the work among the youth of our church is an important phase of pastoral activity and

whereas, the leadership and advice must be representative of the whole clergy of the synod in order to make any progress of work successful,

therefore, the undersigned herewith humbly requests that the Joint Synod of Wisconsin a.o.s. consider the feasibility of appointing a Committee for Young People's Work.

Two thoughts come to mind after reading this. First, we cannot tell whether Keturakat wrote this memorial before or after the Missouri Synod announced its Unite the Youth Endeavor which appeared two months before the Minnesota District (WELS) convention. Secondly, we note that this is the same William Keturakat who ended up in the Missouri Synod and corresponded with Dr. Peters in 1950 as one who supported Walther League efforts and organized youth programs while he was still in the Wisconsin Synod. His statements to Dr. Peters in 1950 are consistent with his 1936 memorial.

Apparently, President Brenner appointed a committee which was not to serve as a synod board for youth work, but rather was to study and answer Keturakat's plea. The committee consisted of Pastor G. Pieper of Fond du Lac, Professor W. Schumann of NWC, and Pastor E. Blakewell of Milwaukee. Their reply to Keturakat was also included in the various 1936 district proceedings following Keturakat's memorial:

Committee report on the Memorial on Young People's Work
To the Joint Synod of Wisconsin a.o.s (1936)

Dear Brethren:

The committee appreciates the sincerity of the motives embodied in the memorial on Young People's Work. It believes, however; that the desired objective is neither advisable nor wholesome to the church.

Referring to paragraph one, it is self-evident, on the one hand, that the young people in the church must not be spiritually neglected but, on the other, it would

result only disasterously and interfere with the 'progress of our church' to pay attention to them as a special class.

The committee subscribes to the statement in paragraph two.

As to the suggestion contained in paragraph three, the committee believes that even with the existence of a special group, under full synodical control, the pastor must retain the specific duty and responsibility for the care of the youth in his congregation which he must not yield to a larger or 'representative' body. There must be no disturbance of the intimate and God-given relation between pastor and flock.

As to paragraph four, the committee sees no need for the appointment of a committee on Young People's Work. It furthermore takes occasion in this connection earnestly to caution the brethren not to yield to the appealing temptation of creating an organization for young people in the synod. The dangers of youth crusades are apparent and should be a sufficient deterrent to warn us. Youth is naturally (too) immature to assume leadership in the church and as an organization might become embarrassingly meddlesome. Any so-called 'latent possibilities' in individuals will be called forth by the Spirit of God, through the Gospel, in His own time without the aid of human assistance.

Because of the prevailing organizing tendencies, the committee recommends the assignment of a synodical paper on this theme, which would serve to turn our thoughts back in serious consideration to the fundamental Gospel principles governing the healthy status and prospering of the church.¹⁰

Thus the committee answered Pastor Keturakat. In their answer the three men of the committee alluded to "organizing tendencies" and the "intimate God-given relation between pastor and flock." These thoughts would soon be expounded in an assigned synodical essay. This essay was Professor Kowalke's paper, "The Church and Its Youth." Another year was going to pass before the essay was prepared. In the meantime the matter of organizing a synodical youth program found support in the Minnesota District (WELS). The very same district convention proceedings which included the Keturakat memorial, and an answer from the committee appointed by Brenner, also included

the gist of a district convention essay prepared by Pastor Theo. Albrecht of Lake City, Minnesota. He emphasized three points: the need for youth societies in the church to offer an alternative to sinful worldly pleasure; Bible study as the chief activity in these societies; and the necessity of a close relationship of the youth society to the congregation and its pastor.¹¹ The third point in particular sounds very much like the answer which the three-man committee had given to Keturakat. But Pastor Albrecht must have had more in mind. For, again, in the same district proceedings, immediately following the committee's answer to Keturakat, we read this adopted resolution:

Because we differ with the report of the committee (appointed to answer) the memorial for young people's work (submitted by Pastor Keturakat), we propose that the Joint Synod elect a (permanent) board for young people's work and that this board as soon as possible present its program and suggestions to the Joint Synod for ratification.

We further recommend that the Minnesota District itself appoint a board for young people's work and that this board gather statistics and acquaint itself with the best materials available for young people's work, and, in general, become active in this field so that it will be able to give good counsel and advice whenever and wherever it is desired.

Theo. Albrecht
Im. F. Albrecht
A. J. Sprengler¹²

As was mentioned, this resolution was adopted by the Minnesota district Convention (1936). District President A. Ackermann appointed the three men (the undersigners of the counter-proposal -- a pastor from Lake City, a pastor from Sleepy Eye, and a teacher from St. Paul) to serve as the district board for young people.

Theo. Albrecht and his cohorts received an answer to their proposal during the 1937 synod convention held in Appleton, Wisconsin. Professor Kowalke had finished his essay and read it before the assembly. The synod convention

proceedings also included a report from a floor committee which spoke to the subject. Lest we become too confused over which committee was which, let us remember that in 1936, Keturakat requested that a permanent synodical youth committee be appointed. He was answered by an interim (or temporary) synodical committee appointed by President Brenner. These men called for an assigned synodical essay on "Youth Work." Then the Minnesota District requested that a permanent synodical youth committee be elected. Finally, in 1937, Professor Kowalke presented his essay and a synod convention floor committee offered the following report:

To the Honorable Joint Synod of Wisconsin a.o.s.,

Your committee on young people's work has thoroughly studied the material submitted to it, and from our common experience we find it to be a fact that the very expression 'young people's work' is being used in a widely different sense within our circles. In using the expression 'young people's work' we are not all speaking one language. This expression is sometimes used to mean the activities of young people's societies for the mere amusement and entertainment of its members. It is also used to denote all manner of church work done by young people. Finally, it is also used to denote the spiritual work done by pastors, teachers, and congregations on behalf of the spiritual welfare of the young people of the church.

We as a committee, see a real danger in the fact that we do not speak one language in the use of this expression, 'young people's work.'

For this reason we welcome the biblical and clarifying statements given in Professor Kowalke's essay. With striking clarity this paper sets forth as the only duty of the church the saving of souls by the gospel of Christ - and that this fully applies to the work done on young people also.

Your committee also finds that we no doubt all still believe, teach, and preach that the only means of saving souls, keeping and strengthening them in the faith, are the God-given means, the gospel and the sacraments. However, it is apparent that our practice is not always strictly consistent with this fundamental truth of Scripture - when we concern ourselves with the care of young people.

This is evident when it is claimed that we must have organizations and societies, and that we must offer, besides the means of grace, something of special interest in order to counteract the evil influence of the world and to keep the young people with the church.

This does not mean that we deny young people the right of wholesome pastime and amusements, but it does mean that we deny that it is the god-given duty of the church to provide such pastime and amusements, and that they are a means of keeping young people with Christ and of saving their souls.

Therefore, we are in agreement with the statement of principles laid down in the report of a Joint Synod Committee on the memorial on behalf of young people's work (by Keturakat), as it is printed in the program for the district convention of 1936 and in the 1936 proceedings of the Minnesota District, p. 67 and 68.

Therefore, your (synod floor) committee recommends that we adopt Kowalke's essay which sets forth our interpretation of 'young people's work,' that we print and distribute the essay for all our pastors and teachers, and that we encourage them to discuss the essay in conferences and with their congregations.

W. P. Amacker
 (pastor - Omak, Washington)
 J. R. Ruege
 (pastor - West Allis, Wis.)

Against this background of a general national desire to organize the forces of youth, of elaborate and growing organized youth programs in the Missouri Synod, of unionizing tendencies in the Missouri Synod, and of stirrings in the Wisconsin Synod for an organized youth program, Professor Kowalke wrote his essay "The Church and Its Youth." In the second part of this paper we will give a brief overview of his essay, as he outlined scriptural guidelines for an effective youth ministry.

II.

AN OVERVIEW OF PROFESSOR KOWALKE'S ESSAY

Professor Kowalke began his paper with a reference to adolescence, a difficult time of life when profound changes take place. St. Paul understood this very well, "When I was a child, I spoke as a child...but when I became a man, I put away childish things" (I Cor. 13:11). Then Professor Kowalke stated the purpose of his essay:

The question that this essay will attempt to answer is: What is the church's special mission toward those of its members who are in the process of putting away childish things and becoming men and women? What must the church do for these young people?¹⁴

Professor Kowalke immediately answered his own question. The mission the church has for its young people is found in the words of the Great Commission (Mt. 28:19-20). The church, and in particular those whom the Church calls to teach and preach publicly, are by these words of Christ made stewards of the mysteries of God (I Cor. 4:1). God expects only one thing of His stewards, that they be found faithful. How can we, who live in the light of Christ's love for us, be anything but faithful, for "the love of Christ constrains us" (II Cor. 5:14). Such faithfulness means that God's stewards will make sure that the content and the purpose of their teaching are in line with God's holy Word and will.

The content of the message of God's stewards will be nothing more and nothing less than "all things whatsoever I have commanded you," that is, all of God's sacred revelation, both the full fury of God's burning law and the joyous beauty of His soothing gospel. Our Lord also gave His stewards special gifts to serve His Church. The purpose for which Christ gave His disciples these gifts is expressed in Eph 4: 11-15, "For the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all

come in the unity of the faith unto a perfect man...and that we grow up in all things unto Him who is the head, even Christ."

In this way Professor Kowalke laid the basis for the proper scriptural approach to youth work. He asked, "Is not that a complete program for any congregation that is seeking an answer to the question of what to do for its youth to hold it and save it?...What better thing and what more can be done for young people than that they be edified, built up as members of the body of Christ?"¹⁵ Professor Kowalke then pointed to Paul's words in the first and second chapter of Philippians which explains what it means to be built up in the unity of faith, and Kowalke concluded:

If we could say of our youth that their life is as becomes the gospel; that they stand firm in faithfulness to the gospel; that they are like-minded in the fellowship of the gospel; that they possess Christlike humility, selflessness, and obedience to which Paul admonishes, then we could say that the youth 'problem' has been solved.¹⁶

Scripture is clear concerning the content and purpose of our teaching, and also concerning the means to be employed, namely, the gospel of Jesus Christ. Professor Kowalke asserted that all present at the 1937 synod convention stood in agreement on those truths. But there was not perfect agreement regarding methods. Here, Kowalke offered some valuable comments:

There is no hard and fast rule laid down anywhere in Scripture governing the methods we employ...The methods will vary according to the age we live in, the kind of people we work with, our own gifts, the peculiar situation we have to deal with, and so on. And yet it is not true that any method is right so long as we declare that it is our purpose to edify people by the word of Christ. 'All things are lawful to me: but all things are not expedient' (I Cor 10:23)...What methods we employ in our church work are left to our Christian freedom, but as our Christian freedom is a freedom only in Christ so too the methods we use must be such as are becoming to the character of the church as the body of Christ, becoming to the character of the Word we preach, and becoming to the purpose of our church work,

which is to edify the body of Christ...Opinions vary as to the propriety of methods employed in church work... the line between propriety and impropriety is not easy to draw in matters of Christian freedom. What is an adiaphoroh today in one place,¹⁷ may be a denial of faith tomorrow in another situation.

From this opening discussion of the scriptural basis for all church work and the scriptural perspective on methodology, Professor Kowalke turned to the subject of youth groups and youth programs. He said, "There is special interest shown in young people as a special group in the church...this is not attributable to any scriptural injunction...Interest in youth is part of the spirit of the age...it is in the air we breathe."¹⁸ Professor Kowalke attributes the interest in youth as a special group within the church to three reasons: First, the universal interest shown in the social and physical welfare of youth after World War I certainly influenced the thinking and policies of churches; secondly, young people do require entertainment and excitement and are encouraged to find it in the church; thirdly, there is an appalling loss to the church of young people during the ten years after confirmation.¹⁹

Kowalke did not deny that the situation called for special attention. Adolescence is a critical period when a person's "faith is put to the first severe test by the world, the devil, and the flesh."²⁰ So he asked, "What should be done to keep these young people within the church?" - his answer, "The church must teach them those things which Christ commanded."²¹ It must preach the gospel. This is traditionally done through church services, home training, and Christian schools (Bible class, Sunday school, Christian day school, etc.). Then he asked, "In view of the alarming casualties, should not something more be done?"²²

In the next paragraphs Kowalke recognized that youth need fun and recreation (Ec. 11:9) and stated that a balanced program of recreation and fellowship with like-minded Christians, and Bible study and discussion would certainly be in

keeping with Scripture and a means of edifying the body of Christ. "Such societies are already a prominent feature of our church-life."²³ However, he readily acknowledged that not all congregations had such a balanced program, "There is no feature of our church-life concerning which there are such widely divergent opinions and policies as our societies, young people's societies in particular...In the Wisconsin Synod the usual form of a young people's society is the local, independent society, which is often as not, a Bible class."²⁴

Beyond this typical arrangement for a youth society, Professor Kowalke also saw some trends creeping into the Wisconsin Synod. He mentioned that in some areas local societies merged into a loosely organized group so that once or twice a year the youth could meet and become acquainted. He noted that the Walther League was strongly represented in the synod and that the Wisconsin Synod had been drafted into the United Youth Endeavor. Pressure was being brought to bear on pastors to fall in line with "what undoubtedly is a strong trend toward organizing the youth as a separate group in our church body. Shall we encourage that trend, or ought we to resist it?"²⁵

This was the burning question of the day which Professor Kowalke was assigned to answer. He got right to the point. That Christians may gather socially is indeed a wonderful privilege and blessing from God, but "if those social activities come to be looked upon as church work, or if the interest in them supplants the interest in what is the church's real and only business...then such activities are altogether out of place and decidedly harmful."²⁶ In such an instance, people are in danger of being interested in the meat that perishes, rather than the meat that endures to eternal life (Jn 6:26-27).

The problem which Professor Kowalke recognized was that many of the new trends toward youth organization led to societies with a "seemingly high and spiritual purpose," but

which were really organized for social or recreational purposes. He used the Unite the Youth Endeavor as an example. The Endeavor was defined as "an effort to unite all of our Lutheran young people, whether they belong to the Walther League or not, under a single program of Christian training for greater service to the congregation, the pastor, the Synodical Conference, and thus to the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ."²⁷ Professor Kowalke then cited three dangers connected with such movements in the church.

"The first danger inherent in such separate movements is the threat offered to the unity of the church."²⁸ He went on to explain:

It is the very nature of any separate organization within the congregation, that the more alive it is and the more energetic its leaders are, the more it feels and shows its separate identity...The more active it is as an organization, and the stronger its feeling of being a unit in itself, the sharper becomes the cleavage between it and the rest of the congregation.²⁹

Such a threat to unity violates Paul's plea, "Now I beseech you...that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you" (I Cor. 1:10).

"A second danger inherent in such young people's societies, particularly in the active, well-organized groups, is that they so easily instill in their members a wrong conception of their calling before God."³⁰ Kowalke explained that any leader in the church does not appoint himself, but is properly called. "The vocation of youth is not to assume leadership in the church, not to assist pastors and boards, unless they are properly called to do so. Their vocation is rather as children in the family (Eph 6:1-2) and as learners in the church."³¹ In Eph. 4:1-3 and Php 2:5, 8-9 Paul indicates that "the way to leadership in the church is not via aggressiveness, self-assertiveness, busy-ness, self-appointment; but by obedience, meekness, humility, confession of faith, and remaining in one's calling until God by His church calls one to another kind of service."³²

A third danger inherent in societies within the church is that they so easily develop a false conception of what constitutes churchwork."³³ Professor Kowalke added this insight:

There is a real danger of placing faith in mere activity rather than in the slow process of preaching and teaching the Word of God. There is a danger of substituting noisy pep and publicity for the quiet working of the Holy Spirit.³⁴

Let us keep in mind that Professor Kowalke has been speaking about those highly organized youth programs which have seemingly high and pious objectives but which in fact only serve to unite the youth socially. Then, his final warnings against "these societies" cannot be considered unwarranted generalities:

Although these societies are usually formed with the purpose of serving the congregation and the pastor, in practice they are seldom found to be humble, meek, obedient, self-effacing servants. As they increase in number and solidarity of organization, they assert themselves, make others keenly aware of their presence and their importance, force their way in where they are not called. Their attention is distracted from the one purpose of the whole congregation to their own private objectives.³⁵

After all these warnings and negative examples, Professor Kowalke did not abandon his assigned task. He concluded his essay with five constructive suggestions for improving youth work in the Wisconsin Synod. He firmly declared, "We cannot neglect our youth...We do not need a new program, but we may need to carry out neglected parts of the old program."³⁶

His five constructive suggestions are these: improve sermons; improve family life (Eph 6:1,4); improve the early training of children (a sound Christian training in the home, elementary school, and instruction class); improve our schools (by providing first-rate teachers and holding to the firm conviction of the necessity of a sound Christian training); and build up in every member of the congregation, young or old,

the feeling of unity in the congregation. "We shall be serving youth well if we make them conscious members of the one body rather than members of a group of their own."³⁷

Thus, Professor Kowalke's essay answered the burning questions of the day regarding synod-wide, organized youth programs. Certainly some pastors may have disagreed with some of his comments. But no one could deny the general biblical overtones of his writing and the truth of the scriptural guidelines outlined by his essay. We can safely admit that his essay set the tone for youth work in the Wisconsin Synod for the next forty years.

As of 1974, the Wisconsin Synod has had a Committee on Youth Ministry functioning in its midst. This committee has sponsored International Youth Rallies for Wisconsin Synod youth from 1974 to the present (1980). As was mentioned in the introduction, questions have been raised, "Is this recent emphasis on youth ministry legitimate?" Or we might ask, "How does this recent emphasis fit that what the synod has done in the past? Does it agree with the scriptural guidelines for youth work outlined by Professor Kowalke?" Before we answer those questions, we must first ask, "How did the International Youth Rallies and Committee on Youth Ministry get started?"

III.

THE BACKGROUND OF PRESENT DAY YOUTH WORK

In order to learn the history of International Youth Rallies in our synod, a person can page through issues of the Northwestern Lutheran from recent times. He would run across this note from Pastor Wicke in the July 28, 1974, issue:

One of the exciting events scheduled for next month is the International Youth Rally (WELS) at Ottawa, Canada, August 13-16, 1974. It is sponsored by the

Walther League of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Ottawa. Inviting WELS youth from all over the synod is their way of observing the 100th anniversary of the founding of St. Paul's congregation...The theme for the rally is 'Learn, Love, Live Christ.' The daily program will include devotions, Bible study, group discussions on life topics. There will be an open air festival, tours of Canada's capital, a giant barbecue, several sing-songs, and a mass youth service.

After reading a notice like that, a number of questions come to mind. How did the idea for an International Youth Rally in the Wisconsin Synod get started? Why was it held in Ottawa, Canada? The youth group in Ottawa was called "Walther League." Was there any connection between Walther League rallies and this first Wisconsin Synod rally? Did that congregation have experience in any other camps, retreats, or rallies which may have served as a background for an international rally? To find some answers to these questions, the writer had prepared a questionnaire (a copy can be attached) and mailed it to Pastor Pfothner of St. Paul, Ottawa, to Mr. Ernest Saar (a lay counselor for the youth of St. Paul, Ottawa), to Professor A. Zahn of Northwestern Prep (who vicared in Ottawa, 1970-71), and to those men who served as vicars in Ottawa from 1973-1980 (D. Hartley, R. Beyer, P. Krieger, J. Luetke, J. Berg, R. Schwab, J. Schuetze). Professor Zahn and Mr. Saar were able to offer the greatest amount of information. Another helpful source of information was the congregation's centennial booklet entitled "Kept by His Power."

The congregation in Ottawa had been a member of the Missouri Synod until 1969. The brief history of its youth program offered in the centennial booklet does much to explain the basis for the congregation's active youth program and the thinking which led to a Wisconsin Synod youth rally in 1974:

Throughout its history St. Paul's has always shown great concern for and support of its youth. The church has always felt that the teenage years following confirmation were important, with a need for special guidance...There is repeated evidence that even at its

beginning the youth group functioned not only as a social club but also served to help the young people grow spiritually and to become involved in the work of God's Kingdom within the congregation.

In 1936 the Young People's Association joined the International Walther League...Under the auspices of the Walther League program many training and leadership facilities and opportunities for Christian Fellowship were offered: Lutheran Volunteer Schools, summer camps, conventions and rallies at International District and Zone levels. Our youth faithfully participated in these activities. Guidance was offered to the youth by lay counselors, vicars, and the pastor. Herman and Doris Bacher served as lay counselors from 1960-1971. Present counselors are Ernest and Helen Saar.

In 1952 Ottawa was the host city to the Walther League International Convention. St. Paul's Leaguers, working in conjunction with the District Executive Board, had a great deal of involvement in this venture at which some 1500 attended...

During the time our congregation left Missouri and joined the Wisconsin Synod, the Walther League retained the name although there was no further connection with International Walther League.

As a new congregation in the WELS, the St. Paul's youth felt the need to learn more about synod and to get to know their fellow young people. Therefore in 1971 they had a Super Safari of synod schools. In 1972 (Camp Yank Canuck) and again in 1973 (Killarney Camp) they helped organize and participate in a week of camping with other Wisconsin youth.

St. Paul's Walther League chose to celebrate Centennial Year by hosting the first WELS International Youth Rally, August 13-16, 1974...355 young people from fifteen states and two provinces were in attendance. The wholehearted congregational support of the youth program was³⁹ again very evident throughout this International Rally.

Without a doubt the fact that the St. Paul's youth group was involved in the Walther League and that its leaders were trained in Walther leadership seminars⁴⁰ played a role in leading to the first WELS International Youth Rally. Another factor to be considered was the experience gained from earlier retreats and camps. Mr. Saar said, "Retreats and

camping programs have always played a part in the youth ministry of our congregation."⁴¹ Professor Zahn agrees:

We had a winter retreat and a summer retreat the year that I vicared in Ottawa. After I left, Ernie and Helen Saar took over. They supplied the initiative to have a week long camp. The first was held in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan (1972), the second at Camp Killarney in lower Michigan (1973), and the following year was the first WELS International Rally.

I think the weekend retreat was probably common fare for the group prior to my arrival. The week long camp, however, I think was a revival of Old Walther League practice which Ernie and Helen had been used to when they were of that age.⁴²

In answer to the question, "With whom (person or persons) did the idea for the IYR originate?", Professor Zahn said, "I do recall that the Ottawa group brought the idea... to Camp Killarney during the summer of 1973."⁴³ Mr. Saar states very simply, "The idea for St. Paul Congregation to host the IYR of WELS youth originated from the counselors, Ernie and Helen Saar, in discussion on the trip home from the 1972 camp in Michigan."⁴⁴ His words further explaining the birth of the first IYR are valuable for our study of its historical background:

The youth of our congregation desperately felt the need for fellowship with other young people of their own faith after we separated from LC-MS and joined WELS. The fact that we were approximately 500 miles from any other congregation initiated the fellowship adventures in 1972-1973 in co-sponsoring camps, and the thought of expanding this fellowship further by inviting synod congregations to participate in a youth rally in Ottawa. A secondary thought was that it would eliminate our youth from having to travel...

The idea of hosting a rally was subsequently discussed with the pastor, the youth group approved the idea, and the congregation through its centennial planning committee and voters' assembly gave approval. A rally steering committee of five teenagers and the counselors laid out the rally plans⁴⁵ with the pastor serving as religious co-ordinator.

Mr. Saar also answered the request from the questionnaire, "List any similarities and/or dissimilarities between the organization, plans, program, and emphases for a WELS youth rally and a Walther League rally." Having had experience with both, he pointed out, "To compare the former Walther League International Convention and the present day youth rallies...in WELS is not practical since the formats were completely dissimilar."⁴⁶ The Walther League was a separate organization operating under the auspices of the LC-MS. Membership in the international organization was through congregational society, zone, and districts. Districts bid to host the annual international convention within a city that could accommodate 1500 to 3000 delegates. "The convention was mainly to plan and advertise the emphasis and program for the next years and to elect officers. The first WELS rally was inaugurated by an individual congregation inviting young people from congregations in synod."⁴⁷

Pastor Wické's explanation of the rally (quoted above) provides us with a sufficient general picture of the activities of that first rally. During that rally another significant development for our understanding of present day youth work in the WELS occurred. Some of the men who had participated in the organization of the rally and in the presentation of the topics formed an ad hoc committee to promote future rallies. The members of this committee were P. Kelm (chairman), A. Zahn, D. Schmeling, E. Saar, K. Kritsch (youth representative from Ottawa). Articles in the Northwestern Lutheran, the various books of reports and memorials, and synod convention proceedings provide us with the information which outlines the growth and activities of the ad hoc youth committee and the International Youth Rallies.

In the "Report to the Ten Districts" (May, 1974) the Board for Parish Education noted the fact that Ottawa planned a youth rally and went on to say, "We recognize the need for our synod to become more active with its youth,

but we feel that a synod-wide organization would be difficult to administer because of geographical distances and varying needs."⁴⁸ The district boards for parish education were then encouraged to compile information from congregations with successful youth programs and pass it on to others.

The synod's BPE changed its tune a year later. The "Book of Reports and Memorials" (BORAM) of May, 1975, reported that a representative, Pastor W. Fischer, had attended the first international rally in Ottawa. Then we read, "The board suggests that a committee be appointed to study the role of the BPE in promoting a coordinated ministry to youth in the synod."⁴⁹

Pastor A. L. Mennicke had been quoted as encouraging the idea of a synod-wide, organized youth program in 1950. Twenty-five years later his congregation hosted the second IYR, sponsored by the WELS churches of the Winona circuit and held at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, Winona, Minnesota. 515 young people and counselors attended the rally on July 21-24, 1975. The theme was "Sharing His Grace!"

The most interesting event of this rally was the solidification of the ad hoc youth committee. In a recent conversation⁵⁰ Pastor Paul Kelm (now Dean of Students at Wisconsin Lutheran College) remarked that the committee had done little during its first year except encourage a second rally. But at the second rally in Winona (1975) the committee solidified its membership and formulated objectives. As the Northwestern Lutheran reports these events, one cannot help but notice the leanings toward a synod-wide youth organization or "structure." The committee was to include:

1. a liaison man to work with the synod BPE and and district BPE chairman
2. one member assigned the task of collecting and evaluating youth materials and organization used effectively in other church bodies
3. one member to chair a subcommittee to develop a 'Youth Handbook' which would aid congregations

in organizing their youth program and provide a tie that would make a synodical structure meaningful

4. one member in charge of publicity
5. one member in charge of producing a program for use in youth groups

The committee as a whole was to be responsible for drawing up articles of federation for the following summer so that a loosely federated organization could begin to function in preparation for a future structure...Members of the committee were J. Behling, P. Kelm, R. Stadler, A. Zahn, and E. Saar.⁵¹

Even before we reach part IV of this paper we must interject with the comment that this preparation for a separate "synodical structure" was indeed contrary to the spirit of Professor Kowalke's essay. However, as we proceed with our story of the committee's development, the reader will find that no such structure was formed. In speaking with Pastor Kelm on this matter he revealed that no one on the committee really wanted to form a separate organized, synod-wide group which would have a structure similar to the Lutheran Pioneers. The committee preferred to work with the support and especially the funding of the synod. Yet, if the synod and its representative boards took no action and ignored the ad hoc youth committee, those men were willing to undertake the proposed measures for federation as a separate group. However, as the year (1975-1976) rolled by, the synod's BPE showed more interest in the work of the committee.

The first step toward a closer tie between the ad hoc youth committee and the BPE came during the 1975 synod convention when the delegates adopted the BPE's resolution, "that the synod encourage its several districts to encourage, coordinate, and promote youth ministry within each district through each district BPE."⁵²

The next step was reported in the April 18, 1976, issue of the Northwestern Lutheran and in the "Report to the Ten Districts," May, 1976. On February 9, 1976, a seminar was arranged by the BPE and the district BPE together with

the ad hoc youth committee. "The meeting revealed unanimity and common interest in an effective ministry to post-confirmation young people."⁵³ The group resolved: 1) to take a synod-wide survey to determine the needs and direction of youth ministry; 2) to prepare a newsletter for youth leaders; 3) to arrange for a youth leaders' seminar; 4) to make the ad hoc youth committee's publication for young people, Generations, the responsibility of the BPE. The most important statement came in the "Report to the Ten Districts" (May, 1976), "The BPE is in the process of clarifying its relationship with the ad hoc committee."⁵⁴

In June of 1976, the first issue of another publication sponsored by the ad hoc youth committee came off the press. The publication entitled Youthink was aimed at youth leaders. The first issue included an article by Pastor W. Fischer of the BPE concerning the synod-wide survey. He reported that about three quarters of the synod's congregations conduct youth programs. For 90% of these groups the pastor is the leader. Two thirds of the pastors asked for help in learning how to reach youth and get youth to join the youth group. Only one third of the pastors asked for help with developing a more structured youth group organization in their own congregation.³⁵

The story of our synod's youth committee and its youth rallies continues. As part of its 125th anniversary celebration, St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Saginaw, Michigan (Pastor D. Tomhave) hosted the third annual WELS International Youth Rally. The 350 youth and 75 counselors met on August 16-19, 1976, under the theme, "Lord of My Life." The group made use of the facilities of Michigan Lutheran Seminary. The October 3, 1976, issue of the Northwestern Lutheran reports the activities.

Another resolution from the February 9, 1976, BPE seminar was carried out on October 8-10, 1976, when the ad hoc

youth committee conducted its first youth leaders' seminar at Kettle Moraine Camp located near Campbellsport, Wisconsin. Forty people attended this seminar which was used to expound and illustrate a five point program for youth ministry designed to keep the congregation's youth group activities in balance. The five points include worship, education, fellowship, recreation, and service.

Following this seminar some negative reactions rippled through the synodical grapevine. Again, in conversation Pastor Kelm mentioned the fact that some pastors had sent lay youth leaders to the seminar. But when these lay men returned home all excited about putting an elaborate five-point program into high gear, a number of pastors felt threatened. One also gets the impression that there were negative reactions from those outside the seminar when he reads Pastor W. Fischer's article in the January 8, 1977, issue of the Northwestern Lutheran. As Pastor Fischer reported on the youth leader's seminar, his tone was a bit defensive. He alluded to the history of the ad hoc youth committee and its relationship with the BPE in preparing the seminar. He also sounded like he was answering objectives when he said:

There is a constant concern among us that a youth ministry might eventually resort to trying to hold the young people together in the church by means other than the gospel. It is the conviction of the ad hoc committee that the 'one thing needful' must always be kept as the bonding force, for the gospel alone can keep our youth in the true faith. When this remains uppermost in our minds, youth work becomes a God-pleasing ministry in the congregation. The ad hoc youth committee desires at all times to work with the synod through its appointed boards on both the synodical and local levels.⁵⁶

We might consider April 22, 1977, as a banner day for members of the ad hoc youth committee. On that day they became the Wisconsin Synod's "Committee on Youth Ministry," appointed by the BPE. In the 1977 BORAM the BPE declared:

Since the ad hoc youth committee has been elected at the annual youth rallies and since there is the growing conviction that the BPE should be responsible for all the activities of such a committee, the BPE appointed the following six-man standing committee for youth ministry at its April, 1977 meeting: Rev. P. Kelm (chairman) and Professor A. Zahn, 3 year terms; Mr. E. Saar and Rev. R. Stadler, 2 year terms; Rev. J. Lawrenz and Rev. J. Behling, one year term...The BPE has now assumed editorial responsibility for Generations, a publication for the youth in our congregations. A youth leaders handbook has been produced and is available. 57

An article in Youthink by Pastor Fischer includes a little more of the historical background concerning the relationship of the BPE to the Committee on Youth Ministry (CYM):

The BPE initially became involved in youth ministry when it produced its first Bible class courses for young adults. The BPE believed that it could render no better service to our congregations than to provide Scripture based material which would strengthen our young people during the critical adolescent years...

When some of our congregations sponsored international youth rallies, the BPE sent an observer (Pastor Fischer). It felt a certain responsibility for the youth activity which was being promoted synod-wide. It was pleased to find that the emphases of the rallies were on the Word...

The local congregations have the primary responsibility to serve their youth with the gospel and to foster a strong bond of fellowship. 58

The 1977 synod convention held in New Ulm, Minnesota, on August 3-10, by resolution commended these actions of the BPE. In the meantime, the fourth annual IYR was held at Emanuel Lutheran Church in New London, Wisconsin, on July 11-14, 1977. The theme for the rally was "For Love's Sake, Communicate! - with God, in the family, and in society." The rally was not reported in the Northwestern Lutheran. On September 16-18, 1977, the CYM held its second youth counselors' workshop at the Kettle Moraine Camp.

By now we can see a pattern developing. BORAM contains a report on the CYM in May, a rally is held in summer, and a leadership seminar in the fall. The "Report to the Ten Districts"

in May, 1978 shows that the activity of the CYM had come to full bloom. In this report the BPE outlined the recent activity of the CYM and printed these objectives:

- I. General objectives - to encourage, promote and coordinate ministry to youth in the WELS under the supervision of the BPE.
- II. Specific objectives -
 - A. to gather, evaluate, produce, and make available materials for youth ministry
 - B. to edit a newsletter for pastors and youth counselors
 - C. to sponsor a newsletter for the youth of the WELS
 - D. to conduct youth counselor seminars
 - E. to consult with and advise groups planning an IYR
 - F. to develop manuals for youth counselors
 - G. to be a resource available to each district BPE for the carrying out of its responsibilities in youth ministry
 - H. to be a resource available to any congregation or institution of our fellowship which requests information concerning youth ministry.

On July 24-28, 1978, the congregations of the area near Wausau, Wisconsin, hosted the fifth annual IYR under the theme, "Stand up for Life." The youth studied life's Creator, life's beginning, and life in faith (as opposed to occults and sects). They made use of the facilities of the University of Wisconsin-Marathon campus. At the end of this same month the Michigan District BPE sponsored a youth counselors' workshop and on September 15-17, 1978, the CYM held their third annual workshop for youth leaders at Camp St. Croix, Hudson, Wisconsin.

The May, 1979, BORAM included a few interesting notes which described the expanding work of the CYM. Pastor R. Zehms was named editor of Generations. P. Kelm continued to serve as editor for Youthink (replaced by Pastor D. Tomhave

by the end of the year because of pressing duties). The committee had produced a slide presentation on the international rallies. The Handbook for youth leaders was being revised, and a songbook for youth was being prepared. The committee also conducted annual seminars at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. David Bunnow, a layman from Appleton had replaced J. Behling on the committee, and the committee requested synod funding. The August 1-8, 1979, synod convention authorized this funding. Meanwhile 805 people participated in the sixth annual IYR hosted by congregations of the St. Louis, Missouri area. The group met on the campus of Washington University and studied under the theme, "Let your Light Shine." The fourth annual youth counselors workshop was held at Camp St. Croix on September 28-30, 1979. A seventh annual IYR is planned for Watertown, Wisconsin, under the theme, "University." The young people will stay at Northwestern College, July 14-17, 1980.

The reader would be given a wrong conception of youth work in the WELS if he assumed from this description of the growth of the CYM that this committee's activities comprise any and all youth work in the synod since Professor Kowalke wrote his essay. A better picture would include a report on the varied activities and balanced programs of many local congregations working independently or at times hand-in-hand with neighboring congregations. The Northwestern Lutheran cites only a few of these, but even before the CYM existed as an ad hoc committee, it can be documented that numerous congregations had "active" youth programs. We use "active" in a positive way, denoting a program which is centered upon and firmly grounded in the means of grace. Such a program indeed reflects the scriptural guidelines outlined by Professor Kowalke, which brings us back to the questions which were asked earlier - "Does the activity or even the very existence of this recently developed Committee on Youth Ministry agree with the scriptural guidelines for youth work outlined by Professor Kowalke's essay, 'The Church and Its Youth'?"

IV.

COMPARISONS AND CONCLUSIONS

From the very first paragraph of his essay, Professor Kowalke breathes pastoral love and care for youth. He could imagine nothing worse than a youth program which set as its goal the spiritual edifying of the young people but which only offered them social or recreational activity. That would be a case of a church and a church's called representatives neglecting the God-given assignment which is its one and only business - to preach God's pure law and gospel, to teach all men all things whatsoever Christ has commanded. That kind of deplorable situation, when a youth group is primarily social, is what Pastor Kelm would call "roller-skating syndrome." He pointed out that this was the original reason for the formation of the ad hoc youth committee. The men of that committee had believed that too many of our congregations offered little or no spiritual food for their youth. They believed that too many of our congregations offered little or no opportunity for young people to grow in God's Word. For this reason they wished to develop a balanced youth program which was based upon and emphasized God's Word.

We must acknowledge that the CYM shares the same love and concern for youth which Professor Kowalke had. At a recent youth counselors' seminar held at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (May 9-10, 1980), Dr. J. Lawrenz, a member of the CYM asked this searching question, "Why do we need a youth ministry?" He answered that young people are indeed people, sinners in need of the grace of God. They are also young, which means that we want to recognize that they are going through a period of life called adolescence, a period of great flux. Because of their lack of experience in all phases of life and because of the rapid change going on in their lives, the problems are heightened. They deserve our love and concern.⁶⁰

Again, we will point out that this love and concern for youth, voiced by Dr. Lawrenz, echoes the thoughts of Professor Kowalke. But we feel that a warning is in place. A pastor will always want to remember to show love and concern for people of all ages under his spiritual care. Is it not true that a shut-in has his own special cares and worries? Is it not true that any hospital patient has his own "heightened problems?" Do not the very young, the very old, and the in-between all deserve from the pastor an equal measure of overflowing compassion which simply reflects the abounding faithful love of our God who sent His Son to the cross in our place? Just because a person has spent two days in a seminar learning the ins and outs of special problems and special ministrations connected with youth work does not mean that he ought immediately set into motion a full-blown, vital youth program and in the meanwhile spend his usual fifteen minutes preparing for adult Bible class and twenty minutes preparing a Catechism lesson. Let the shepherd of God's flock keep in mind not only a balanced youth ministry, but a balanced total ministry. Let the pastor remember that all phases of his ministry deserve the best use of his God-given talents. Surely all men have different gifts. But when a pastor emphasizes youth ministry so that it stands in contrast to the rest of his ministry, let him re-evaluate his motives and efforts to make sure that he has not substituted noisy pep for the quiet working of the Holy Ghost.

Some will accuse me of vague generalities. The above comments are not so intended. Neither are they directed at the members of the CYM. These men would be the first to say that their efforts for youth ministry are in line with a congregation's goals and objectives. Pastor Kelm said, "Youth ministry that is effective is integrated into the congregation's total program."⁶¹ In fact at the end of the CYM seminars for youth counselors, the CYM leaders hold a de-briefing session so that leaders do not rush home and

hurriedly or impatiently force new programs on the youth, the pastor, or the congregation. Pastor Kelm confided in conversation that some of the early troubles which the ad hoc committee faced had to do with their own aggressive presentation. The members of the committee presented such high-powered seminars that some pastors felt pressured and threatened (as we mentioned earlier). So in their de-briefing sessions they now give their audience the apt advice, "Use only what is proper and fitting for your situation. Remember the sensitivity of your people. Don't impose all these ideas on a congregation. Use common sense."⁶²

Those last statements are worth repeating. Remember that the CYM is merely a clearing house for ideas. If a person does not want to use any of the CYM material, then he should not use it. I would like to draw this analogy: CYM material is to youth ministry as the "Talk About the Savior" program is to evangelism. (Those who find no use for the TAS manual will find no use for that analogy either.) The point stands - not everything which the CYM presents in a seminar can be used by all pastors. Some pastors and counselors will use very little or none of that material. Every situation is different. Here we are in line with what Professor Kowalke said, "Methods may vary, as long as the methods do not override the message."

Thus, Professor Zahn (of the CYM) agrees with Kowalke, "The organization is for the benefit of the group, not the group for the benefit of the organization."⁶³ This is a fine principle to remember because the CYM presents much organizational material for the pastor or youth leader to consider. But a pastor will want to remember that most of that organizational material comes from other sources outside of our church body. For example, even the five point balanced program is taken from the Walther League. Again, not all of the material offered can be used.

Some men will want to consider this point - in many situations as little organization as possible is the best route to take. By "organization" I mean a governing structure for a youth group which follows Robert's Rules to the letter. Certainly, plan your program. Plan and pre-plan, but do not let the outward forms take precedence over the number one priority for a youth group, teaching God's mysteries, the saving Gospel.

Some pastors and students objected to the organizational tactics of the ad hoc youth committee. Such objections were valid if aimed at the idea of a synod-wide "structure" mentioned in connection with the second IYR. Speaking as a member of the CYM, Pastor Kelm shows that the thinking of the committee is now in line with Professor Kowalke's scriptural guidelines regarding "youth movements":

Nobody wants to create a monster. There is no urge for a 'youth unity movement or organization' today. There is a concern for effectively reaching youth with law and gospel taught and applied in their milieu, for an application on the part of youth for Christian fellowship and mission in life, for a realization of their bond of faith and common purpose in the WELS.

No doubt Pastor Kelm held to that even in the early days of the ad hoc youth committee while talk of a separate "structure" was spreading. That is why I believe that the best thing that could have happened in the CYM history was that the BPE showed an interest in the ad hoc youth committee. Thus, the BPE prevented a possible "monster."

Concerning forms and methods, we have mentioned that the CYM suggests a balanced five-point program of worship, education, fellowship, recreation, and service. We have also mentioned that Professor Kowalke had advocated a balanced program. But let us consider a few of the objections that have been raised by some men concerning one or the other of the five points. First of all, one of the original interests

of the CYM (stated on p. 23 of this paper) was its willingness to borrow from other church bodies. But a valid question to be asked is this, "How different from more liberal church bodies do we appear as others look at our practice and methodology?" Another question to be answered is, "Are changes and new methods in our synod natural outgrowths of the Lutheran Church?" On the side of the CYM we must inject this food for thought - maybe the development of the CYM is such a natural outgrowth from a need within the Lutheran Church. Be that as it may, on with other areas of contention.

In the "Youth Counselors' Handbook," Pastor Stadler makes the point that the term "worship" can refer to all of our sanctified living, not just an hour or so per week. He goes on to draw the conclusion that a less formal format of structured worship may be more easily understood and received by youth.⁶⁵ In this whole area of worship we do well to keep in mind the sensitivities of our people. Some people prefer the older forms; others prefer the newer forms.

In regard to education, Professor Kowalke believed that the most effective way to reach the largest number of people is through the sermon. Pastor Kelm commented, "The Bible Class may be both more effective and more attractive."⁶⁶ We may grant that statement of Pastor Kelm as true, but consider that for a Bible class one is usually preparing for very eager listeners and for a smaller group. I maintain that we still need to keep Professor Kowalke's encouragement in mind, yet we will want to offer our best efforts both in sermonizing and in teaching Bible class.

As for the recreation suggested by the CYM, we will admit that their work falls in line with scriptural guidelines for youth work. During the youth counselors' seminar, Mr. D. Bunnow stresses the importance of using activities which involve all the young people present and which serve as a "learning laboratory" for the scriptural principles being taught.⁶⁷ Always keep in mind the number one business of

the church - preaching the gospel.

In the area of service the CYM offers many suggestions for giving the youth an opportunity to live the faith which God has given them. Again, we return to our principle which Pastor Kelm himself verbalized in regard to service, "Some of the suggestions will work for a certain pastor; others will not. The situation varies." But on one point which Professor Kowalke mentioned, Pastor Kelm begged to differ. Kowalke stressed the idea that youth were primarily "learners" in the church. Pastor Kelm would like to emphasize that all Christians are "learners and doers" at one and the same time throughout their life here on earth. Certainly, his comment is in place. Those who have been called out of darkness into God's marvelous light will want to live as children of the light. Professor Kowalke would not deny that.

I will add a few final comments concerning matters which I believe should receive more emphasis or study in CYM materials and presentation. One area that deserves a great deal of attention is the role which the parents play in relation to the teenager. It is true enough that we are living in an age in which the family unit is downgraded and even mocked. But the Gospel fills empty lives. Therefore we will want to work with parents and work with our youth as future parents to instill in them the proper scriptural understanding of the Christian home, Christian parents, and Christian children. As Professor Kowalke reminded us, let us work to improve family life.

Another area that could receive greater emphasis is the matter of Christian education, particularly Christian Day Schools and Lutheran high schools. Pastors will naturally be recruiters for these schools. They will also be recruiters for the youth group. What if conflicts arise? For example, should a Lutheran high school student feel obligated to attend youth group activities when his schedule is already rather full? The pastor will need to do some careful thinking on such

matters so as not to create Pharisees by favoring the youth group or the Lutheran high school student as a "better" Christian.

Yet, another area to be studied more fully is the matter of "lay ministry." Maybe the time has come for someone in our circles to write a paper that strikes the happy medium between the pastor who feels that only he can do a job correctly and thereby eliminate his lay people from all service, and between the pastor who studies up on some clever administration course and sits back to relax while his people do all the work. In this same area the pastor will want to be clear on Scriptural guidelines and also make sure his people are clear on the matter of the divine call as it relates to lay ministry and the universal priesthood.

Finally, we must ask the inevitable question, "Are international youth rallies the kind of youth activity we want to see in the Wisconsin Synod?" Again, our answer may seem like we are hedging, but we can only say that as long as rallies are conducted in the light of scriptural guidelines, we cannot condemn them. Apparently, the BPE representative who attended the first rallies did find them centered about "the one thing needful." We also want to keep in mind this comment from E. Saar, a member of the CYM, "International Youth Rallies are not and will never be a substitute for a well-balanced congregational youth program."⁶⁸

What is the bottom line? We must also ask, "Does the present youth work in the WELS fit the scriptural guidelines for youth work outlined by Professor Kowalke's paper?" We are compelled to answer, "Yes." I will admit that this conclusion was not what I had expected as I began my research. But we must say, "Yes," even in spite of the high-powered, aggressive CYM seminar presentation which irritates some who object to its efforts. But I will also qualify this answer. Insofar as the CYM remains merely an advisory body and does not in any way force its material on others, and as long as

its members make it clear that their material is not always applicable to every situation, then we will agree that they stand alongside of Professor Kowalke in sincere concern and love for youth. Finally, pastors, layleaders, and all others concerned with youth work in our congregations can receive no better advice than that given by the 1936 synodical committee, "The pastor must retain the specific duty and responsibility for the care of the youth in his congregation which he must not yield to a larger or 'representative' body. There must be no disturbance of the intimate and God-given relation between pastor and flock." (see p. 7 of this paper). Our concluding thoughts are best summed up by Professor Kowalke:

Finally let us have faith that when we faithfully teach and preach the Word of God, we are preaching the power and wisdom of God which will work all spiritual things needful for the Church in this world and the world to come, not forgetting, if we have fears for the youth of the church, to take our fears to the Head of the Church in prayer, in the calm confidence that our prayers will be heard, even as Christ Himself prayed for them and for us: 'I pray for them: I pray not for the world but for them which Thou hast given Me: for they are Thine, and all Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me, That they may be one, as we are.

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A. Proceedings--

Minn District, LC-MS	1936
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B. Report to the Ten Districts (WELS) 1974, 1976, 1978

C. BORAM 1975, 1977, 1979

D. Letters--

Luetke, J.	Mar. 1980
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Zahn, A.	Apr. 12, 1980

E. Notes--

Kelm, P. comments on Kowalke essay

F. Interviews--

Kelm, P. May 5 & 9, 1980
Gawrisch, W. May 3, 1980.

March 10, 1980

This letter includes a request for answers to some rather unusual questions. First, an explanation - I am a senior at Wis. Luth. Sem. gathering information for a paper in our course on American Lutheranism (church history). My general topic is in the area of the Wisconsin Synod and youth work.

Brief reading about the International Youth Rallies in our synod shows that the first rally was held in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, in connection with the 100 year anniversary of the congregation. What I am looking for is more information on names, dates, and places regarding this first rally (and possibly others which followed). Thus, I am sending the following questions to Pastor Pfothenauer, former vicars at St. Paul's and to Mr. Ernst Saar (an active participant in youth counseling in Ottawa, as the Northwestern Lutheran reports).

Would you please assist me in answering the following questions (and adding whatever info you may deem pertinent) as soon as possible? Sorry this has to hit during the Lenten season. Then return the sheet to me in the self-addressed envelope. Thank for your time.....

(answer on back if necessary)

1. How long has St. Paul, Ottawa, carried on a rather "active" youth program?
2. How many years has the youth program of St. Paul's held camps and/or retreats?
3. Did youth camps and retreats on a congregational or area basis contribute to the idea for an international rally? In what way?
4. St. Paul's at one time was a member of the LC-MS. The LC-MS has a nationally organized youth program called the Walther League. Did an earlier connection with the Walther League contribute to the idea for a WELS Internat. Youth Rally? In what way?
5. If there is an affirmative answer to #4, list any similarities and/or dissimilarities between the organization, plans, program, and an emphases for a WELS Youth Rally and Walther League Rally.

6. If #3 and #4 suggest negative answers, with whom (person or persons) did the idea for the International Youth Rally originate?
7. Imagine you had to write a short synopsis of the WELS Internat. Youth Rally from seed to blossom (in Aug, 1974) at St. Paul's, Ottawa.
Please share your thoughts:
8. List any other comments or criticism, impressions or inspirations regarding International Youth Rallies in WELS:

Thanks again for your trouble. Blessed Lenten season in remembrance of His atoning sacrifice to all.....

Sincerely,

James Huebner

OUTLINE

Introduction - Dr. Peters' paper which refers to
WELS youth work in 1950

- I. The background of Professor Kowalke's essay
 - A. In Missouri Synod
 - B. In Wisconsin Synod
- II. An overview of Professor Kowalke's essay
- III. The background of present day youth work
 - A. The first IYR
 - B. The ad hoc committee
 - C. The development of the CYM
- IV. Comparisons and conclusions
 - A. Concern for youth
 - B. unity
 - C. other areas