

The Membership Roll

Seattle Address

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THE first question to ask is, Who should be on the membership roll? I should say, Every working member of the Church. It is, of course, the young people's organization, and young people should officer it, and give it direction, but the League is more. It is the Church, organized for work. I sincerely hope the day will come when we will recognize that the Church is the great body of believers who hold communion together; that there is the preaching service of the Church, to which, because the worship is led by the God-called, God-inspired man, who is pastor of that church, we should give pre-eminence; the teaching service of the Sunday School, and the service of the League, where we not only offer prayer and praise to God, but plan work for the world.

The people whom, particularly, the membership roll should carry, however, are the young people, not members of the church, but of the community.

The second question is how to get them? Many methods have been tried. The people of the Church should be reached. First: The Look-out Committee should take the church roll, check off the names of all who are not members of the League, have the members of this Committee call on them, and invite them to come to the League meetings. The Sunday School Committee should watch carefully the boys and girls who are growing up in the Sunday School, and invite them into the League as soon as they are old enough. If the church is in a small town or country district, I would suggest that a list of the young people in the community, who are not members of other churches, be made up, and that the League members cordially invite and urge them to come to the various meetings and social gatherings. When they come, make them feel that you are glad to meet them, make yourselves agreeable, and ask them to join the League; eventually you will get them into the Church.

If the Church is in the city, the young people are harder to reach, particularly because you do not come into contact with them as you do in a smaller place. My suggestion in the cities, then, would be to get up a card similar to the one which I hold in my hand, which has been used successfully. The particular card shows the picture of the church, the Church Chorus Choir, and a large Sunday School Orchestra, as well as the picture of the pastor of the church. The picture of the President of the League, well as the Superintendent of the Sunday School, could be placed on the card. You could, also, show the hours of service, and any other special information that you wished to give. The idea being to have attractive cards placed in hotels, restaurants, boarding houses, etc., which would cordially invite strangers to visit your church.

There should be communication between the different Leagues, so that if any member should move from one town to another, in addition to the transfer cards, a letter should be written to the Secretary of the other League, notifying them that such and such a party has left your League to go to their city, and to be on the lookout for them, and endeavor to induce them to join the League.

Contests for members, where the League is divided into two parties, or sides, called the "reds" and "whites," for instance, the loser to furnish a din-

ner or pay some other forfeit, have been successful. But there is danger with this method, unless carefully managed, that there will be strife and a slump afterward. But the best way to get new members is to show a real life interest in the people, and then they will want to come with you. A man who has been a church teller how he came a stranger into the city—dropped into a meeting, and was so heartily greeted that he stayed, and became a member of the Church. A travelling man, going into a church in a southern city found the Pastor's Staff ready to greet him as he came, was spoken to by one of the young men who composed a young people's organization, seeing him loitering on the pavement, and asked him to come into the meeting. He went, enjoyed the meeting, and appreciated the friendliness so much that he joined the society, later the church, and has been a faithful worker for forty years. Another young man visited this particular church, and as he was leaving at the close of the meeting, a member of the door committee shook his hand, and cordially invited him to come again. He has said that he went home and immediately wrote his mother that he had visited a number of the churches since coming to Pittsburgh, but now he knew that he had found his home church, because of this friendly greeting, and that he was going to join the church. He did, and became a most valuable worker, later becoming President of the League, Associate Superintendent of the Sunday School, and a member of the Official Board. So you see that this personal work is the one great thing after all. We have to be careful, however, of this method. I remember an incident where a new young man on the committee approached a gray-haired, elderly man, and said: "How do you do, sir? I'm glad to see you. Are you a stranger?" The old man, raised to his full height, and said: "Why, my dear sir, I came to this church before you were born." So that the committee should be well acquainted with the people who are members of the League and the Church.

The young people should systematically visit the hotels and boarding-house, have cards of invitation, as mentioned before, hanging in the halls, have someone at the door of the church to greet strangers, as well as your own members, both coming in and going out, and cordially invite the young people live, and invite them to come back again.

Having gotten our people, we will hold them by our love, having something so interesting that they will want to come again. The Membership Committee may secure the people, but the League as a whole, the Programme Committee, the Spiritual Department, the Literary and the Social Departments, and the various members of the League, must do their parts to hold them.

Sometimes a new Cabinet comes into power to find a long membership list with a small attendance and no interest. There are two ways of remedying this: to weed out the lukewarm and undesirable ones, or to set about making them

desirable. When we have called on each one who is not attending, have prayed for them, have talked with them, have tried in every way to bring them back, and have not succeeded, we should then write and ask them if they still wish their name continued on the roll, and, if no answer is received, to remove their names, for it is not right to carry a lot of dead-wood on the roll, for two reasons. First: It doesn't do the League or the individual any good; and, second, it is expensive, for the League is required to answer to both the Central Office and the District tax.

Personal love and interest in our fellow men, and the exercise of it, therefore, I would say, is the greatest factor in keeping up the membership roll. There are hundreds, yes, thousands, of young people whom we could find and bind to us by our love, friendliness, and interest, but if we do not they may drift away from us entirely. And while the Spiritual Department is the predominant feature in all our Epworth League work, yet we must keep all the other parts of the work up to the highest possible standard of excellence, and make them harmonize with it.

This might be illustrated by the story of an artist, the colors of whose pictures harmonized so beautifully upon being asked how he achieved such splendid results, replied: "Some painters paint the foreground first, and then the sky, while I paint the sky first, and then bring all of the other colors up to it." So, in all of our League work, let us do our best, and with the help of God, who overlooks all, we shall be successful.

Pittsburg, Pa.

"Canadian Epworth Era" Evening

An interesting meeting of the Senior and Junior Epworth Leagues of Central Methodist Church, Moncton, N.B., was held last Tuesday evening in September. The meeting was in charge of the Juniors who gave the "Canadian Epworth Era" programme. Quite an amount of preparation was made for this meeting, for under headings—"Consecration Meetings," "Missionary Helps," "Hints for Literary Vice-Presidents," "Social Events," "Junior League," etc., in fact a collection of programmes for every department of League work, clippings from Era from last twelve or more numbers were pasted in "home made" scrap books—made by taking two sheets of colored blotting paper and twenty or thirty sheets of plain white paper (cut same size) then tied together, each book being marked as above; on inside blanks pasting items from Era, each department in separate book. Instead of a regular topic, a "talk" was given by the Senior Vice-President, and a number of successful programmes of other Leagues read, all going to show what others had done: we could at least try. At the close of the meeting, these League scrap books were presented by the Juniors to their Senior friends, who in return, many of them, gave a subscription or a renewal to the Era, in this way helping the Juniors to secure the paper free (see plan in November number) if each collector secured five subscribers. During the evening, a Bible Promise "Sword Drill" between Seniors and Juniors resulted in the Juniors leading by eight promises. Silver collection at this Union Meeting went towards "Japanese Orphanage Fund," for which our Juniors are at present collecting.

"A mothers' club!" exclaimed Mrs. Farmer Hayrick, putting the newspaper down, and a very wise lady said: "I never use nothin' but a shingle. Nice sort o' mothers they must be that has to use a club!"—Exchange.