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THE PLACE OF CHILDREN'S CHOIRS  
IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

BY

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A Thesis

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To the four other members of that  
singing circle, my Family,  
who for me have joined  
worship and song

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. The Problem and Its Importance

Present-day church leaders are confronted by the problem of waning interest in church worship, and at the same time an aroused interest in Christian education. To re-awaken enthusiasm for the church and attendance upon its services, many of these leaders are encouraging greater participation in the worship of song, largely through the organization of choirs in which all age groups can take part in public praise. H. Augustine Smith observes, that

"The twentieth century is seeing a renaissance of choral music. The forces contributing to this rebirth are powerful enough to justify the development of a choir or a system of choirs in a church of even the smallest dimensions."<sup>1</sup>

Endeavors in the direction of music programs are inherently educational, and must so be considered if their effect is to be of value to the children and youth participating.

Although this complete choral program calls for the organization of a series of choirs, this study will treat only one of the suggested units, namely, the children's choir. Indeed, it does not seem inappropriate to concentrate at this point, for a successful children's choir may prove the opening wedge for a program which will rouse the whole

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1. H. A. Smith and M. L. Maxwell, The Organization and Administration of Choirs, p. 4

1

congregation into joyous praise. If the loyalty of the children is caught and held, the problem of the future of church worship need not loom so large, and the Christian education of the church's constituency is satisfactorily begun.

Therefore the present study will be concerned with an investigation of children's choirs in relationship to Christian education. It will endeavor, through a study of the history, the value-outcomes, and the basic studies of program and methods, to draw conclusions concerning the place of children's choirs in Christian education.

#### B. Definition of Problem and Terms

The term "children's choir" is used rather than the more common "junior choir", because the latter is often employed ambiguously. Although in the technical sense "junior" includes only those children of nine to eleven years, "junior choir" is sometimes made to denote a choir composed of children of all ages, or even a young people's choir. In this usage the term simply signifies a choir younger than the adult choir. For the sake of clarity, then, "children's choir" is the term which will be employed throughout this study. The term as interpreted will exclude the older adolescent age, since they cannot be regarded as

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1. Cf. H. A. Smith and M. L. Maxwell, op. cit., p. 5



children in either nature or voice. It will, however, include the early adolescent, or intermediate age (12 to 14 years), because in smaller churches the junior and intermediate groups are quite often combined in one organization.<sup>1</sup> The term "junior choir" will be used in the present study in the strict sense to indicate a choir made up of junior age children.

The children's choir must not be confused with the choir boys, long used in liturgical churches to provide the treble parts in the vested male choir. Elizabeth Van Fleet Vosseller, of the Flemington Children's Choir School, says of them, "Since they have been attached to the men tenors and basses, we have not regarded them as 'juniors'."<sup>2</sup> The choir boys are members of the regular church choir; and while they undoubtedly derive much benefit from their training, it cannot be said, to use Anna Palmer McKibben's expression, that the choir is organized to make "music for the child's sake".<sup>3</sup>

Neither must the children's choir be thought of as simply a group of children of the church school, gathered together for some festive occasion to render "special music", or a number of children assigned seats near the piano on

. . . . .

1. Cf. E. E. Harper, Progress in Church Music, p. 13
2. E. V. Vosseller, in a letter to the present writer, under date of May 27, 1933
3. A. P. McKibben, "Music in Character Education", Religious Education, December, 1927, p. 1001

Sunday morning with the hopeful intention of their leading the singing. The term "choir" should assume a certain amount of organization and training. The children's choir may lead the singing in church school worship; but the opinion of most authorities is that it should, also, at regular times, participate in the formal church service. H. Augustine Smith speaks of "a permanent singing band, at peace with an organ accompaniment, at ease in a large auditorium, at rest on the key, and serene in true legato singing and expressional values."<sup>1</sup>

The children's choir shall be regarded, therefore, as a group of the children of the church, under fifteen years of age, organized and musically trained for definite purposes. To ascertain the nature of the organization, the training and the purposes, and to discover the development and values of this type of choir is the problem of the present study.

### C. Method of Investigation

#### 1. Modus Operandi

This investigation will begin with an examination of the historical background and development of children's choirs. This will be followed by a study of the value-outcomes which should result for both the church and the

. . . . .

1. H. A. Smith, "Children's Choirs in Non-Liturgical Churches", Studies in Musical Education, History, and Aesthetics, Fourth Series, p. 100

children. Basic courses will then be analyzed to learn such essential matters in the conduct of the children's choir as may fall under organization, administration, leadership and training. Finally, the findings of the earlier chapters will be summarized, their implications stated, and the writer's own estimate given of the place of children's choirs in Christian education.

## 2. Sources of the Investigation

It is a significant fact that little material on children's choirs can be found. Elizabeth Van Fleet Vosseller, the outstanding authority on the subject,<sup>1</sup> declares that she has been able to find nothing with direct bearing on the work, and that her own writing has been for the purpose of filling this need.<sup>2</sup> This dearth of material has made the gathering of data difficult, though very interesting. The greater part of the general books on church music contain only a few paragraphs, or at most a chapter or two, on the subject of children's choirs. Much of the accumulation of material, therefore, had to be made from scattered references to various aspects of the subject. Most of the standard books on the training of children's voices have especial reference to boy choirs or

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1. Cf. John F. J. Williamson, Letter to the present writer under date of May 3, 1933. He speaks of Miss Vosseller as the "best authority on junior choir work".
2. Cf. E. V. Vosseller, Letter to present writer, under date of May 27, 1933

to public school music. However, since much of the discussion is applicable also to children's church choirs, a number of these books were recommended and used in the study.

As the first step in gathering data, letters were written to a number of recognized authorities asking for bibliographical suggestions. The persons so consulted were H. Augustine Smith, of the Department of Fine Arts, the Boston University School of Religious Education and Social Service; John Finley Williamson, of the Westminster Choir School, Princeton; Marguerite Hazzard, Union Theological Seminary School of Sacred Music, New York; and Elizabeth Van Fleet Vosseller, of the Flemington Children's Choir School, Flemington, New Jersey. A bibliography was compiled from their suggestions. To this were added certain books included in bibliographies issued by the International Council of Religious Education,<sup>1</sup> the National Bureau for the Advancement of Music,<sup>2</sup> and by Laird T. Hites in Studies in Religious Education.<sup>3</sup>

Much valuable information was found in magazine articles, notably in certain issues of Religious Education,

. . . . .

1. The Standard Leadership Training Curriculum, Educational Bulletin Number 503, 1933
2. National Bureau for the Advancement of Music, Books on Vocal Music
3. Laird T. Hites, Chapter XXVIII, "A Selected Bibliography of Religious Education," Studies in Religious Education, Lotz and Crawford, editors.

The International Journal of Religious Education, The American Organist, and periodicals of the National Federation of Music Clubs. Certain pamphlets issued by the National Bureau for the Advancement of Music and other organizations also contained helpful material.

Among the most fruitful sources of data were correspondence and notes from lectures and conferences on church music.

## CHAPTER II

### AN HISTORICAL INVESTIGATION OF CHILDREN'S CHOIRS

#### A. Introduction

One of the most illuminating methods of approaching any movement is an historical study of its development and of the factors which contributed to its development. Such an investigation reveals the movement, not as a detached phenomenon, but as a related part of other trends which give it meaning and significance.

The growth of the children's choir movement has by no means been an isolated development. It has been produced directly and indirectly by trends and emphases within and without the church. For this reason the specific study of children's choirs will be preceded in this chapter by an investigation of the development of public school music and church school music in America. These two parallel and related movements will afford a background for the historical investigation of children's choirs. Finally, there will be an exposition of two of the most outstanding programs of children's choir training in the United States, which illustrate the increasingly great importance placed upon the movement.

## B. The Background of Children's Choirs

### 1. The Development of Public School Music

Public school music is a significant part of the background of church school music, and an important influence in its development. In the early days of this country, the United States was too much occupied with the problems of hewing out a new national life to give much<sup>1</sup> thought to the inclusion of music in education. There were singing masters, to be sure, of the type caricatured by Cooper in his David Gamut; but the singing schools and singing societies were not associated with the public schools. The only music which had a place in the public schools was the preparation of songs to be sung as part<sup>2</sup> of the program on public "examination days".

Public school music had its birth in Boston. In 1827 Lowell Mason, "the first apostle of public school<sup>3</sup> music in the United States", came to Boston and entered the musical life of the city as one of the founders of the Boston Academy of Music, president of the Handel and Haydn Society, and teacher of music. He and his associate, George

. . . . .

1. Cf. Mrs. Frances E. Clark, "The Status of Music in the United States", N. E. A. Journal of Proceedings and Addresses, 1909, p. 676
2. Cf. Edwin Grant Dexter, A History of Education in the United States, p. 406
3. Will S. Monroe, article, "Lowell Mason", Monroe's Cyclopaedia of Education, Vol. IV., p. 146

Webb, introduced children's singing classes on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons and conducted the famous "juvenile concerts" at Park Street Congregational Church. So popular were these classes that the proposal to include music in the school curriculum came as a natural consequence.

The Boston school board in 1836 rejected the first petition for school music. In 1837 they adopted a resolution that it was "expedient to try the experiment of introducing vocal music"<sup>1</sup> into the schools of the city, but they hesitated to make an appropriation for this purpose. Nothing daunted, Mason accepted the challenge and consented to teach gratuitously for a year. He had meanwhile spent a summer in Switzerland and had brought back Pestalozzian songbooks and methods which he employed in his teaching. The experiment was eminently successful and, as a contemporary writer said, "dispelled all doubts and removed all hesitation".<sup>2</sup> By vote of the Boston school board on August 28, 1838, music was admitted as a part of the public school curriculum.<sup>3</sup>

From Boston, school music spread to other centers. When, in 1885, the bureau of education investigated the prevalence of musical instruction in the country, they

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1. Quoted in Adolf Weidig, "Music in Education", Monroe's Cyclopedia of Education, Vol. IV, p. 350
2. Quoted in Charles I. Rice, "Boston, the Cradle of Public School Music in America," N.E.A. Journal of Proceedings and Addresses, 1910, p. 803
3. Cf. Will S. Monroe, op. cit., p. 146, and Charles I. Rice, op. cit., pp. 789-903



found that about seven-eighths of the pupils were receiving such training. In the fifty years since then<sup>1</sup> the proportion has been greatly increased.

An interesting index to the changing status of public school music is afforded in a list of the papers in this field which have been presented before the annual meetings of the National Education Association enumerated in the Fiftieth Anniversary Volume of the National Education Association, Journal of Proceedings and Addresses.<sup>2</sup> Music was not considered in these conventions until 1876; then two papers were presented, one of which was by Eben Tourjee, founder of the New England Conservatory, on "A Plea for Vocal Music in Public Schools" The subject was then apparently dropped until 1884, when the topic, "Methods of Teaching Music", was included in the program.

During the eighties the discussions were chiefly concerned with method in the elementary grades, dealing to a great extent with the tonic sol-fa system which had been initiated in England about the middle of the century. One paper had the significant title, "Shall the State Teach Music?"

In the decade of the nineties, method was still

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1. Cf. E. G. Dexter, op. cit., pp. 406-407
2. Cf. Bibliography of Topics from 1857-1907, Music in Schools, N.E.A. Journal of Proceedings and Addresses, Fiftieth Anniversary Volume, 1857-1906, pp. 703-706

uppermost, but now particularly in reference to an understanding of the child voice. The Association also gave its attention to the study of music in its broader relationships in the curriculum, especially to mental and cultural development.

At the turn of the century, the emphasis was two-fold -- problems of supervision and teacher training were considered, and with them the significance of music as a social force. The latter emphasis may be found in such papers as these: "What Power Does the Child Gain through Music-Study?", "School Music in Character Making", "The Influence of Music upon National Life", "The Rights of Boys and Girls in Music Education", "The Psychological and Ethical Value of Music". Without doubt music was gaining recognition in the public school curriculum.

Even in the last three decades music has made a notable advance. Although deploring the national willingness to listen rather than to create music, a recent writer to the Atlantic Monthly admits the growth in appreciation during the last thirty years, and declares,

"Within the past generation, at least, one musical fashion has changed for the better. It is no longer considered 'sissy' for boys, or queer and infra dig. for men to take a serious interest in music."<sup>1</sup>

. . . . .

1. Henry S. Drinker, Jr., "A Neglected Language," Atlantic Monthly, February, 1934, p. 211

George Herbert Betts writes in reference to the influence of public school music on that of the church school:

"Excepting in some of the rural schools it is now rare to find a course of study that does not provide music, or a schoolroom whose singers are not acceptable singers of good songs."<sup>1</sup>

"Yesterday", says H. Augustine Smith, writing in a similar connection, "music was a curriculum joke; today it is a titanic force in education."<sup>2</sup>

## 2. The Development of Church School Music

The pertinence of the investigation of public school music is revealed by a parallel study of church school music. Osbourne McConathy calls attention to the fact that when Lowell Mason inaugurated public school music it was with the purpose of training the children to sing better in Sunday School and church.<sup>3</sup>

Although singing was included in the Sunday School program of the early days, the music for the most part could not be considered expressive of the religious experience of the child. The children sang adult hymns of the theological character of the period, or hymns

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1. G. H. Betts, The Curriculum of Religious Education, p. 171
2. H. A. Smith, "Worship in the Church School through Music, Pageantry, and Pictures, p. 105
3. Cf. O. McConathy, Lecture on School and Church School Music, Conference of Youth Department, Greater New York Federation of Churches, October 7, 1933.

intended for "the young", many of which, says Edwin W. Rice, were of the type to "cause the irreverent to say that they were 'well fitted for those pious young children in "memoirs", '(too common then), wherein 'all good little children died young.'"<sup>2</sup> Probably the first Sunday school hymnal of significance was The Juvenile Psalmist, published in 1899 by Lowell Mason. This was followed by other books of which Mason, George Kingsley, and Thomas Hastings were outstanding compilers.<sup>3</sup>

During this early period instruction in singing was sometimes given in the Sunday schools. By issuing hymnals and even manuals of music, the American Sunday School Union and other Sunday School organizations gave great impetus to singing.<sup>4</sup> Asa Bullard says that singing "was spoken of as a delightful employment for the young".<sup>5</sup> The children's songs were often an important feature of the Sunday school concerts, popular meetings for religious exercises. Bullard quotes a superintendent as remarking, "After the concert is over, you will hear aged fathers and

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1. Cf. Grace W. Conant, article "Music in the Sunday School", The Encyclopedia of Sunday Schools and Religious Education, p. 704
2. E. W. Rice, The Sunday School Movement, p. 152
3. Cf. G. W. Conant, article "Hymn Writers and Composers of Sunday School Music", The Encyclopedia of Sunday Schools and Religious Education, p. 540
4. Cf. E. W. Rice, op. cit., pp. 149-153
5. A. Bullard, Fifty Years with the Sabbath Schools, p. 243

mothers exclaim, 'Did you ever hear anything like it? How the little creatures did sing!'"<sup>1</sup> This attitude, Miss Conant observes, is quite different from the modern viewpoint of regarding music as "an aid to worship rather than an attraction in itself."<sup>2</sup>

Although music was thus forwarded in the early Sunday schools, it was not until the middle of the nineteenth century, or shortly before, that the real movement for Sunday school music began. "The father of Sunday school music" was William Bachelder Bradbury, a pupil of Lowell Mason, who, in an effort to improve the quality and increase the quantity of the music, produced a long series of hymnals.<sup>3</sup> He was succeeded by a great many imitators whose songs for children are remarkable for their quantity rather than their worth.<sup>4</sup>

Following the Civil War there came the period of religious revival under Moody and the introduction of "gospel songs" by Ira D. Sankey, Moody's co-worker. The widespread popularity of this type of music carried it quickly into the Sunday school where its effect was both good and bad. On the one hand, it brought new life into

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1. A. Bullard, op. cit., p. 243
2. G. W. Conant, article "Music in the Sunday School", The Encyclopedia of Sunday Schools and Religious Education, p. 703
3. Cf. G. W. Conant, article "Hymn Writers" The Encyclopedia of Sunday Schools and Religious Education, p. 540
4. Cf. G. H. Betts, op. cit., p. 168

the music which had been of a rather somber character;<sup>1</sup>  
 on the other hand, these gospel songs were for the most  
 part too introspective and too little concerned with growth  
 in the Christian life to be the best music for the religious  
 nurture of children.<sup>2</sup> Certainly the gospel songs brought  
 a needed simplicity into Sunday school music, though as  
 Frances W. Danielson points out, some of the simple tunes  
 lacked melody and were therefore hard to learn, and the simple  
 words did not always express a child's ideas.<sup>3</sup>

Meanwhile, quite different influence on hymnody  
 was coming from England. The new interest in hymns, started  
 by the Tractarian movement, began toward the end of the  
 nineteenth century to cross over to America.<sup>4</sup> Not only did  
 English hymns come into common use, but American composers  
 were influenced by the English style. While these hymns were  
 not written for children, many of them proved admirably  
 suited to church school use and found their way into church  
 hymnals.<sup>5</sup>

An important factor in the development of music for  
 children was the growing recognition of the principle of

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1. Cf. G. H. Betts, op. cit., p. 170
2. Cf. H. Augustine Smith, "Music in the Sunday School and Its Value in the Religious Development of the Child", Religious Education, August, 1910, p. 255
3. Cf. F. W. Danielson, article "Music in the Primary and Beginners Departments", Encyclopedia of Sunday Schools, p. 698
4. Cf. Gardner and Nicholson, eds., Manual of English Church Music, pp. 2-8
5. Cf. G. W. Conant, article "Hymn Writers and Composers of Sunday School Music", op. cit., pp. 541-542

grading. When the "infant class" had begun to meet apart from the older group, the leaders had to recognize the need of appropriate music for them. Much of what was used to be sure, like "I want to be an angel", hardly stands the test of modern child study; but at least the process of grading music, like that of grading the other parts of the curriculum, had begun.<sup>1</sup>

These early efforts at grading were an indication of the growing understanding of pedagogical principles developed by European educators like Pestalozzi, Froebel, and Herbart. The advance of the public school in this respect was, though slow, far more rapid than that of the church school. By 1890 the public schools had made so much progress in pedagogical efficiency that the church school lacked much by comparison, and religious leaders became increasingly aware of the need for graded materials and methods.<sup>2</sup> The improvement in the quality of public school music, like that of other parts of the curriculum, revealed by contrast the poor grade of the music, and the inadequate musical methods used in the church school.<sup>3</sup>

Closely related to the influence of educators upon church school music is that of the psychologists. During

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1. Cf. F. W. Danielson, op. cit., p. 698
2. Cf. A. A. Brown, A History of Religious Education in Recent Times, pp. 80-82
3. Cf. G. H. Betts, op. cit., p. 171

the first decade of the present century psychology made a particularly active study of the child and of the nature of religious experience, investigations which naturally would have their effect upon religious education.<sup>1</sup> The study of religious experience led to an analysis of worship. Hugh Hartshorne wrote in 1915, "For ten or fifteen years, interest in children's worship has been steadily increasing."<sup>2</sup> In 1912 the Religious Education Association appointed a special commission to report on graded worship.<sup>3</sup> In all this study great emphasis was laid on the materials of worship, especial attention was given to music. The constitution of the Religious Education Association, drawn up in 1903, provided for a department of religious art and music, and Waldo S. Pratt, a recognized authority in these fields, was made executive secretary of the department.<sup>4</sup>

All this interest in music as a means of worship has not been without its results. Earl E. Harper calls attention, among other signs of progress in church music, to the rise of conferences on music and worship, the

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1. Cf. A. A. Brown, op. cit., pp. 236-237
2. Hugh H. Hartshorne, Manual for Training in Worship, p. 111
3. Cf. Report of Commission on Graded Worship, Religious Education, December, 1913, p. 497
4. Cf. Proceedings of the First Annual Convention of the Religious Education Association, 1903, pp. 353-354



development of courses in seminaries and music schools for training leaders in sacred music, and the number and quality of the hymn books which have been published in recent years for use in church and church school.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, the interest in tests and measurements in present-day religious education, which seeks to discover the educative value of the various parts of the church school program, has produced, says Edith Lovell Thomas, a "new awareness of the importance of hearing and making music as a means of education in religion."<sup>2</sup>

### C. The Development of Children's Choirs

So far as can be ascertained, no date can be set for the beginning of children's choirs. Even in the early periods of the Sunday School, as has already been indicated, groups of children sang specially prepared numbers for occasions like the Sunday School concert. The group whom Lowell Mason trained for his juvenile concerts might be termed a children's choir. Such efforts were, however, unorganized and sporadic. The musical authority in many communities was the transient singing master, often a man of irregular habits, whose leadership must have been anything but worshipful.<sup>3</sup> The training of the singing school

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1. Cf. E. E. Harper, *Progress in Church Music*, pp. 2-3
2. Cf. E. L. Thomas, "Music, Drama and Art in Religious Education," Chapter X in Lotz and Crawford, *Studies in Religious Education*, pp. 222-223
3. Cf. E. W. Rice, *op. cit.*, p. 150

consisted in a few sessions in catechetical instruction in notation, followed later by sessions of lusty drill in "psalmodising" by note, an exercise in which vim was<sup>1</sup> apparently more favored than beauty of tone and expression.

Strange<sup>1</sup> to say an indirect cause of children's choirs was the visit of his royal highness, the Prince of Wales, to New York in 1860. In honor of the prince, Henry Cutler, organist of Trinity Church, robed his male choir in ecclesiastical vestments and placed them in the chancel. This acquiescence to Anglican tradition, especially with royal approval, had an immediate effect on other Episcopal churches of the country. The quartette choirs, which were so common in the nineteenth century American churches, were supplanted, in many cases, by the vested<sup>2</sup> male choir, commonly spoken of as the "boy choir".

The choir boys under the most competent leaders received a type of training which children ordinarily could have nowhere else. In 1895 G. Edward Stubbs wrote that although vocal instruction was given in both public schools and Sunday schools, neither institution really trained the children to sing. In the public school the stress was laid on sight reading, and in the Sunday school the

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1. Cf. J. Spencer Curwen, *Studies in Worship Music*, First Series, pp. 116-117

2. Cf. Gardner and Nicholson, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-6

memorizing of hymns was emphasized; voice culture had no considerable place in either kind of instruction.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand choir boys, under capable directors, learn to sing beautiful music and to sing it beautifully.<sup>2</sup>

The achievements of the boy choir were a contributing influence to the organization of the Flemington Children's Choir, begun in 1895. Elizabeth Van Fleet Vosseller, the founder, in a letter to the present writer says that she does not know the origin of children's choirs, but that she is convinced that her project must be among the first. Since seeing a boy choir in her childhood she had cherished the ambition of organizing a choir of her own; but determined that hers should include both boys and girls. In 1895 she heard for the first time of the existence of such a choir, and with this encouragement she started to carry out her cherished plan. The choir of which she heard lived but a brief time, but the Flemington Children's Choir<sup>3</sup> has been living and growing ever since its founding. Miss Vosseller's experiments have been influential in starting other choirs.<sup>4</sup> "What others try on a small scale,"

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1. Cf. G. E. Stubbs, Practical Hints on the Training of Choir Boys, p. 92
2. Cf. Karl P. Harrington, Education in Church Music, p. 16
3. Cf. Letter from Miss Vosseller to present writer, under date of February 21, 1934
4. Cf. Letter from Mrs. Grace Widney Mabree, National Federation of Music Clubs, November 18, 1933.

says the editor of The American Organist, "Miss Vosseller has done wholesale. Where others have gained an ounce of experience, Miss Vosseller has gained a ton."<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, in religious education circles, problems of worship had arisen. The technique of training children in worthwhile hymns and guiding their experience through music was perplexing leaders. The files of Religious Education, the Journal of the Religious Education Association which afford a striking record of trends, contain in this period a number of references to children's choirs as a solution to worship problems. In 1906, in the first year of the publication of the magazine, a writer proposes the children's choir to help in "giving educational value to the devotional exercises of the Sunday school".<sup>2</sup> In 1908 the possibilities of the children's choir are again pointed out,<sup>3</sup> and its musical and devotional values emphasized. A contributor in 1909 includes children's choirs in a proposed musical program which should develop the worship life of the church.<sup>4</sup> By 1913 the movement had so far advanced that the editor called special attention to it, noting particularly the work done under the leadership of

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1. T. Scott Buhrman, Foreword to Vosseller, Junior Choirs
2. Cf. Mrs. B. S. Winchester, "Giving Educational Value to the Devotional Exercises of the Sunday School", Religious Education, December, 1906, p. 175
3. Cf. C. W. Wendt, "Sentiment and Song in the Sunday School", Religious Education, August, 1908, p. 97
4. Cf. Lester Bartlett Jones, "Church Music: Who is Responsible?" Religious Education, October, 1909, pp. 372-374

H. Augustine Smith in the First Congregational Church of  
<sup>1</sup>  
 Chicago.

Earlier than this, however, in 1909, the use of the children's choir had assumed a sufficient importance for Professor Smith to present a paper before the Music Teachers's' National Association on "Children's Choirs in the Non-Liturgic Church", in which he called attention to especially to the worship values which this type of music  
<sup>2</sup>  
 affords the church.

This emphasis on worship unquestionably has been a factor in the growth of the children's choir movement. It is significant, also, that this development has taken place during the period in which the churches were learning that they must lay aside the adage that "children are to be seen and not heard." Religious educators have realized that unless the church allows the child to be heard he will not long be present to be seen. In 1913 a writer in Religious Education, faced with this problem of the child and the church, pointed out the fact that no longer could church leaders simply take for granted the children's presence at the church services, a motive must be provided for their attendance, some means by which they may have a part in the

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1. Cf. "Notes and News", Religious Education, December, 1913, p. 521
2. Cf. H. A. Smith, "Children's Choirs in the Non-Liturgical Church", Studies in Musical Education, History and Aesthetics, Fourth Series, pp. 93-107

service. The children's choir, he suggested, is one of the means which may be used.<sup>1</sup> After about twenty years of debate on this problem, a writer in the International Journal of Religious Education, in the current year, comes to a similar conclusion on the necessity of enlisting the child's loyalty for the church; he, too, suggests the children's choir as a means by which loyalty and participation may be attained.<sup>2</sup>

One of the strongest influences, however, in developing children's choirs, came, not from the church, but rather the school. There is, thinks H. Augustine Smith, a revival in choral music which has been brought about by the schools and colleges.<sup>3</sup> The singing of massed choruses of children has become an important feature of conventions and festivals.<sup>4</sup> No longer do the best college glee clubs sing the senseless ditties of a generation ago; but as a writer in the Atlantic Monthly says, "We can now hear superb performances of the best music by college glee clubs."<sup>5</sup>

The force of this revival has had its effect upon the church and church school.<sup>6</sup> The National Federation of

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1. Cf. J. W. F. Davies, "Children and Church Worship," Religious Education, December, 1913, pp. 500-504
2. Cf. John R. Scotford, "Leading Children to Love the Church", International Journal of Religious Education, March, 1934
3. Cf. H. A. Smith, Worship in the Church School, p. 104
4. Cf. E. E. Harper, Progress in Church Music, p. 4
5. H. S. Drinker, Jr., op. cit., p. 211
6. Cf. H. A. Smith, op. cit., p. 104

Music Clubs for example has sponsored the promotion of children's choirs as one of its activities,<sup>1</sup> with the declared aim, "A junior choir organized in every church in every city."<sup>2</sup> Dr. Harper lists the organization of choirs of children and adults as one of the first evidences of the progress of church music.<sup>3</sup> He indicates two main trends as causal in the quickening interest in church music; one is "an increasing interest in and appreciation of music on the part of the general American public"; and the other, "a deepening consciousness of a need for devout, reverent, and well ordered public worship on the part of the religious public."<sup>4</sup> Both these trends, as has been seen, have been factors specifically in the growth of the children's choir movement.

#### D. Children's Choir Schools

A difficulty which in most cases prevents the realization of the fullest possibilities of the children's choir, is the limited amount of training which apparently can be given. "The most perfect method and complete system of training the young for choral singing," says Karl P.

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1. Cf. E. V. Vosseller, Junior Choirs, p. 21
2. Heading of article in Music in Religious Education, October, 1930, p. 15
3. Cf. E. E. Harper, op. cit., p. 2
4. E. E. Harper, op. cit., p. 4

Harrington, "is found in a choir school."<sup>1</sup> Choral centers of Europe owe much of their perfection in the art to this kind of education. St. Thomas Church in Leipsic, for example,<sup>2</sup> has had its choir school since the Middle Ages. The few children's choir schools which are found in the United States are practically all Episcopalian institutions for the training of boy choristers.<sup>3</sup> There are, however, two noteworthy examples of community choir schools which have been accorded no little prominence and commendation; one of these is the Flemington Children's Choir School in Flemington, N. J., and the other is the Durham Choir School in Durham, N. C.<sup>4</sup>

#### 1. The Flemington Plan

The Flemington Children's Choir School was organized in 1895 by Elizabeth Van Fleet Vosseller, for the purpose of making possible in the village of Flemington "music of a worshipful quality".<sup>5</sup> Children from all the five denominations of the village are enrolled in the school and carry back to their several churches the value of the

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1. K. P. Harrington, op. cit., p. 16
2. Cf. Waldo S. Pratt, The History of Music, p. 202
3. Cf. A. D. Zanzig, Music in American Life, p. 445
4. Cf. A. D. Zanzig, op. cit., pp. 436, 445
5. Cf. E. V. F. Vosseller, "The Flemington Children's Choir School," Church Music Bulletin, February, 1928, p. 4



training they receive. It is really a community enterprise in choral music, and, according to A. D. Zanzig, it is "one of the most extraordinary efforts in this field."<sup>1</sup>

The school receives children from the fourth grade up through the earlier adolescent years. All who enter must pass a year in the Probationers' Class before their formal initiation into the choir at commencement. Children who cannot sing true to pitch are not allowed to become full-fledged choristers; unless they can sing a second part they are not permitted to graduate. To earn the sixty credits required for the diploma a chorister is usually trained six or seven years; four years is the minimum. He is also required to have a year of piano lessons. When the graduate is given his diploma he is admitted to the senior choir of his church and becomes a member of the Chorus of the Alumni. All the children are required to attend at least one rehearsal a week; in most grades they are expected to be present at two or three.<sup>2</sup> Children of all denominations are in classes together except once a week when there is a special rehearsal for each choir. The choristers receive a small salary each month, the amount depending on the grade of the child and the quality of his work. The school also

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1. A. D. Zanzig, op. cit., p. 445

2. Cf. E. V. Vosseller, Junior Choirs, p. 8

has a system of medals and awards for the recognition of faithful effort and unusual achievement. The seniors at graduation are vested with gold hoods which they are afterward entitled to wear in the choir. In later years service stripes are put on the hood as a token of continued faithfulness.

Although the children of all the churches work together in the school, on Sunday each denominational group forms a choir at its own church. Faithful church attendance is required as well as regular attendance at rehearsals.<sup>1</sup>

The alumni creed, to which each graduate pledges himself, sums up admirably the musical ideal of the choir school:

"We, the Chorus of the Alumni of the Flemington Children's Choirs, believe music to be God's gift to His children, and as ministers of song do give ourselves to this holy office of the church. We pledge ourselves by our service, enthusiasm and means to aid the music of the church; to raise the standard of music in the community; to respect by perfect silence the art of music during its performance, nor to suffer disturbances from others. Thus do we give our utmost support to this cause of good music in any community in which we live."<sup>2</sup>

## 2. The Durham Plan

The Durham Choir School represents a different

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1. Cf. E. V. Vosseller, "The Flemington Children's Choir School," Church Music Bulletin, February, 1928, p. 4
2. E. V. Vosseller, op. cit., p. 4

type of organization. It was founded in 1925, thirty years after the Flemington school, as "the outgrowth of an effort on the part of the music teachers in the schools of the city to help toward raising the standard of music in the Sunday Schools of the city."<sup>1</sup> A committee appointed at a conference of secular and church school teachers drew up preliminary plans. The steps taken preparatory to starting the venture were; "first, a demonstration of training for children by the city school teachers to those in charge of Sunday School music; second, a standardization of sacred music material to be used; and third, the formation of a junior choir for training singers as a nucleus."<sup>2</sup> This original choir, made up of forty children from fifteen churches, demonstrated so well the choir possibilities that in September, 1925, the Durham Choir School was made a permanent institution.

The founder and director is William Powell Twaddell, a man of cultural background and high ideals in sacred music, who is director, also, of the department of music in the Durham city schools. The superintendent of city schools has given the project his encouragement, and though rehearsals are held after school hours, the choir school forms in reality an extra-curricular activity

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1. Pamphlet on "Durham Choir School"
2. Ibid

of the public school music department.<sup>1</sup>

The director accepts pupils from the fourth grade through the junior high school. There are no preliminary vocal tests;<sup>2</sup> payment of a monthly tuition fee of one dollar and regular attendance at rehearsals are the only requirements. There are two rehearsals a week after school. During the first year the director laid the ground work for pure tone production and trained the group in unison choruses. The next year the choristers were ready to advance to two-part music, and during subsequent years they have continued to improve.<sup>3</sup> At present the choir prepares and memorizes a complete service of music each month.<sup>4</sup>

The Durham plan does not undertake to train a separate choir for each church; rather, the choristers form nuclei for group singing in the various churches. They act throughout the city and in neighboring towns as student leaders in church school music and as members of church choirs.<sup>5</sup> In addition to the service rendered by the choristers in their own churches, the entire choir gives

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1. Cf. pamphlet, "Durham Choir School"
2. Cf. pamphlet, "Young People in Church Music", p. 8
3. Cf. pamphlet, "Durham Choir School"
4. Cf. letter from W. P. Twaddell, to present writer, under date of February 19, 1934
5. Cf. pamphlet, "Young People in Church Music", p. 8

many programs in Durham and elsewhere. The fact that the choir was invited in 1929 to appear on the program of the biennial convention of the National Federation of Music Clubs is an indication of the high musical standards of the school.<sup>1</sup> The value of the choir to the members was expressed by a leading citizen of Durham when he called it "the greatest piece of civic work for youth that has ever been done in the city of Durham!"<sup>2</sup>

#### E. Summary

This historical investigation of children's choirs has revealed the fact that numerous factors have entered into the growth of the movement. For the sake of gaining perspective in the study of children's choirs, specifically, there was a preliminary examination of the development of public school and church school music.

It was found that public school music, which had its beginning in Boston in 1838, was originally allied very closely with church music. From Boston the movement spread throughout the country; and, after passing through experimental stages, had by the end of the nineteenth century, become an important part of the public school curriculum. The last thirty years have witnessed its increasing development and influence.

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1. Cf. pamphlet, "Durham Choir School"
2. Burke Hobgood, quoted in *ibid.*

community enterprises make profitable study both for their accomplishment and for the fact that they reveal what other communities can do in this field.

CHAPTER III  
AN ANALYSIS OF THE BASIC STUDIES  
OF THE CHILDREN'S CHOIR  
WITH REFERENCE TO VALUE-OUTCOMES

## CHAPTER III

### AN ANALYSIS OF THE BASIC STUDIES OF THE CHILDREN'S CHOIR WITH REFERENCE TO VALUE-OUTCOMES

#### A. Introduction

It is only fitting that in an investigation of the place of children's choirs in Christian education there be an inquiry into the values which may be looked for as outcomes. The religious education program should include no activity which does not have worthwhile objectives or vindicate its existence by realizing the objectives to some extent.

Hence, in this chapter, there will be first, an examination of the prevailing situation to ascertain any needs which children's choirs may reasonably be expected to meet. In the second place, there will be a synthesis of the value-outcomes which should result from the children's choir program, gathered from the statements of such outcomes in available sources.

#### B. Present-day Needs Which May Be Met By The Children's Choir

##### 1. The Church's Need of the Children

The situation faced by the Protestant Church



today presents a number of urgent needs which the children's choir proposes, at least in part, to fill. Prominent among these is the problem of the empty pew, and next to is that of the apathetic congregation. Just as its spire is often overtopped by modern skyscrapers, so the church is too often over-shadowed by many outside attractions. Karl P. Harrington declares, "To win and keep the active interest of young and old to-day in the church demands the utilization of every possible drawing force."<sup>1</sup> Especially is the absence of children and young people from the church services quite generally apparent. Yet, says Professor Tweedy, the church needs the child, both because his presence leavens the service with life, and because if the church does not win him as a child it has probably lost him permanently.<sup>2</sup>

## 2. The Children's Need of the Church.

There is also the companion problem -- "The child needs the church."<sup>3</sup> No substitute children's service, Professor Tweedy believes, can fully take the place which the church service should fill for the child. "It offers him external aids", he says, "living examples, and adequate training. It offers him the contagion and

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1. K. P. Harrington, op. cit., p. 6

2. Cf. L. A. Weigle and H. H. Tweedy, Training the devotional Life, p. 82

3. Ibid., p. 82

refinement of a larger social fellowship."<sup>1</sup> Dean Sperry also stresses the value which the church worship has for the child's development, and contends that no service need<sup>2</sup> be or should be entirely beyond the child's comprehension. It is most important of all, however, that the child be given an opportunity to feel that he is contributing to the service as well as drawing from it. Only in this way<sup>3</sup> will he feel that the church is truly his.

The writer of a recent article in the International Journal of Religious Education expresses the belief that the church in its permanence and its challenge to loyalty is an important and abiding influence in religious training.

"As we weave the life of the child into the life of the church we are establishing a relationship which may carry through to fruition ~~some~~ of the ideals which we have sought to implant in the church school."<sup>4</sup>

### 3. The Need of Guided Experience in Christian Education

Both church and church school have an educational responsibility, particularly toward children and young people, a responsibility which the program of Christian education has been developed to meet. Because the church

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1. Ibid., p. 82

2. Cf. W. L. Sperry, *Reality in Worship*, pp. 197-199

3. Cf. L. A. Weigle and H. H. Tweedy, *op. cit.*, p. 89

4. John R. Scotford, *op. cit.*, p.

is concerned with training for Christian living, the curriculum of Christian education goes far beyond fact-content to include experiences "in every area of life". These experiences of the pupil are carried on under guidance "in the group to control and enrich his growing insight into life and skill in living the Christian life."<sup>1</sup> The primary interest of this "life-centered" curriculum is to establish "attitudes, habits, skills, affections, ideals, motives, enthusiasms, loyalties,"<sup>2</sup> and that of imparting information is only secondary.<sup>3</sup> Such an educational program unquestionably calls for a wide variety of activities and welcomes any experience which amplifies the older type of curriculum and helps to produce the desired end, "a person growing in the ability to live a Christian life".<sup>4</sup> The task of Christian education needs guided experience which can aid in achieving the declared objectives.

#### 4. The Children's Need for Musical Outlet

Co-existent with these problems of the church is another which, though not ostensibly a church problem, will in this study be related to them. The progress of

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1. International Council of Religious Education, Proposed Standard for the Weekday Church School, p. 8
2. Ibid., p. 9
3. Cf. Ibid., pp. 8-9
4. International Council of Religious Education, op. cit., p. 9

music education in this country has been, as has been seen, very rapid. Recognizing that children almost without exception have great capacity for music, the progressive schools have laid much stress on music training. Yet Americans are by no means a musical people, for when the child leaves the schoolroom he usually has no opportunity to express this natural and cultivated interest. Without outside encouragement this musical sense becomes<sup>1</sup> atrophied or perverted.

As a representative of the public school, Osbourne McConathy urged on a group of church school workers "co-operation between church and school in music". The churches, he said, can put the school training to use, and thus not only take advantage of this musical education,<sup>2</sup> but stimulate the pupils to further learning. Edith L. Thomas writes,

"In a vast number of churches latent possibilities are to be found in young people which the church school could well afford to cultivate for its own advantage. What justification can the institution offer to the individual whose gift of music it has failed to cultivate? Some seers are prophesying that in this phase of the church's life there<sup>3</sup> is the greatest promise of its future vitality."

#### C. Value-Outcomes of the Children's Choir

Such being the needs placed before the children's

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1. Cf. pamphlet, "Young People in Church Music", pp. 1-2
2. Cf. Osbourne, McConathy, op. cit.,
3. Edith L. Thomas, op. cit., pp. 223-224

choir, the obvious question is how nearly may the specific positive outcomes be expected to fill the needs. An analysis of sources yields a large number of values resulting from a properly organized and administered children's choir. They may be divided into two parts: values to the church directly, and values to the child which indirectly affect the church.

# 1. Values to the Church

## a. The Worship Stimulated

The program of the children's choir brings the children into the church service on the Sundays on which they sing publically; and some outstanding leaders affirm<sup>1</sup> that they should be encouraged to attend every Sunday.

Although the presence of these children gives the minister and the adult worshippers an added responsibility for directness, simplicity, and sincerity in all parts of the service, the acceptance of this responsibility will greatly improve the worship value of the service for the adults as well as for the children.<sup>2</sup>

The participation of the children gives new life to the church worship. For middle-aged pew holders for whom the service may have become commonplace and uninspiring, the reverent enthusiasm of carefully guided

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1. Cf. E. V. Vosseller, *Junior Choirs*, p. 7
2. Cf. L. A. Weigle and H. H. Tweedy, *op. cit.*, p. 82

boys and girls may serve as a spiritual tonic.<sup>1</sup> There is something of essential spiritual quality, "an ethereal purity, a passionless sweetness,"<sup>2</sup> in the tone of well trained children's voices, which liturgical churches have always utilized.<sup>3</sup> Rightly directed, the children's choir should make the church service far more in the spirit of Him who said, "Except ye . . . become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter the kingdom."<sup>4</sup>

#### b. The Parents Influenced

Most church schools have many children from the homes of non-church members or indifferent members. The interest of their children in a children's choir project and their children's participation in the service may bring them to church as nothing else would. The singing of their own children may touch the hearts of those who would be obdurate to any other appeal.<sup>5</sup>

#### c. The Children Related to the Church

Regular attendance at church worship may form the habit of church going, an habitual tie which many people

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1. Cf. pamphlet, "Young People in Church Music", p. 6
2. F. W. Wodell, Choir and Chorus Conducting, p. 30
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 30; H. A. Smith, "Children's Choir in the Non-Liturgic Church", Studies in Musical Education, History, and Aesthetics, Fourth Series, p. 100
4. Matthew 18:3
5. Cf. pamphlet, "Young People in Church Music", pp. 6-7

lack. The child in the children's choir has, however, as well as the habit, the stronger motivation of responsibility in participation. Since he takes part in the service, church going becomes desirable and voluntary to him. The church is his church, and his enthusiastic loyalty is directed toward it. Because the church worship is made meaningful for him, he will grow up into an intelligent, reverent participant, not simply an apathetic on-looker. From the children's choir should come a large and enthusiastic addition to the church membership.<sup>1</sup>

#### d. Church Music Improved

##### (1) A Help to the Senior Choir

Particularly for adult choirs with little musical training, there is great help in the occasional lifting of the burden of providing weekly church music. They may in this way have time to prepare their music more adequately.<sup>2</sup> Besides relieving the senior choir of part of the responsibility, the children's choir may, by the quality of their music, prove an incentive to the older singers.<sup>3</sup> On occasions the two groups can sing

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1. Cf. references upon this outcome, K. P. Harrington, op. cit., pp. 12-13; J. F. Williamson, Notes on Lecture: Choir Organization, School of Sacred Music, Massanetta Springs Conference, Harrisonburg, Virginia, August 5, 1933; pamphlet, "Young People in Church Music", p. 7
2. Cf. pamphlet, Ibid., pp. 6-7
3. Cf. E. V. Vosseller, Use of a Children's Choir, pp. 14-15

together, achieving lovely results which will give variety<sup>1</sup> and added effectiveness to the music of the church.

## (2) Provision for the Future Church Choir

The members of the children's choir in a church of adequate choral organization will in due time be graduated into the senior choir. The children's choir organization should prove the solution to the problem of finding singers now perplexing many churches, for not only will it help to increase the membership of the adult choir, but it will improve the quality of that membership. The children receive a training and experience which leaves with them musical understanding and ability to worship.<sup>2</sup>

## (3) Congregation Musically Trained

Congregational singing, which like the open Bible is a legacy of the Reformation, many writers concede<sup>3</sup> to be becoming a lost art. Apathy and ignorance have united to discourage hymn singing. Other musical parts of the service are treated still more carelessly; the anthem, for example, is sung to occupy the time of the offering,<sup>4</sup> and the postlude is a signal that the service is over.

The children's choir should produce not only

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1. Cf. E. V. Vosseller, Music for the Junior Choir, p. 5
2. Cf. references upon this outcome, K. P. Harrington, op. cit., p. 127; E. V. Vosseller, Use of a Children's Choir, pp. 10-11; J. F. Williamson, op. cit.
3. Cf. H. A. Smith, "Fine Arts in the Curriculum", Religious Education, June, 1922, p. 215
4. Cf. A. D. Zanzig, op. cit., pp. 428-435



members of the adult choir, but members of the congregation who regard music as an act of worship. However, the congregation should also be affected more immediately and directly. The pure voices of children are, says Professor Smith, especially effective in leading singing, and their leadership should stimulate their elders.<sup>1</sup> In addition to this, the musical appreciation of the church may be lifted. Under wise direction the children develop discriminating taste and enjoyment of good music, and adults who would be slow to appreciate artistry and sincerity in music may learn to do so from the children.<sup>2</sup>

## 2. Values to the Children

### a. Loyalty to the Church

Not by passively attending, but by actively and intelligently taking part,<sup>3</sup> does the child build up loyalty for the church. Nothing could develop this attitude better than the dignity and responsibility of being one of a choir entrusted with the music for a service. If such feelings are carefully fostered, the children's choir experience will develop the finest and most lasting sentiments of loyalty and responsibility, of

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1. Cf. H. A. Smith, "Children's Choirs in the Non-Liturgic Church", *Studies in Musical Education, History and Aesthetics*, Fourth Series, pp. 98-99
2. Cf. E. V. Vosseller, op. cit., pp. 9-10
3. Cf. J. R. Scotford, op. cit., p.

pride and affection.<sup>1</sup>

b. Education in Worship

Through an adequate children's choir program, the children will learn not only to love the church, but to understand and appreciate the services of worship. By simple teaching, the leader can explain the significance of the parts of the service, of the sacraments, of the church symbolism, so that they may have devotional meaning for the children.<sup>2</sup> There is value in group worship, and in the church service the children learn also from the example of adults at worship.<sup>3</sup> They will develop what Edith Sackett speaks of as "the fine art of reverence,"<sup>4</sup> truly a rare art in these days. Edith Lovell Thomas says that "in music we have the most real means of getting into communication with the spiritual world".<sup>5</sup> In education for worship in song, declares Gerrit Verkuy1, the children's choir is "the training school on which we must chiefly rely".<sup>6</sup> Through participation in worship, especially in the worship of praise, the children will grow in the ability to

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1. Cf. Edith Sackett, Notes on lecture, "Junior Choirs", conference of Youth Department, The Greater New York Federation of Churches, Riverside Church, October 7, 1933; J. F. Williamson, op. cit.
2. Cf. E. E. Harper, Church Music and Worship, p. 145
3. Cf. L. A. Weigle and H. H. Tweedy, op. cit., p. 83
4. Cf. Edith Sackett, op. cit.
5. E. L. Thomas, notes on lecture, "Worship Experience through Music", before The Graded Union, Department of Religious Education, The Greater New York Federation of Churches, School for Training Christian Leaders, February 6, 1934.
6. Gerrit Verkuy1, Devotional Leadership, p. 106

worship "in spirit and in truth".

### c. Education in Music

In giving a means of expression to the musical training of children, in providing simple training when public school music is lacking or deficient, in opposing the influence of good music to that of the overflow of poor music which drenches most communities -- in these and other ways musical values may result from the children's choir. It cannot, of course, provide a full musical education; yet through its training the children should learn to sing with a clear, pure tone, to do ensemble singing, to sing intelligently and feelingly, and to enjoy the best music. They should begin an acquaintance with the great music of the church, a familiarity which has <sup>1</sup> much cultural as well as great spiritual values.

In one of the most recent books on church music, the author, Archibald T. Davison, finds the provision for training children in church music in most churches woefully <sup>2</sup> inadequate. If the music is wisely selected, however, he states that children's choirs "may be an important addition <sup>3</sup> to church music education."

### d. Development of Christian Concepts and Character

There is no end to the writing, rhapsodic and

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1. Cf. for references on this outcome, E. E. Harper, op. cit., pp. 145-146; K. P. Harrington, op. cit., pp. 12-13; H. A. Smith and M. L. Maxwell, op. cit., p. 6; E. V. Vosseller, op. cit., p. 11; pamphlet, "Young People in Church Music", p. 7
2. Cf. A. T. Davison, Protestant Church Music in America, pp. 20-2
3. Ibid., p. 20

commonplace, metaphysical and practical, about the effects of music on life. Apart from the field of religious education, the educator and idealist of music, Thomas Whitney Surrette, declares, " It requires the most accurate 'teamwork', it is unselfish, it awakens sympathy, creates joy, frees the soul, and subtly harmonizes the physical being."<sup>1</sup> In singing, he says, are both self-expression and discipline,<sup>2</sup> component parts of the educative process.

Anna Palmer McKibben lists ten character outcomes of music, to which she gives religious interpretation. These are: to develop the spirit of co-operation; to deepen an appreciation of and response to the beautiful; to develop patience; to develop trustworthiness; to develop the ability to concentrate; to aid in worship; to teach great religious truths; to provide legitimate outlets for emotional feelings; to engender world brotherhood; to intensify<sup>3</sup> emotions.

Though neither Dr. Surrette nor Miss McKibben refers specifically to the work of children's choirs, their remarks have particular applicability to this training. Frederick Wodell states that if the training of these choirs is done by able leaders,

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1. T. W. Surrette, "A General View of Music Education for Children, "Creative Expression", Hartman and Shumaker, eds., p. 74
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 71
3. Cf. A. P. McKibben, "Music in Character Education", Religious Education, December, 1927, pp. 1000-1004

"there is a gain by the children in concentration, self-subordination for the general good, orderliness, punctuality, obedience, self-respect, and respect for others. Character in general is favorably affected. This in addition to the advantage to the child in the cultivation of musical knowledge and taste, the development of the powers of self-expression and enjoyment in singing, and the conservation of the voice."<sup>1</sup>

Thus wisely directed, the children's choir should be a great asset to the program of Christian education. Through ensemble singing, co-operation and unselfishness are developed. In the same exercise there is release and training of emotions, a form of expression, says Edith L. Thomas, by which even children who have not learned to be articulate can find outlet for otherwise incoherent feeling.<sup>2</sup> In entering into the music of other groups, sympathies are widened. Through the process of mastering music, of planning and carrying out plans for others, of accepting and performing responsibilities, are developed many of the conduct responses which are aims of Christian education.

There should result from the children's choir experience not only social attitudes, but spiritual concepts. Through giving expression to religious truth in singing, the children will have impressed on them many of the great facts of Christianity.<sup>3</sup> Training in worship has already been

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1. F. W. Wodell, op. cit., p. 167
2. Cf. E. L. Thomas, op. cit.
3. Cf. E. E. Harper, op. cit., p. 53

referred to. If the literary and musical content is worthy and the teaching is of the right kind, the adoration, the prayer, and the challenge to service which sacred music expresses must have their effect on concepts and character.

"A religious education which sees in music vast resources for shaping character through legitimate suggestion and stimulation," says Miss McKibben, "will find itself in the midst of almost unlimited resources and opportunities."<sup>1</sup>

The values which may be realized are not altogether results which can be tabulated, yet they are none the less real. "The children in children's choirs," declares Miss Sackett, "will be the men and women you will hear about."<sup>2</sup> "No other art," says Miss Vosseller, "holds such possibilities for uplifting the heart of the young as that of song, so let us use it as a glorious gift to make noble those who sing and those who hear."<sup>4</sup>

#### D. Summary

The purpose of this chapter has been to point out certain present day needs which the children's choir might have some part in filling, and to place over against these needs the value-outcomes which may be looked for as results from this choir.

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1. Cf. E. E. Harper, op. cit., p. 53
2. A. P. McKibben, op. cit., p. 1004
3. Edith Sackett, op. cit.
4. E. V. Vosseller, "The Boy Voice", The American Organist, April, 1923, p.223

The needs which the children's choirs are asked to fill may be summarized as follows: the church's need for the children, both as a source of new life and as a guarantee for the future; the children's need for the church, as a means of spiritual development and as an opportunity to participate in worship and service; the need for guided experience in Christian education, through which the children can grow in the ability to live Christian lives; the need for opportunity for the highest expression of the musical instinct and training of children, in a manner which will benefit both the church and the children.

The value-outcomes gathered from an analysis of sources were found to affect both the church and the children. The children's choir should help the church through stimulating worship, bringing parents and children into church life, and improving the quality of church music. It should help the children through relating them to the church, training them in musical expression and in worship, and developing Christian concepts and character.

In view of these specific needs and specific results, it appears that the children's choir, properly organized and administered, has a contribution to make to the solving of a number of present-day problems.

CHAPTER IV  
AN ANALYSIS OF THE BASIC STUDIES  
OF THE CHILDREN'S CHOIR  
WITH REFERENCE TO PROGRAM



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A. Introduction

In making the analysis set forth in this chapter, it has been necessary to gather data from varied sources. The materials are gleaned from books, pamphlets, magazine articles, and correspondence. The source of much of the information on the treatment of children's voices is literature written primarily for public schools and boy choir directors. This material is largely applicable however, to the training of children's church choirs. Material was found to be abundant at certain points and very sparse at others.

Since few of the studies analyzed treat all the topics here discussed, it will be necessary to make a composite exposition based on all the studies, rather than a comparison of the different authorities. Nevertheless, there will be a careful attempt to present fairly those questions on which there are divergent points of view.

This analysis will endeavor to cover, in not too detailed manner, the problems which have to do with the organization and administration, the leadership, the use and the training of children's choirs.

## B. Organization and Administration of The Children's Choirs

### 1. Inaugurating the Children's Choir

Before the children's choir can be organized the leaders must decide whether they will follow the principle of selection or that of general admission in enrolling the members. As a representative of the group which advocates selection, Miss Vosseller states, "There must be a standard for admission to any choir if good results are to be obtained."<sup>1</sup> The requirements which she recommends are "ability to sing in tune, to read and be reliable."<sup>2</sup> Unless these standards are maintained, she believes, the really musical child will lose interest. However, she admits elsewhere that children with good voices but faulty ear<sup>3</sup> are to be considered, for they can often be trained.

Those who support the opposite view contend that the benefits of the choir should not be denied the less musical boys and girls. Dr. Harper gives three reasons why he believes that no entrance test should be required:

"First, it is sometimes difficult to determine whether or not a child has musical talent. . . It is part of the responsibility of the church to afford every child under its care opportunity to develop what may simply be a dormant capability. . .

"Secondly, the purpose of organizing and conducting the choir, is not primarily to present musical works in public, but to train and develop the children. A considerable part of this training is other than purely musical, having to do with

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1. Elizabeth V. Fleet Vosseller, Junior Choirs, p. 7
2. Ibid., p. 7
3. Cf. The Use of the Children's Choir, p. 17

the child's capacity for worship, and with his fondness for fellowship and recreation. . .

"Third, the setting up of rigid and specific requirements and the imposing of tests may frighten many children away from an organization whose primary end and aim is to furnish a channel through which as nearly as possible the entire body of children of the Sunday School shall be passed for training, instruction, and general development."<sup>1</sup>

Undoubtedly such general admission will lead to many problems, and the less musical children will need much careful attention from the director. Yet in most cases the root of their trouble is not in actual tonal deafness, but, as Dr. Williamson declares, in lack of musical advantages. He states that he has never found a child who could not get pitch.<sup>2</sup> "Quite ninety per cent of our children," says James Bates, "can, with a little patience and perseverance, cultivate a 'good ear', and learn to sing with pleasing voice and good intonation."<sup>3</sup> To quote Dr. Harper again:

"It is quite evident that: this general admission of the children is going to take the patience, tactfulness, and resourcefulness, of the director. . . But. . . one of the essential requirements for making a success of such work as this is just such patience, tact, and resourcefulness, and . . . one of the very great responsibilities of the director is that he shall study the children for their own sake, that he may aid them in every possible and practicable manner."<sup>4</sup>

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1. Earl E. Harper, Church Music and Worship, pp. 141-142
2. Cf. John Finley Williamson, Notes on lecture, "Choir Organization"
3. James Bates, Voice Culture for Children, p. 62
4. Earl E. Harper, op. cit., p. 143

The first step to be taken in starting the organization is that of securing the official sanction and the active co-operation of the church leaders -- the pastor, the church school superintendent, the Council of Religious Education, or whatever official board may exist.<sup>1</sup> The children's choir must be regarded as part of the religious education program, not as a separate unit. There must be definite plans for its functioning and maintainence at the outset.<sup>2</sup>

When the church has sponsored the organization and a program has been laid out, an announcement of the proposed choir must then be made to the church school and a time and place appointed for organizing. It is well also to write letters to the parents, to telephone them, or call at the homes, in order that the mothers and fathers may understand the purpose of the choir and give their co-operation.<sup>3</sup>

If there are to be entrance voice tests, the director will examine each voice separately, encouraging the child with tact and kindness. The children with soft,

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1. Cf. E. E. Harper, op. cit., pp. 139-140; Edith Sackett, Notes on lecture, "Junior Choirs"; Article, "Organization of Junior Choirs", Music Clubs Magazine, January-February, 1932.
2. Cf. Elizabeth Van Fleet Vosseller, Junior Choirs, p. 7
3. Cf. Edith Sackett, op. cit.; Article, "Organization of Junior Choirs"; Harper, op. cit.; pp. 140-141; Vosseller, Use of Children's Choirs, p. 19.

sweet voices are the ones to be selected, rather than<sup>1</sup>  
those who sing loudly.

When the group of prospective choristers has met and the children's choir has been explained to them, such grading and organization can be effected as the circumstances require. There must be a definite time and<sup>2</sup>  
place selected for rehearsals. It is most important to secure the enthusiasm of the group from the very start; as Miss Vosseller says, "First win the children as your<sup>3</sup>  
champions and all the parents will follow."

It is necessary that the children's choir organization be correlated not only with the religious education program but also with the musical program of the church. The members of the adult choir must be made to feel that the children's choir, instead of supplanting them, is only helping to complete an adequate choral organization<sup>4</sup>  
for the church and that each part of the whole has a place.

Under wise leadership a children's choir thus inaugurated should start a life of progressive growth.

## 2. Grading the Children's Choir

As was indicated in the Introduction, the term

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1. Cf. Vosseller, op. cit., p. 17; F. W. Wodell, Choir and Chorus Conducting, p. 168
2. Cf. Edith Sackett, op. cit.; pamphlet, "Young People in Church Music", p. 7; article, "Organization of Junior Choirs", Music Clubs Magazine, January-February, 1932
3. Cf. E. V. Vosseller, op. cit., p. 6; E. E. Harper, Pro- in Church Music, p. 13
4. E. V. Vosseller, Junior Choirs, p. 6

"children's choir" is employed in this study, rather than "junior choir", because the former is the broader term. In small churches it is often most practicable to combine the choristers from the junior and intermediate departments in one choir.<sup>1</sup> However, where numbers warrant, most authorities advise a system of graded choirs. The suggested age groupings differ somewhat in certain cases, but in general the junior ages correspond to those of the junior department (9-11) and the ages of the intermediate, or junior high school choir, with those of the intermediate department (12-14).<sup>2</sup> It is recommended that the grouping be as nearly as possible that of the public school.<sup>3</sup> Naturally in this, as in all church school grading, the local situation will be a deciding factor.

One of the chief differences of opinion is on the inclusion of primary children in the children's choir.<sup>4</sup> One source suggests the organization of a primary choir. Two others would include in the junior choir all the children from six to eleven years of age.<sup>5</sup> Miss Vosseller opposes the enrolling of children below the fifth grade

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1. Cf. E. E. Harper, op. cit., p. 13
2. Cf. sources: J. F. Williamson, op. cit.; Edith Sackett, op. cit.; H. A. Smith, *Children's Choirs in the Non-Liturgic Church*, pp. 101-104, and *Worship in the Church School*, pp. 106-115; Smith and Maxwell, op. cit., pp. 5-6; E. E. Harper, *Church Music and Worship*, pp. 139, 149, and *Progress in Church Music*, p. 13; Pamphlet, "Young People in Church Music", p. 7; article, "Junior Choir Organization", *Music Clubs Magazine*, Jan.-Feb. 1932.
3. Cf. "Young People in Church Music", p. 7
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 7
5. Cf. J. F. Williamson, op. cit., and Edith Sackett, op. cit.

on the ground that such small children will have a bad<sup>1</sup> effect on the group as a whole; While Dr. Williamson affirms, on the other hand, that the younger ones will<sup>2</sup> learn much from the older children. In general it would seem that an organization following church school departmental lines is deemed the most practicable.

Some recommended systems of organization include<sup>3</sup> a probation class for prospective choir members. The younger children, as probationers, receive simple teaching which fits them for membership in the choir at the end of a year's training. At the Flemington Children's Choir School the probationers are inducted into the choir at commencement and thereafter wear the surplice as full-<sup>4</sup>fledged choristers.

It is generally agreed, especially in respect to the junior division, that boys and girls will be members of the same choir. The opinion of H. Augustine Smith is an exception to this point of view, for he states very emphatically that two distinct organizations should be maintained. He feels that the "problems of singing, discipline, and repertoire are all so different" that

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1. Cf. E. V. Vosseller, Junior Choirs, p. 7
2. Cf. J. F. Williamson, op. cit.
3. Cf. E. V. Vosseller, Use of a Children's Choir, p. 17; Edith Sackett, op. cit.
4. Cf. E. V. Vosseller, Junior Choirs, p. 26

junior boys and girls cannot be successfully trained together.<sup>1</sup> Miss Edith Sackett advises that boys and girls have one separate rehearsal a week for intensive work, and one rehearsal together.<sup>2</sup>

The intermediate group presents a greater problem, for, as Dr. Williamson says, this is the period at which boys and girls "hate each other and want to love each other". He suggests that the director keep an empty pew or aisle between them at rehearsal.<sup>3</sup> Although in his bulletin on choirs, writing in collaboration with Mary Louise Maxwell, Professor Smith modifies his view to allow junior boys and girls to be in the same choir, he states that in the intermediate period it may be advisable to have separate choirs.<sup>4</sup> Most of the authorities, however, would have both choirs co-educational.

Vocally as well as socially, the intermediate group is difficult. Both Smith and Harper agree that it may be well, even when there have been no entrance tests for the earlier period, to have vocal tests now, especially for those who join the intermediate choir without passing through the training of the junior choir.<sup>5</sup> It is Miss Vosseller's opinion that in organizing a new children's

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1. H. Augustine Smith, *Worship in the Church School*, pp. 113-114
2. Cf. Edith Sackett, *op. cit.*,
3. Cf. J. F. Williamson, *op. cit.*
4. Cf. Smith and Maxwell, *op. cit.*, p. 6
5. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 6, and E. E. Harper, *Church Music and Worship*, p. 149



choir no boys over twelve years old should be admitted "unless they have had special work or are delicate physically, for their voices will soon be changing, and this will be fatal to tone quality."<sup>1</sup> As the younger boys are trained they will learn to use their voices properly and can continue to sing in the choir until they are fifteen or sixteen.<sup>2</sup> On the basis of this it might perhaps be wise not to form a choir of the intermediate age group until one can be organized from a group which has had the experience of the junior choir.

### 3. Setting Up Choir Organization

In a brief discussion of the children's choir, Hugh Hartshorne makes a statement which is significant in its implications for organization and administration. "The choir", he says, "is both a class and a club, and the same methods belong to its management as to the management of these other groups."<sup>3</sup> As a class the choir has the important function of training in music and worship; but as a club it can combine with its more serious aspect a social and recreational side. Dr. Harper suggests that for the junior group periods of play, fellowship, and devotional exercises can well be added to the educational program of the choir, so that it may be the only organization

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1. E. V. Vosseller, Use of a Children's Choir, p. 18

2. Cf. Ibid., p. 18

3. Hugh Hartshorne, Manual for Training in Worship, p. 21

necessary. Such a plan obviates the problem of con-  
 flicting organizations for one group within the church.<sup>1</sup>  
 Although in the case of the older boys and girls it may  
 not be so easy for the choir to provide for all interests,  
 he advises that as far as possible all intermediate  
 activities be correlated and all the intermediates  
 retained in the choir.<sup>2</sup>

The National Federation of Music Clubs, in  
 sponsoring children's choirs, has encouraged them to elect  
 officers and adopt by-laws.<sup>3</sup> The type of organization and  
 the number of officers will naturally be governed by the  
 local situation. A vested choir will need a choir mother,  
 matron, or chairman of robes.<sup>4</sup> In the Flemington choir the  
 senior class is organized and accorded a certain amount of  
 distinction and responsibility. Thus they are trained in  
 leadership for their later service as "Ministers of Song".<sup>5</sup>  
 At the end of the year they are graduated formally into  
 the senior choir.<sup>6</sup>

If a church has a system of graded choirs, though  
 each has its own organization, they should all be federated

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1. Cf. E. E. Harper, Church Music and Worship, p. 144
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 149
3. Cf. Pamphlet, "Young People in Church Music", p. 7
4. Cf. H. A. Smith, Worship in the Church School, p. 106;  
 "Young People in Church Music", p. 7; article, "Junior  
 Choirs", Music Club Magazine, Jan-Feb., 1932
5. Cf. E. V. Vosseller, Junior Choirs, pp. 25-26
6. Cf. E. V. Vosseller, Use of a Children's Choir",  
 pp. 47-48

as a unit.<sup>1</sup> Additional interest is created for the children by association with other children's choirs, as, for example, through membership in the National Federation of Music Clubs.<sup>2</sup> By co-operation, the children's choirs of a community can unite in occasional choir festivals through which both the singers and the auditors may be helped.<sup>3</sup>

For the encouragement of attendance, interest, and good discipline, Miss Vosseller advocates the payment of a small salary which is raised as the child progresses. Absence, tardiness, or misbehavior, on the other hand,<sup>4</sup> brings a fine. The Flemington choir has also a system of awards for attendance and good work, service medals which are worn over the vestments. After graduation the alumnus wears a gold hood to which service stripes are added in recognition of continued service.<sup>5</sup> Most other authorities make no reference to choristers' salary, but both Miss Sackett and Dr. Williamson recommend the adoption of the Flemington system of service awards.<sup>6</sup> If churches favor the plan and desire to adopt it, they are at liberty to do so if they make due acknowledgement of the source of

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1. Cf. article, "Organization of Junior Choirs", Music Clubs Magazine, Jan.-Feb., 1932
2. Cf. Edith Sackett, op. cit.
3. Cf. article "Organization of Junior Choirs"
4. Cf. E. V. Vosseller, op. cit., p. 44
5. Cf. E. V. Vosseller, Junior Choirs, pp. 12, 27
6. Cf. J. F. Williamson, op. cit.; Edith Sackett, op. cit.

the system.<sup>1</sup>

Irregularity of attendance is regarded as sufficient reason to drop members from the roll.<sup>2</sup> Miss Vosseller advises that the child lose his place in the choir after three unexcused absences a month, or continued misconduct in church.<sup>3</sup>

The use of vestments is coming increasingly into favor. "A child just from a bath, clean and fresh", says Professor Smith, "will be in a more virtuous frame of mind than a dirty child playing in the gutter; just so, the child, in a garment used only during a sacred service, will be more in the spirit of reverence than in ordinary dress."<sup>4</sup> In speaking of the use of vestments, Dr. Williamson observes, "A choir should have a personality, but a compound personality."<sup>5</sup> This principle is admirably exemplified in the appearance and singing of his own Westminster Choir. He suggests that the choirs of the church wear different, but harmonizing, shades, which ideally should be chosen to blend with the predominant colors of the church.<sup>6</sup> Though they need not be elaborate, vestments, to be

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1. Cf. J. F. Williamson, op. cit.
2. Cf. E. E. Harper, op. cit., p. 141
3. Cf. E. V. Vosseller, Use of a Children's Choir, p. 46
4. H. A. Smith, Children's Choir in the Non-Liturgic Church, p. 97
5. J. F. Williamson, op. cit.
6. Cf. Ibid.

effective, must be kept clean and in good condition.<sup>1</sup>

#### 4. Financing The Children's Choir

No matter how economically a children's choir is administered, there is some expense involved. Professor Smith suggests that the choristers pay dues, but apparently this is intended chiefly to make the organization seem more businesslike, not to meet all choir expenses.<sup>2</sup> Dr. Harper says very positively that since the children's choir is part of the program of religious education there should be no dues. The choir, he affirms, should be provided for in the church school budget.<sup>3</sup> Miss Vosseller agrees with Dr. Harper that the church budget should include the cost of running the children's choir; yet she holds that it is wise, also, to give the parents an opportunity to subscribe as they feel able.<sup>4</sup> "If the training is paid for, it will be much more appreciated by the church, the parents, and the choristers themselves."<sup>5</sup> Miss Vosseller also recommends that the children's choir gradually build up an endowment to insure the permanent establishment of the organization. Such a project should enlist and hold the interest of the children themselves; for

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1. Cf. E. V. Vosseller, op. cit., pp. 42-43
2. Cf. H. A. Smith, *Worship in the Church School*, p. 106
3. Cf. E. E. Harper, op. cit., p. 138
4. Cf. E. V. Vosseller, pp. 27-28
5. Ibid., p. 28

while their gifts may not be large, they can, by such a device as the coin card, keep adding to the sum.<sup>1</sup>

### 5. Conducting Rehearsals of the Children's Choir

There should be at least one rehearsal a week for the children's choir, and a number of authorities urge that there be more. Miss Sackett would have two for all above the probation class, one for the boys and girls separately, and one for them together.<sup>2</sup> Miss Vosseller is of the opinion that there should be at least two rehearsals a week -- preferably three or more. If the choir does part singing she advises that there be a practice for each part in addition to one or two full rehearsals. These frequent rehearsals, Miss Vosseller believes, should not often be more than half an hour in length.<sup>3</sup> Other writers who do not require so many meetings permit the rehearsal to be as long as an hour if it is broken by a period of relaxation.<sup>4</sup>

The best place for rehearsals is in a room adjoining the church, a place set aside for choir practice. The heating, lighting, and ventilation should be conducive

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1. Cf. Ibid., p. 27
2. Cf. Edith Sackett, op. cit.
3. Cf. Elizabeth Van Fleet Vosseller, Use of a Children's Choir, p. 26
4. Cf. E. E. Harper, op. cit., p. 143; Smith and Maxwell, op. cit., p. 6

to the best work. A piano kept in tune is preferable to an organ for rehearsal. The leader may find a blackboard another useful piece of equipment. All the features of the room should be cheerful and yet businesslike, befitting<sup>1</sup> the nature of the rehearsal period.

Miss Vosseller recommends that if possible the rehearsals be conducted in the morning, before school, from<sup>2</sup> eight to eight-thirty, while the children are fresh.

Professor Smith would have the choir practice in the after-<sup>3</sup>noon directly after school. Dr. Harper says, "The best time to conduct a rehearsal of the Junior Choir is in the afternoon, immediately after school, unless a morning hour<sup>4</sup> before school time, or on Saturday can be arranged."

Whatever is the time selected, it should be rigidly adhered<sup>5</sup> to, and the director must be both prompt and regular.

If the choir is to realize the desired results, there can be no haphazard procedure in rehearsals. The director must set general objectives for the year, and form a definite plan for each month, each week, and each rehearsal. Good pedagogy is as essential as good musicianship

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1. Cf. E. V. Vosseller, op. cit., pp. 27-28; H. A. Smith Worship in the Church School, p. 107
2. Cf. E. V. Vosseller, op. cit., p. 26
3. Cf. H. A. Smith, op. cit., p. 107; Smith and Maxwell, op. cit., p. 6
4. E. E. Harper, op. cit., p. 143
5. Cf. H. A. Smith, op. cit., p. 107

in training the children's choir; and good pedagogy demands that the teacher have a plan, though he must not allow himself to be bound by it.<sup>1</sup>

It is necessary to keep a record of attendance; but the waste of time involved in calling the roll may be avoided if an assistance, for example, the assistant<sup>2</sup>, marks the record while the children are occupied with vocal exercises. "Never begin a rehearsal", says Miss Vosseller,<sup>3</sup> "without tuning up the choristers with vocal exercises." Miss Sackett advises five to ten minutes' simple tone work, preceded by physical exercise.<sup>4</sup> Dr. Harper and Professor Smith suggest that it may be well to have a recess in the middle of the period for rest and free movement, perhaps combined with story-telling.<sup>5</sup> For the younger children, Dr. Williamson recommends that throughout the rehearsal there be periods of relaxation and stretching, allowing about two minutes relaxation to four minutes work. These breaks can be utilized in such ways as tapping the rhythmic pattern of a song.<sup>6</sup>

Miss Vosseller emphasizes the importance of

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1. Cf. E. V. Vosseller, *Junior Choirs*, pp. 9-11
2. Cf. E. V. Vosseller, *op. cit.*, p. 8
3. E. V. Vosseller, *Music for Junior Choirs*, p. 6
4. Cf. Edith Sackett, *op. cit.*
5. Cf. Smith and Maxwell, *op. cit.*, p. 6; E. E. Harper, *op. cit.*, p. 143
6. Cf. J. F. Williamson, *op. cit.*



conducting the rehearsal in an orderly manner:

"Each number must have an introduction and be in some way connected with what has gone before; each bit of material must be summarized, and all the loose ends drawn together. This connection in teaching is like the modulation of keys from one number to another, and stands for unity of thought."<sup>1</sup>

The leader, she says, must avoid talking too<sup>2</sup> much, but, instead, must keep the choristers occupied.

This same principle obtains in matters of discipline; as Miss Sackett observes, "The less I talked, the better order I had."<sup>3</sup> Discipline will not be a problem, Dr. Williamson<sup>4</sup> declares, if the children are kept busy and interested.

To make the most of rehearsals, says Professor Smith, "nothing but the most masterful command of all resources of time, place, repertoire, and personnel will suffice."<sup>5</sup>

### C. Leadership of Children's Choirs

The director of the children's choir may be, and<sup>6</sup> very often is, the music director of the church. In this case he should have special training, in addition to his

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1. E. V. Vosseller, op. cit., p. 8
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 10
3. Cf. Edith Sackett, op. cit.
4. Cf. J. F. Williamson, op. cit.
5. H. A. Smith, *Worship in the Church School*, p. 107
6. Cf. E. V. Vosseller, *Use of a Children's Choir*, p. 12;  
E. E. Harper, op. cit., p. 67

other musical training, in the treatment of children's voices.<sup>1</sup>  
 However, it may be deemed advisable for an assistant to  
 take charge of the children's choir, though the choir  
 director should still have it under his general supervision.<sup>2</sup>  
 It is held by some authorities that women are better fitted  
 for the direction of children's choirs than men though some  
 men have been successful.<sup>3</sup> Dr. Harper suggests that a teacher  
 of music or a music student who has the necessary qualifi-  
 cations, may be glad to use his knowledge for the benefit  
 of the church and derive helpful experience for himself.<sup>4</sup>

The choice of a director is of paramount importance  
 to a choir. "Good or bad singing," says Dr. Williamson,  
 "depends entirely upon the conductor and his knowledge of  
 choral and baton technique, granted that he is a person  
 of personality, leadership and musicianship."<sup>5</sup> In addition  
 to having as broad a musical background as possible, the  
 director should be possessed with special ability to deal  
 with children's voices.<sup>6</sup> Ideally, says Professor Smith, the  
 leader will be a soprano who will teach the children "to  
 sing well by actual example of tone, phrasing, diction,

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1. Cf. E. E. Harper, op. cit., p. 67
2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 139-140
3. Cf. H. A. Smith, op. cit., p. 106; E. V. Vosseller, op. cit., p. 12
4. Cf. E. E. Harper, op. cit., pp. 139-140
5. J. F. Williamson, Vocal Technique for the Conductor, p. 1
6. Cf. E. E. Harper, op. cit., p. 67

and spiritual insight."<sup>1</sup> The leader must cultivate a light  
voice and avoid heavy resonance.<sup>2</sup>

"If the vocal director is a man," says Miss Vosseller, "then it is imperative that he develop the upper register of his voice from E below middle C to E above it, in order that he may set the pitch of any song so that it will match the natural register of the children's voices. And in any case, his or her voice should be smoothed out with persistent and correct humming, and a proper use of 'loo!' so that a good example of pure tone can be given at any time."<sup>3</sup>

It is Dr. Williamson's opinion that a man in training a  
children's choir should use his falsetto voice.<sup>4</sup>

It is not enough that the leader be a musician; he must be a teacher as well. Many directors who have had real knowledge and appreciation of music have failed at this point.<sup>5</sup> Yet it need not be so; as Miss Vosseller declares,

"To the musician who is successful, the art of teaching becomes just as much a delight as the art of playing the organ or conducting a chorus. To be able to draw out the chorister and awaken in him a new zeal for his work is just as fascinating as the finished result."<sup>6</sup>

Among the personal qualifications which the children's choir director should possess are, according to Miss Sackett, "unbounded enthusiasm and belief in junior choirs, great love for children, and a willingness and capacity for work."<sup>7</sup> The leader should have, in addition

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1. H. A. Smith, op. cit., p. 106
2. Cf. J. F. Williamson, lecture, "Choir Organization"
3. E. V. Vosseller, Chapter IV in R. L. McAll, Practical Church School Music, p. 72
4. Cf. J. F. Williamson, op. cit.
5. Cf. E. V. Vosseller, Junior Choirs, pp. 9-10
6. E. V. Vosseller, Junior Choirs, p. 10
7. Edith Sackett, op. cit.

to these qualities, patience, tact, sympathy, a character that inspires respect,<sup>1</sup> and "a smile that wins."<sup>2</sup> By no means the least important consideration is the motive of service. The director must have, says Dr. Harper, "a Christian consciousness of desire to minister to the lives of the children rather than to develop choice musical programs for public presentation."<sup>3</sup>

It must not be forgotten that there is included in the program not only the training of choirs, but also the training of the children of the church. This fact involves the pastor and the church school workers in the matter of leadership. They should occasionally attend rehearsals, take an interest in the work, and in every way possible support the choir activities.<sup>4</sup> Especially in the case of the intermediate age group, says Dr. Williamson, should the minister attend the rehearsals, for at this age of idealization the boys and girls should learn to love and respect him.<sup>5</sup>

By the selection of the right director and the

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1. Cf. E. V. Vosseller, Use of a Children's Choir, p. 12
2. J. F. Williamson, op. cit.
3. E. E. Harper, op. cit., p. 140
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 140
5. Cf. J. F. Williamson, op. cit.

co-operation of the leadership of the church, the success and usefulness of the children's choir will be largely determined.

#### D. The Use of the Children's Choir

The purpose for which many of the earliest children's choirs were organized, and for which many are still maintained, is to lead the singing in the church school worship periods.<sup>1</sup> Junior and Intermediate choirs, when both are organized, can take part in the worship services of their respective departments. They should also be available for any special service of the church school, particularly since their organization forms part of the religious education program.<sup>2</sup>

However, the singing of the children's choir should not be confined to the church school sessions, for there should be, in the opinion of most authorities, occasions on which the children sing in the church service. This need not interfere with their singing in the Sunday school; it should rather give it additional interest and impetus.<sup>3</sup> Authorities are in some disagreement about the manner and frequency with which the children should take part in the church service. Professor Smith proposes that

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1. Cf. above, p.22

2. Cf. E. E. Harper, op. cit., p. 133

3. Cf. H. A. Smith, op. cit., pp. 109-110

the children's choir function with the adult choir,<sup>1</sup> while both Harper and Williamson would have the children take the place of the adults in the choir loft, to lead the singing and provide the choral numbers.<sup>2</sup> The choir which Miss Sackett conducted until recently in New York City was accustomed to sing every Sunday.<sup>3</sup> The Flemington Choirs, on the other<sup>4</sup> hand, take the place of the senior choirs once a month. Participation once a month is advised also by both Williamson<sup>5</sup> and Smith.

When the children act as choir for the church service, they are not to be the center of attention, but to fit into the worship.<sup>6</sup> The service should be made clear to the choristers beforehand,<sup>7</sup> and a standard of reverent behavior maintained.<sup>8</sup> The worship should be "dignified, churchly, devotional, and spiritual,"<sup>9</sup> that through it both choir and congregation may be uplifted. Miss Sackett urges that the choristers remain for the entire service, not

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1. Cf. H. A. Smith, op. cit., p. 109
2. Cf. J. F. Williamson, op. cit.; E. E. Harper, op. cit., p. 152
3. Cf. Edith Sackett, op. cit.
4. Cf. E. V. Vosseller, Junior Choirs, p. 11
5. Cf. J. F. Williamson, op. cit.; H. A. Smith, op. cit., p. 109
6. Cf. J. F. Williamson, op. cit.
7. Cf. E. E. Harper, op. cit., p. 152
8. Cf. E. V. Vosseller, Use of a Children's Choir, p. 36
9. Ibid., p. 33

leaving as some choirs do at the end of a children's sermon.<sup>1</sup>  
 The most effective results are attained when the minister and the director work together, planning a unified service. The sermon should be one, Dr. Williamson, states, of which the psychology demands the child voice as a medium for the attendant music.<sup>2</sup>

The children's choir, as well as the other choirs of the church, can prepare secular programs which may be a great contribution to the social activities of the church. The choirs of the church can have a very important place in church life, and should be ready to co-operate with the other organizations.<sup>3</sup>

One of the most inspiring uses of the children's choir is its singing in conjunction with the adult choir. The intermediate group especially, says Dr. Williamson, can be used to sing solo parts with the adults, and this choir should be used to sing solo passages more often than any adult soloist.<sup>4</sup> "On festival and special days," suggests Professor Smith, "why not a glorious ensemble, with all the choirs in a stirring procession!"<sup>5</sup> On such occasions all ages can thus join together in a great and inspiring

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1. Cf. Edith Sackett, op. cit.

2. Cf. J. F. Williamson, op. cit.

3. Cf. Smith and Maxwell, op. cit., pp. 12-13; E. E. Harper, op. cit., p. 146

4. Cf. Williamson, op. cit.

5. Smith and Maxwell, op. cit., p. 12

service of praise.

### E. Content of Training

#### 1. Scope of Instruction

As may be expected the primary instruction given the choir will be in music. There will be simple training in correct and artistic use of the voice, and in both unison and part ensemble singing.<sup>1</sup> In the opinion of most authorities the technical instruction should include practice in sight reading.<sup>2</sup> Miss Sackett advises the conducting of a sight reading class if this is possible. Even if it is not, she believes that the children can learn to follow the notes as they practice their anthems, and that if they have the music in their hands they will be more interested.<sup>3</sup> Dr. Williamson, however, states that the younger children should be taught only by rote, learning through the ear before the eyes are confused with the mysteries of notation.<sup>4</sup> In this he is in agreement with the educational theory of Dr. Surette, who says that young children first "need the experience of music itself not only as a basis for notation but as a natural method of expression and a natural means of happiness."<sup>5</sup> Obviously the children's choir cannot devote

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1. Cf. Smith and Maxwell, op. cit., p. 6
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 6; E. V. Vosseller, op. cit., p. 28; E. E. Harper, op. cit., p. 144
3. Cf. Edith Sackett, letter to the present writer under date of April 5, 1934
4. Cf. J. F. Williamson, op. cit.
5. T. W. Surette, Creative Expression, Hartman and Shumaker, editors, p. 71



the time to sight reading which public schools commonly give.

In addition to this technical training there should be guidance in music appreciation and a growing familiarity with the great sacred music. This is brought about by learning choral numbers for singing, and by studying other music from phonographic reproductions and the playing of the pianist.<sup>1</sup> The values to the children from this type of training are in "familiarizing them with the music and affording an opportunity to teach them the mood and spirit in which they should listen to it."<sup>2</sup>

However, the program of the children's choir should include, as well as musical instruction, explanation of the meaning of worship and of the worship forms of the church.<sup>3</sup> It is quite proper, also, to include such devotional experiences as the study of suitable pictures,<sup>4</sup> and the telling of well chosen stories.<sup>5</sup> Throughout all its activities, as class and as club, the children's choir should have an emphasis on Christian life and conduct in keeping with its place in the program of religious education.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Cf. E. E. Harper, op. cit., pp. 145-146
2. E. E. Harper, op. cit., p. 146
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 142
4. Cf. Ibid., pp. 143-146
5. Cf. Ibid., p. 143
6. Cf. Ibid., p. 142

## 2. Repertoire

A number of lists of children's choir music recommended in the various sources studied may be found in the appendix.<sup>1</sup> This section of the chapter will not name specific anthems for choir use, but will instead discuss general principles of selection.

Frederick Wodell points out the fact that in choosing music for children their lack of maturity, physically, intellectually, and emotionally, must be taken into account. No matter how large a group of children may be assembled, their voices cannot have the richness and power of the adult voice; and they cannot be expected to grasp or express adult ideas and emotions.<sup>2</sup> "As one does not require the pony to carry the load of the full grown horse," he says, "so the child voice cannot reasonably be asked to cope with the type of music written for adults, or to engage in forceful, dramatic, passionate singing."<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, there is danger of erring in teaching the children unworthy music. Miss Vosseller stresses the principle that music given to children's choirs need not be entirely within their present intellectual comprehension, but may allow for growth of ideas and appreciation.<sup>4</sup> Dr. Davison, in his recent book on church

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1. See Appendix

2. Cf. F. W. Wodell, "The Proper Training and Use of the Voice of Persons of School Age," *The Etude*, September, 1929, p. 678

3. *Ibid.*, p. 678

4. Cf. E. V. Vosseller, *Use of a Children's Choir*, pp. 40-41

music, inveighs vigorously against the "musical all day 'suckers'"<sup>1</sup> so commonly used in Sunday school singing.

The theory that a child's musical receptivity "is limited to the trivial and immediately attractive"<sup>2</sup>, is, he holds,<sup>3</sup> a mistake and invidious notion.

The hymn book, says Dr. Williamson, is the child's first anthem book. He advises starting a program of memorizing one hymn a week and following a rotating system<sup>4</sup> by which these hymns can be used when they are learned. Miss Vosseller states that a children's choir should learn at least fifty hymns in a season.<sup>5</sup> Naturally the selection of the hymn book is very important. Dr. Harper observes that there is little excuse for a church to select any but a good hymnal from the large number of excellent ones<sup>6</sup> recently published.

The children's choir will start with unison singing and go gradually to two-part music.<sup>7</sup> Dr. Harper thinks that throughout the junior age the children should continue to sing in unison;<sup>8</sup> Miss Sackett says that at the end of the first eight weeks they can go to two-part music;<sup>9</sup>

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1. A. T. Davison, Protestant Church Music in America, p. 22
2. Ibid., p. 21
3. Cf. Ibid., pp. 20-26
4. Cf. J. F. Williamson, op. cit.
5. Cf. E. V. Vosseller, Junior Choirs, p. 22
6. Cf. E. E. Harper, Progress of Church Music, p. 15
7. Cf. J. F. Williamson, op. cit.
8. Cf. E. E. Harper, Church Music and Worship, p. 151
9. Cf. Edith Sackett, Notes on lecture, Junior Choirs "

Miss Vosseller advises unison singing the first year, two-part the second, and three-part the third.<sup>1</sup> In the latter part of the first year Miss Vosseller would introduce descant singing, in which the older choristers should take the lower part.<sup>2</sup>

Many anthems are adapted to antiphonal singing of the adult and children's choirs. On occasions when this type of singing is used, the children usually sing in unison against the part singing of the adults, or they sing the solo passages in unison.<sup>3</sup>

Miss Vosseller encourages the use of canticles with the children's choir. Most hymnals have a number of these in the back of the book in chant form; but lyric forms of the canticles are available, and may be easier to sing at first.<sup>4</sup>

If, as Dr. Williamson advises, the children are taught by rote, only one copy of the music for the director will be needed.<sup>5</sup> If, however, the children are to read the music, there should be a copy for each child.<sup>6</sup> All the music should be kept in good condition, every copy in a manila cover which can be replaced when it is worn.<sup>7</sup> Dr. Harper

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1. Cf. E. V. Vosseller, *Junior Choir Music*, pp. 3-4
2. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 3
3. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 5
4. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 6
5. Cf. J. F. Williamson, *op. cit.*
6. Cf. H. A. Smith, *Worship in the Church School*, p. 107
7. Cf. E. V. Vosseller, *op. cit.*, p. 4

suggests the use of anthem books for children's choirs on the ground of economy.<sup>1</sup> Miss Vosseller, on the other hand, declares that the children grow tired of a book, even though they may not have sung all the numbers it contains;<sup>2</sup> while Dr. Williamson's objection to the use of junior anthem books is that most of them contain only adult anthems transposed, and therefore are not suitable for children's choirs.<sup>3</sup>

The children's choir, says Dr. Davison, "may be an important addition to church music education provided the music be of uniformly high quality."<sup>4</sup> Much depends upon the wise and discriminating selection of repertoire.

#### F. Method of Choral Training

##### 1. The Child Voice

Much of the so-called singing of children is, in reality, only yelling, and should not be tolerated simply because of the attractiveness of the singers. Well meaning superintendents who urge the group to "sing louder" unconsciously do great harm to the children and fail to achieve anything more commendable than vigor as a result.<sup>5</sup>

Children's voices, properly used, have the flute-like quality which is heard in the tone of a well trained

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1. Cf. E. E. Harper, Church Music and Worship, p. 153
2. Cf. E. V. Vosseller, Junior Choirs, p. 21
3. Cf. J. F. Williamson, op. cit.
4. A. T. Davison, op. cit., p. 20, footnote.
5. Cf. E. E. Harper, op. cit., p. 147

boy choir. Their singing lacks the variety of tonal color which adult sopranos possess. "They represent what might be called an organ of one stop," says Professor Wodell, "and that a flute of high pitch."<sup>1</sup> Authorities on child voice training are agreed that the first principle of correct singing for children is that they sing lightly. This is commonly called, in vocal parlance, using the "head register" instead of the "chest register"; or the "thin" rather than the "thick" register, as Curwen describes it, for in one case the whole vocal cords vibrate, while in the other case only the thin edges produce the tone.<sup>2</sup> In the upper part of the voice range the child naturally uses this quality.<sup>3</sup> The problem which confronts choir directors is that of training children who habitually use loud, rough tones, to sing throughout their range with the desired lightness and sweetness. Particularly is this a problem in the case of the boy who naturally shouts a great deal at play and "sells newspapers in a man's voice".<sup>4</sup>

Nevertheless, if the boy's voice is gruffer than the girl's in the junior age, it is an acquired, not a natural difference. Anatomically the structure of the larynxes are alike until the boy and the girl near adolescence.<sup>5</sup> Children's voices do not differ in tone

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1. F. W. Wodell, op. cit., p. 678
2. Cf. J. S. Curwen, op. cit., p. 113
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 314
4. H. A. Smith, op. cit., p. 113
5. Cf. H. E. Howard, op. cit., p. 19

quality as adult voices do, and when properly used, they<sup>1</sup> blend perfectly.

The child voice is usually high rather than low. The range of singing for little children should be restricted, avoiding low notes particularly. They should sing no higher than  $\bar{f}$  and no lower than  $\bar{e}$ . As the child voice grows in strength the compass may be extended up and down, though<sup>2</sup> the voice must never be forced. If the child sings properly,<sup>3</sup> a is usually easy. Boys' voices in the years just before adolescence may, if trained, have a wide range and great<sup>4</sup> power and beauty.

With approaching adolescence, there is a change in the child's voice. Though the larynx does not grow in size from the age of six to the teen age period, the increasing power of the voice is caused by an increasing strength of vocal cartilage and muscle. The change in the voice of the adolescent is brought about by the growth of the larynx. The girl's larynx grows in the proportion five to seven, and the boy's in the proportion five to ten.<sup>5</sup> The treatment of these maturing voices forms a special problem in the intermediate choir. "The child's voice is a

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1. Cf. F. E. Howard, op. cit., p. 19
2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 72-80
3. Cf. J. F. Williamson, op. cit.
4. Cf. E. V. Vosseller, Use of a Children's Choir, p. 22
5. Cf. F. E. Howard, op. cit., p. 22

delicate instrument," says Howard. "It should not be<sup>1</sup> played upon by every blacksmith".

## 2. Training the Junior Choir

The salient points in good tone production for children, agreed upon by authorities in training children's voices, are: good posture, free, natural breathing, open throat and relaxed jaw, and a soft, light voice. The simplest way of getting these conditions will be the best. For good posture, says Dr. Williamson, tell the children to sit and stand as tall as possible, and above all, let the director set a good example.<sup>2</sup> This good posture is essential to freedom in breathing.<sup>3</sup> Breath in singing is taken as in ordinary respiration without lifting of the shoulders or stiffening anywhere.<sup>4</sup> A relaxed, movable jaw, declares Howard,<sup>5</sup> "is a first requisite for good tone formation."

"With regard to securing a natural, unconscious production of 'Head voice', " says Professor Wodell, "essentials are: 'Singer's position'; a smiling, happy child; the feeling on the part of the child that singing is a pleasure, is play, not a task; every exercise to be the expression of something normal to the happy, interested child; absence of rigidity throughout the body."<sup>6</sup>

This simplicity and naturalness are very important. Dr.

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1. Ibid., p. 43

2. Cf. Williamson, op. cit.

3. Cf. G. E. Stubbs, op. cit., p. 50

4. Cf. H. E. Howard, op. cit., p. 85

5. Ibid., p. 92

6. F. W. Wodell, Choir and Chorus Conducting, p. 180



Williamson's advice is, "Never teach voice to children,"<sup>1</sup>  
 Instead he stresses the important principle that the  
 director in all points of vocal technique, set an example<sup>2</sup>  
 for the children consciously or unconsciously to imitate.  
 "The secret of success with children's choirs," says Miss  
 Sackett, "is that they sing naturally and simply and without  
 being conscious that singing is an art."<sup>3</sup>

The tone quality to be sought is that obtained by  
 singing the vowel "oo" with round, relaxed lips.<sup>4</sup> The tone  
 in all singing, particularly with younger groups, should<sup>5</sup>  
 be matched with this quality. Dawson writes, "The use of  
 "oo" acts as a lubricant on the throat and permits the tone  
 to flow easily."<sup>6</sup>

Since the use of the light voice is natural on  
 high notes, it is important to sing scales downward,  
 carrying down the desired quality.<sup>7</sup> Vocal exercises for  
 young children can often be made into tone plays. For instance,  
 they may pull an imaginary rope and sing "ding  
 dong",<sup>8</sup> to develop resonance, have "bee songs" for humming

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1. Williamson, op. cit.
2. Cf. Ibid
3. Cf. Edith Sackett, letter to present writer, under date of April 5, 1934
4. Cf. E. V. Vosseller, Junior Choirs, p. 16
5. Cf. Ibid., p. 14
6. J. J. Dawson, The Voice of the Boy, p. 29
7. Cf. J. Bates, op. cit., pp. 17-19
8. Cf. E. V. Vosseller, "The Boy Voice from Nine to Nineteen", American Organist, June, 1922, p. 225

exercises,<sup>1</sup> or imitate a siren in the event that they have the tendency to monotone.<sup>2</sup> Wodell says, "all technical work in voice culture and singing with children is best disguised under some form of 'play'".<sup>3</sup>

In singing as well as in speaking, diction is most important, that the words may be both understandable and beautiful. After good tone is established, Miss Vosseller says, clear diction must be obtained.<sup>4</sup> In achieving this, it is well to consider Dr. Stubbs' principle that "choristers learn pronunciation more readily by imitation than by rule."<sup>5</sup> As Dr. Williamson observes, if the director talks much about diction to children they will unconsciously exaggerate.<sup>6</sup>

In the junior age the children sing unison songs first; then, according to most authorities, they should sing second soprano in order to make them independent in carrying an under part. This second part should not be too low.<sup>7</sup> Miss Vosseller has the younger children sing first soprano the first two years they are in the choir

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1. Cf. F. W. Wodell, "The Proper Training and Use of the Voice of Persons of School Age", *The Etude*, September, 1929, p. 678
2. Cf. Edith Sackett, Notes on lecture, "Junior Choirs"
4. Cf. E. V. Vosseller, *Junior Choirs*, pp. 14-15
3. F. W. Wodell, op. cit., p. 678
5. G. E. Stubbs, op. cit., p. 62
6. Cf. J. F. Williamson, op. cit.
7. Cf. G. E. Stubbs, op. cit., p. 82; F. W. Wodell, *Choir and Chorus Conducting*, p. 172

school, and second soprano the second two.<sup>1</sup>

The treatment of monotones will be a problem for the director. Little children who sing under pitch are not necessarily monotones; and they may, if given an opportunity to listen to the others and practice simple tone plays, learn to sing on pitch.<sup>2</sup> Many children sing monotone because their throats are weak and they have been accustomed to singing with a forced tone. If they are trained to sing lightly they will probably sing in tune.<sup>3</sup> Sharp singing is commonly caused by forcing the voice; flat singing, by using the heavy, chest tone. The preventive for both is the use of the light head voice.<sup>4</sup> Since most children who sing off pitch or on a monotone do so because of unmusical background, not from any actual handicap of hearing, patient training usually provides the cure.<sup>5</sup>

The choir should do some unaccompanied singing at every rehearsal.<sup>6</sup> The director should not sing with the group but lead silently, singing only for illustration or to teach a song.<sup>7</sup>

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1. Cf. E. V. Vosseller, *Use of the Children's Choir*, p. 22
2. Cf. F. W. Wodell, *op. cit.*, p. 184
3. Cf. F. E. Howard, *op. cit.*, p. 135
4. Cf. J. Bates, *op. cit.*, pp. 59-61
5. Cf. E. V. Vosseller, *op. cit.*, p. 30
6. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 62; F. E. Howard, *op. cit.*, p. 187; J. F. Williamson, *op. cit.*
7. Cf. F. E. Howard, *op. cit.*, p. 53; E. V. Vosseller, *op. cit.*, p. 31

In conducting a choir, says Dr. Williamson, the task of the director is three-fold. He must secure the desired free, vital tone, build phrases with this tone, and make each phrase "glow with that emotional fire that lends the final touch to artistry."<sup>1</sup> When he is conducting "his posture, arm, wrist and hand movement must radiate physical vitality and coordinated control."<sup>2</sup> to produce the desired results. Artistic and emotional shadings are controlled by his phrasing and his facial expression.<sup>3</sup> In directing children, Dr. Williamson states, the effective leader needs "quiet motions, a calming voice, an inspiring eye, and a smile that wins."<sup>4</sup> Miss Sackett is opposed to conducting the choir during a church service. In a concert program it may be necessary but even then it should be done as quietly as possible in order that it may not detract from the effect of the music.<sup>5</sup>

Throughout their training the children should be taught to sing with appreciation of the meaning and mood of the music. "Beauty of tone improves along with the growth of thought and feeling,"<sup>6</sup> says Francis E. Howard. James Bates adds, "It is part of the charm of young voices

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1. J. F. Williamson, Vocal Technique for the Conductor, p.1
2. J. F. Williamson, Ibid., p. 1
3. Cf. Ibid., pp. 1-2
4. J. F. Williamson, Lecture, Choir Organization
6. F. E. Howard, op. cit., p. 94
5. Cf. Edith Sackett, Letter to present writer, under date of April 5, 1934

that there are living boys and girls behind them, and when they sing not only correctly but intelligently there is no music on earth to equal them."<sup>1</sup>

### 3. Training the Intermediate Choir

Much of what has been said of the younger group applies equally to the intermediate choir. The great consideration with this age is the treatment of the changing adolescent voice.

Mutation of the girl's voice comes earlier than that of the boy's and is not so radical a change.<sup>2</sup> The voice increases in volume, particularly on lower tones.<sup>3</sup> Miss Vosseller's method of treatment is to have the girls, prior to this period, sing soprano for two years and second soprano for two. Then, unless the maturing voice is naturally low, the girls will sing soprano again, providing the main soprano section of the choir.<sup>4</sup> After four years training a girl's voice "will be clear and sweet, and of a floating quality, while her high notes will sparkle with brilliance."<sup>5</sup> The voice, however, is not yet mature,<sup>6</sup> and care must be taken not to strain its developing powers.

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1. J. Bates, op. cit., p. 54
2. Cf. F. E. Howard, op. cit., p. 122
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 113
4. Cf. E. V. Vosseller, op. cit., pp. 22-23
5. Ibid., p. 23
6. Cf. Ibid., p. 23; F. E. Howard, op. cit., pp. 113-114

The problem in the case of the boy's voice is greater. A number of writers advise strongly against the boy's singing at all during the period of mutation.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand,<sup>2</sup> an increasingly large group of authorities hold that it is desirable to train the boys as they grow older gradually to sing the lower parts, so that there need be no "break" in the voice. This system is practiced at the Flemington Choir School, and Miss Vosseller states that in all her experience there every boy was helped rather than injured by continuing to sing throughout the period of change. It is necessary, she feels, that a boy should persist in the use of his vocal powers, exercising them carefully, of course, in order that they may not be<sup>3</sup> partially lost through disuse.

Miss Vosseller gives credit for her method to John J. Dawson,<sup>4</sup> who has set forth his theories in a book entitled, *The Voice of the Boy*. In childhood, or from five to ten, he would have the boy sing soprano, cultivating the vowel "oo" quality and practicing particularly in the upper part of the voice. During boyhood, from ten to fifteen, the voice should be gradually and gently trained down, so that at about fifteen the boy can sing tenor or bass. With such

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1. Cf. J. Bates, op. cit., pp. 66-67; Stubbs, op. cit., pp. 76-77
2. Cf. J. F. Williamson, op. cit.: He states that this is the method of the choir at Leipsig, and "public schools are fast accepting the standards of Leipsig."
3. Cf. E. V. Vosseller, "The Boy Voice", *American Organist*, May, 1922, pp. 173-174
4. Cf. E. V. Vosseller, *Use of a Children's Choir*, p. 21

treatment, Dawson affirms, there will be a gradual change<sup>1</sup>  
eliminating the break.

In Miss Vosseller's choir the younger boys, like the younger girls, sing first soprano for two years and second for two. With this preliminary training their voices<sup>2</sup> are smooth, sweet, and flexible. The physical development of the child will determine the age at which to cultivate the alto voice but by thirteen or fourteen he should have a rich contralto quality.<sup>3</sup> A boy's range at this period is sometimes nearly three octaves, and he<sup>4</sup> can do a soprano solo with great ease and brilliance, when he is capable of notes lower than a woman."<sup>4</sup> The alto voice must not be permitted<sup>5</sup> to become gruff, but must be kept clear and flowing.

As the boy grows older he will be able to pass from alto to tenor. He must be careful to use his voice lightly, and on the high notes he must continue to use his boy voice. He should not, says Miss Vosseller, use his man's voice above c or d until he is seventeen. The boy voice will<sup>6</sup> remain with him in after years as his falsetto.

During the intermediate age period the voices of

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1. Cf. J. J. Dawson, op. cit., pp. 28-31
2. Cf. E. V. Vosseller, op. cit., p. 22
3. Cf. E. V. Vosseller, "The Boy Voice", American Organist, November 1922
4. V. E. Vosseller, Use of a Children's Choir, p. 22
5. Cf. V. E. Vosseller, "The Boy Voice", American Organist, November, 1922, p. 488
6. Cf. V. E. Vosseller, op. cit., January, 1923

boys and girls will only begin to mature, but it is important that the adult voice be considered in training the adolescent singer.

#### G. Summary

This chapter has dealt with an analysis of the basic studies of the children's choir, organizing from the various sources on the subject a composite exposition of major considerations in the organization and conduct of these choirs. Where there were differences of opinion the conflicting points of view were presented. The findings may be summarized as follows:

- In the organization and administration of the children's choir important points to be emphasized are the well planned inauguration of the choir; suitable grading according to age groups; simple but adequate organization of the choir in consideration of its functions as class and club; sufficient financial support; and rehearsals conducted on pedagogical principles.

The leader is to be selected on the basis of musical and educational abilities and personal qualifications. The leadership of the church must co-operate also, if the choir is to reach its highest usefulness.

The children's choir may take part in the worship services of the church school and in the church service, sometimes alone, sometimes in conjunction with the other choirs. The choirs of the church are to be available, too,



for participation in the social program of the congregation.

In the program of instruction the choir includes the study of sacred music for both technical performance and appreciation, and training in worship and Christian living. The music selected for use with the children's choir is to be chosen with care, in order that it may not be either unsuited to the immaturity of the children or unworthy of their potential ability and taste. Unison music is first used, followed in time by two- and three part numbers.

It is most important to exercise care in training the children in singing. With the younger children especially a light quality of voice is the chief consideration. The singing of adolescents, particularly the boys, presents special problems; but these can be overcome by wise teaching. In his training the director should develop the ability in the children's choir to sing beautifully and with expression.

CHAPTER V  
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

#### A. Problem and Procedure Re-stated

The problem of this investigation has been to ascertain the place of children's choirs in Christian education through an examination of the history, the value-outcomes, and the program of children's choir work.

It was revealed by a study of the historical development of children's choirs that its progress especially in recent years has been the result mainly of the desire on the part of religious educators to provide for the children training in worship and participation in church life. The movement has been stimulated, also, by widespread interest in choral music, particularly in the public schools and colleges.

The fact that the children's choir has an important contribution to make to the life of both the church and children was shown by an examination of value-outcomes which should result from this program. The children's choir program should affect the music and worship of the church as well as benefit its membership. It should give the children an important means of musical expression, and prove a valuable factor in their Christian education.

An analysis of the basic studies of the children's choir revealed the considerations essential to conducting a successful choir program which findings were classified under organization and administration, leadership, use, and content and method of training.

#### B. Implications of Findings

The implications which arise from the present study may be summarized as follows:

1. The children's choir movement has grown up in response to a felt need. Pioneers in the field initiated the early organizations to help solve problems of worship. Through the use of worthy music and training in the art of worship, they sought to give real devotional meaning to church services. The need for making worship a reality has been largely responsible for the spread of children's choirs.

2. The development of children's choirs has been rapid. Since the earliest organizations at the end of the last century, emphases of religious education and musical trends outside the church have contributed to this growth. The organization of these choirs has been encouraged and popularized by the sponsoring of the National Federation of Music Clubs and other musical bodies. An example of this increasing interest in children's choirs is recorded in a recent article in the New York Times, in which the

correspondent writes of a choral revival throughout New Jersey brought about by the influence of the Westminster Choir School, Princeton. The development of children's choirs, is, he states, an important factor in the movement. This year the Westminster Junior Choir School has joined the Flemington Children's Choir School in promoting the choral training for boys and girls in New Jersey.<sup>1</sup>

3. There is need of more literature in this field to guide inexperienced leaders in inaugurating and conducting children's choirs. The only book to be found which deals exclusively with the problems of these choirs is a small volume by Miss Vosseller, entitled, *The Use of a Children's Choir in the Church*. It was first published in 1907 and is now out of print. Miss Vosseller has supplemented this book by numerous magazine articles and a twenty-eight page pamphlet, *Junior Choirs, Helps and Suggestions*. A few chapters and paragraphs on the subject in general books on church music, occasional articles in magazines, and a few references in books on religious education comprise the remainder of the literature which specifically treats children's choirs.

4. The use of suitable music with children's choirs is most important. Much that is offered for children's singing is either too trivial or too difficult in both words

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1. Cf. Frank Kane, Jr.: "New Jersey turns to Choral Singing," *New York Times*, April 8, 1934, Section 4, p. 6

and music. Although there is a wide field for selection from sacred music literature in hymns, carols, and anthems careful discrimination is necessary to choose those numbers which stand the test of fitness for children's choirs. There is need for music written especially for the use of these choirs. Horace Hollister, director of children's and young people's choirs of the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York, expressed the opinion to the writer that as the children's choir movement continued to develop, composers increasingly write for this purpose. He added, however, that to compose music suited to the children's choir will require combined musical ability and understanding of children.

5. Musically and pedagogically sound methods are of great importance. Even though excellent material is used, unless the teaching is equally good the desired results cannot be expected. Unskillful management of the child voice may injure it permanently instead of conserving it. Similarly the child may be harmed spiritually by careless treatment of worship materials. The effects of inferior method will breed dissatisfaction on the part of the children and on the part of the church.

6. Many questions of administration, organization, and program can be solved best by the dictates of local conditions and needs. The fact that authorities disagree on many points indicates that various plans have been

successful in various situations, and arbitrary rules cannot be made to govern details of conducting the choir. John L. Fuess, minister of music of the Fort George Presbyterian Church, New York, stated to the writer his belief that experience is, after all, the best teacher, and that common sense must guide the leader in much of his procedure with his group.

7. The children's choir program should have more than musical significance. Though high musical standards are necessary, the children's choir must not be allowed to become merely a means of entertainment if it is to deserve a place in the field of Christian education. In recent interviews, three leaders of very different children's choir organizations in New York emphasized to the writer their conviction that the children should be taught to regard their singing as an act of leading in worship, a sacred responsibility, not an opportunity for display.

8. In all aspects of the children's choir program, leadership is the primary consideration. Under an uninterested, inefficient director the choir can expect nothing but failure; but under the enthusiastic, capable leadership of one who understands children and works with the ideal of service, untold benefit may be reaped. If the education of the choir is to be Christian, the leader himself must have a Christian experience which permeates his relation to the group.

9. Because of the values which should result from it, the children's choir has a greater contribution to make to Christian education than is generally realized. It is significant that practically all noteworthy discussions of children's choirs are found in the literature of church music, not that of religious education. There needs to be closer correlation between the program of the children's choir and that of the other phases of Christian education in order that each may aid the other. The possibilities for religious development in the work of the children's choir need to be brought to the attention of leaders in Christian education.

10. This study has been justified by its findings. The place of children's choirs in Christian education was revealed by the fact that their development came as a response to the felt need for worship training, and that the value-outcomes show their contribution to the Christian growth of children. The analysis of basic studies explained in greater detail the program through which this choral organization should function. No study was found to have treated the subject in this way.

In conclusion, it can be stated that children's choirs, with adequate leadership and program, have an



important place in Christian education, deserving of wider recognition. It is to be hoped that churches may take fuller advantage of this means of training their boys and girls for the service and worship of Him "to whom the lips<sup>1</sup> of children made sweet hosannas ring."

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1. St. Theodulf of Orleans, Hymn, All Glory, Laud and Honor

APPENDIX

## APPENDIX

### SUGGESTED REPERTOIRE FOR THE CHILDREN'S CHOIR

The following classification of anthems for children's choir use were compiled from repertoires suggested in a number of sources. The music included in this appendix is that recommended by two or more authorities. The sources containing these suggestions are as follows:

Davison, Archibald T.	Protestant Church Music in America
Harper, Earl E.	Church Music and Worship
- Sackett, Edith E.	Mimeographed List of Children's Choir Music
Smith, H. Augustine, Maxwell, Mary Louise	The Organization and Administration of Choirs
Vosseller, Elizabeth	Junior Choirs Music for Junior Choirs
Article: "Organization of Junior Choirs," Music in Religious Education, December, 1928	
Article: "Music for Newly Organized Choirs," Music Clubs Magazine, January-February, 1932	

Most of the suggested lists referred to were intended to illustrate suitable music rather than to provide an exhaustive repertoire.

### UNISON ANTHEMS

Awake, My Soul . . . . .	Macpherson
Brightly Gleams Our Banner . . . . .	Clough-Leigher
But the Lord is Mindful of His Own . . . . .	Mendelssohn
Come, Holy Ghost . . . . .	Attwood
Come unto Him . . . . .	Handel
Forget Me Not . . . . .	Bach
Holy Father, Cheer Our Way . . . . .	Kitson
How Beautiful Are Thy Feet . . . . .	Handel

How Lovely are The Messengers . . . . .	Handel
If with All Your Hearts . . . . .	Mendelssohn
I know that My Redeemer . . . . .	Handel
Lift Up Your Heads . . . . .	Knowlton
Lovely Appear . . . . .	Gounod
My Heart, Ever Faithful . . . . .	Bach
O for the Wings of a Dove . . . . .	Mendelssohn
O Rest in The Lord . . . . .	Mendelssohn
Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem . . . . .	Mrs. Crosby Adams
Song of Thanksgiving . . . . .	Netherland Folk Song
Sun Of My Soul . . . . .	Gaul
Sun of My Soul . . . . .	Scott
The Heavens Proclaim Him . . . . .	Beethoven
The Lamb . . . . .	Henschel
The Lord is My Shepherd . . . . .	Knowlton
There is a Green Hill . . . . .	Gounod
Up, Up, My Heart, with Gladness . . . . .	Bach

## TWO-PART ANTHEMS

As the Hart Panteth . . . . .	Marcello
Awake, My Soul . . . . .	McPherson
Eye Hath Not Seen . . . . .	Foster
Glorious Forever . . . . .	Rachmaninoff
Glory to Thee, My God, This Night . . . . .	Gounod
God Is a Spirit . . . . .	Bennett
Is It Nothing To You . . . . .	Foster
I Waited for the Lord . . . . .	Mendelssohn
I Will Give Unto Him . . . . .	Blair
Lift Up Your Heads . . . . .	Lynes
Like As the Hart . . . . .	Novello
Not a Sparrow Falleth . . . . .	Lynes
O How Amiable Are Thy Dwellings . . . . .	Maunder
O Lovely Peace . . . . .	Handel
O Saviour of the World . . . . .	Goss
Songs of Praise the Angels Sang . . . . .	Attwood
Te Deum in F . . . . .	Smart
Thanksgiving . . . . .	Rachmaninoff
The Angel . . . . .	Rubenstein
The Cherubic Hymn . . . . .	Gretchaninoff
The Good Shepherd . . . . .	Barri
The Lord is My Shepherd . . . . .	Schubert
The Lord is My Shepherd . . . . .	Smart
There is a Green Hill . . . . .	Somerset
There were Shepherds . . . . .	Foster
This Glad Easter Day . . . . .	arr. Dickinson
Thy Word is a Lantern . . . . .	Richardson

## THREE-PART ANTHEMS

Agnus Dei . . . . .	Bizet
A Joyous Christmas Song . . . . .	Gavaert
A Legend . . . . .	Tschaikowsky
Crucifix . . . . .	Faure
He in Tears That Soweth . . . . .	Hiller
I Waited for the Lord . . . . .	Mendelssohn
Lift Thine Eyes . . . . .	Mendelssohn
Lo, How a Rose . . . . .	Praetorius
Our Jesus Hath a Garden . . . . .	Whitehead
Peace I leave With You . . . . .	Roberts
Sanctus . . . . .	Gounod
Sweet is Thy Mercy, Lord . . . . .	Barnby
Thy Word is like a Garden . . . . .	Berwald

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