July 2012


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Abstract

Francis E. Clark began Christian Endeavor in 1881 as a way to get children involved in the church. Christian Endeavor captivated the youth by making them feel welcome, by providing activities for them, and by challenging them to adhere to a member’s pledge. Christian Endeavor societies were soon found around the world. The collection consists of advertisements, books, booklets, brochures, bulletins, correspondence, instructional materials, newspaper clippings, scrapbooks, photographs, programs, and extensive publications associated with Christian Endeavor. It includes personal material of prominent members of Michigan Christian Endeavor including LaVerne Boss, Dorothy Kling, Sarah McCullagh, and Alice Spykerman, along with material on International Christian Endeavor figures such as Francis Clark and Daniel Poling.

Accession No: W99-1250
Provenance: LaVerne Boss
Donor: LaVerne Boss
Photographs: 65 images (Boxes 2 and 3); 9 oversized (Boxes 8 and 9)
Processed by: Michael Douma, May 2001

History

The First Christian Endeavor Society was formed in 1881 in Portland, Maine, under the direction of Francis E. Clark. The society was formed in order to bring youth to accept Christ and work for Him. The youth were shown that the church cared for young people. The Society enabled youth to express themselves while participating in useful tasks. It stressed a devoted, evangelistic spirit that was expressed in the Christian Endeavor pledge. Christian Endeavor created publications for youth, devised youth programs, and sponsored events. Christian Endeavor was maintained through private donations that often came from youth.

Christian Endeavor began as a small group of eager youth that met at the house of their minister. Within a year, six societies had formed. After two years, the number of societies had grown to fifty-six. The organization expanded rapidly as it grew from a single church society into a world movement. By the end of the 19th century, Christian Endeavor was in the headlines of many major American newspapers. Christian Endeavor took up many causes without apology; it was influential in supporting the temperance movement in the 1920s, as CE stood for family values. Christian Endeavor began extensive publications in 1886. World conventions were held to address major issues. In 1887, Francis E. Clark was elected president of the United Society, and in 1895 he was chosen as the World President of the Christian Endeavor Union. The admirable Clark held this position until his death in 1927. Daniel A. Poling then assumed the presidency. Christian Endeavor societies met at the state level for local control and met in World Conventions at intervals of three to six years. (World Conventions were held in Grand Rapids in 1937 and 1951.) The organization’s world headquarters moved from Boston, Massachusetts, to Columbus, Ohio, in 1952. Christian Endeavor is still operating today; their activities are reported on the CE internet website.
Scope and Content

This collection consists of advertisements, books, booklets, brochures, bulletins, correspondence, instructional materials, newspaper clippings, scrapbooks, photographs, programs, and extensive publications associated with Christian Endeavor. It includes personal material of prominent members of Michigan Christian Endeavor including LaVerne Boss, Dorothy Kling, Sarah McCullagh, and Alice Spykerman, along with material on International Christian Endeavor figures such as Francis Clark and Daniel Poling. This collection also contains a history of the Christian Endeavor movement, a constitution, manuals and handbooks, pledge cards, and oversized graphics.

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“In Memoriam Daniel Alfred Poling,” 1968
“International C.E. Convention,” 1951
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“Young People’s Bulletin,” 1932
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   Anti-Semitism, 1964
   “Can the Church Lead?,” n.d.
   “Government Under Pressure,” Donald C. Blaisdell, 1946
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Study Guide, Young Adult and Adult C.E. Meetings, 1971
“Taking Others Along,” Andrew E. Kurth, 1945
“With Young Adults in Christian Endeavor,” Phyllis G. Brown, 1955
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