

“Valparaiso University: A God-given Opportunity for Our Lutheran People,” 12 page brochure,
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[Front Cover]

Valparaiso University
A God-given Opportunity for
Our Lutheran People

A simple statement of facts regarding a great opportunity for good that has
come to our people for their substantial support

[c 1925]

At the founding of our synod, our fathers dreamed and planned a school of higher learning for all our youth. Such was the idea with the school in Perry County. That was a reason for transferring it to Saint Louis. Today, after generations, is the great chance of finally making this dream and hope come true.

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Dear Friend:

A momentous hour is upon our Church. In pioneer days our fathers dreamed of higher schools for every youth in our Church seeking higher training.

For three generations that noble vision has waited for fulfillment. Many felt the need, more deeply as the years passed on and our people emerged from pioneer hardships to the greater ease of an established existence in this land. Yet the occasion was wanting to turn dreams into reality and make visions come true.

Today the opportunity is here. It seems so sudden and promising that it is difficult not to see God's providence at work, urging us to act, smoothing out the road, putting a tremendous task within the reach of our powers.

Should we fail this opportunity and, perhaps, for years and decades again only dream and hope? Should the appalling neglect of our youth continue?

Surely, we must, we want to face the issue. The following pages have been written in anxiety of heart, conscious of the seriousness of the hour.

Please, read them, read them again, with a prayer to God that He may lead us to see our duty and to do it.

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After his resurrection our Master met Peter at the Lake of Galilee. Thrice He asked him, "Peter, lovest thou Me?" And only after Peter had three times protested his love did Christ give him the commission "Feed my lambs." The care of her youth has from the beginning been the Church's greatest concern and most sacred obligation.

Where is the supreme test of this concern and obligation? Is it in the effort to teach and guard youth in their earliest years when they are still under the wholesome influence and control of Christian homes, or is it in the effort to teach and guard the when they are standing on the threshold of manhood and womanhood when their character is being definitely formed for life? To do the former and not the latter surely would be displaying an astounding lack of foresight.

Today thousands of the young men and women of our churches are given the opportunity of a higher education. Parents are eager even to the point of personal sacrifice to give their children a better chance in the struggle of life through a higher education.

Some day these young men and women are going to occupy positions of influence among friends and associates. Their ideas will help fashion the lives of others. What is being done to conserve their loyalty to the Church, their trained minds and powers for the service of the kingdom of God? In the matter of education practically nothing at all.

In the last years every larger denomination of America and every Lutheran body outside

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of our own has brought heroic sacrifices for the development of higher schools for its laity.

The Disciples of Christ, a body of 700,000 members, is expending \$40,000,000 for this purpose. The Methodists and the Baptists are each spending \$35,000,000. The United Lutheran Church has expended over \$9,000,000. The Augustana Lutheran

Synod has raised and is planning to raise over three million, although it has only 200,000 members and the growth of Catholic Colleges and Universities in recent years has been truly astonishing. In the short space of a hundred years no less than 19 Catholic universities, fifty-six Catholic colleges for men and sixty-five Catholic colleges for women have sprung up in America.

Why should these groups have strained themselves as they did? Solely because from experience they learned to believe that higher schools of learning were a question of life and death for their Church.

In our Synod alone practically no opportunity exists for higher education for our laity.

Year after year more and more of our young men and women go to colleges and universities. That is because our people believe in the value of an education. They know that an education means to get on in life. Fully 4,000 of our Church's youth are today studying in secular and sectarian institutions. The number is steadily increasing.

What happens to their faith, to their loyalty to the church in which they were baptized and confirmed? Large numbers lose their faith and come to look down upon their Church. Instead of becoming a power for good, their powers are thrown in with the scoffer and the agnostic.

The examples are many when even the children of our pastors went to other colleges on the

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privations of their God-fearing parents and returned indifferent to the Master to whom they promised loyalty on confirmation day.

One pastor says that in his time of service fully fifty young people from his church went to college and university. Only one today is an active church member. Three are indifferent members. The rest are lost.

Everyone knows these conditions and deplors them. Is it right to let them continue? Can we afford year after year to lose the pick of our youth? Is it wise to spend thousands for expansion and do nothing to stay the drain of this life blood? When we pray "Thy Kingdom Come, Thy Will be done," can we exclude regard for these children

of God's Kingdom from the meaning of our prayer? When others are ready to give millions upon millions, can we alone believe that this loss means little to our faith and to the life of our Church?

Valparaiso Is a God-Given Opportunity

Our pastors and people have felt the need. Many a pastor, many a father and mother, has prayed to God that something might be done. Many a parent whose child was lost, with lonesome heart has through bitter personal experience awakened to the situation.

The need so far was not met, not because there was any question about its urgency, but because the task of meeting it seemed so hopelessly great. It looked impossible.

Now our great opportunity has come, with a dramatic suddenness that we can yet hardly realize it.

An existing institution, Valparaiso University at Valparaiso, Indiana, is offered to us at a nominal price to make it over into a Lutheran school for our young men and women.

The location is ideal, forty miles from Chicago, in a city of 10,000 inhabitants, on three great railroads, and two national highways. It is not hampered by the distractions of a great city and it still commands the intellectual help of the great metropolis of the Middle West. It is located in the heart of American Lutheranism. Within a radius of 400 miles reside two-thirds of the Lutherans in America.

It is reached by an overnight ride from Pittsburgh, St. Paul, Omaha, Kansas City, St. Louis, Louisville, Cincinnati.

The school has a fine

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history. It was founded in 1874 when educational facilities in this land were meager, to give especially the poorer boy and girl a chance for an education at a low cost. Some hundred thousand students have attended Valparaiso in these years. Many today are

nationally known figures, such as Gov. Blaine of Wisconsin, Sen. Ralston of Indiana, Deneen of Illinois, and others.

Our Lutherans are getting the property at an astounding bargain. The total cost of the buildings and grounds is \$205,000. Two impartial appraisals have placed the value with equipment at near \$700,000. The replacement value would be nearly double.

While the buildings have been somewhat neglected in the last five years because the school could not meet changed conditions in the educational field, most of the buildings are really good and only require nominal repairs to be put in first class, attractive, usable condition.

There are two good dormitories, usable for many years. There is a fine domestic science building. The music building is well built and comparatively new. It is equipped with sixty pianos. The Law and the Science buildings are substantial. The engineering building has machinery just a few years old which today would cost \$50,000. The library has 25,000 volumes.

There are enough substantial buildings amply to take care of 2,000 students. These buildings will serve for many years. The only need is to spend a fair sum to redecorate.

Why should it be possible for us to get this property so cheap? Valparaiso was a private school which in years gone by more than paid for itself. However, in the last fifteen years the states and denominations have invested huge sums in their institutions and the standards of higher education have been correspondingly raised so that the field of a private school like Valparaiso was eliminated. There were a number of such schools. Today Valparaiso is the only one left, and for a number of years it faced the necessity of closing down. The old Fremont Normal in Nebraska, e.g., founded by a graduate of Valparaiso, was taken over by the United Lutheran Church.

So Valparaiso faced the choice of going out of existence or of passing into the hands of some group which would carry it on.

The local community and the friends of the school were willing to make any sacrifice to prevent the death of the university. That is the reason for the nominal price.

The United Lutheran Church acquired the Fremont Normal for a nominal price. In addition

the city of Fremont has since raised \$150,000 toward the school. They wanted a going concern and not a dead school. Similarly Valparaiso citizens have pledged \$56,000 toward the school which we will get. There are no conditions to our taking over the university. There is no flaw in our title and no limitation to our right to make of it a soundly Lutheran school, just as the United Lutheran Church transformed the Fremont Normal to its ideal.

We believe in the providence of God. We believe that He has led our Church into this opportunity. There seem few occasions when He has so palpably reached down to our weakness and cleared our path to a great achievement.

A Missionary Opportunity for Sound Lutheranism

Apart from and, perhaps, just as important as the provision for the Christian training of our youth is the meaning of this step for the ideals of conservative Lutheranism for which we stand.

We know the influence exerted by Catholic schools on public thought. We meet the many non-Catholics whose mind was fashioned by Catholic instruction and who have become tolerant and sympathetic toward that Church.

Here is OUR chance to put our light on a hill that its rays may radiate far and wide. Thousands of students from non-Lutheran homes in the years to come will receive their training at Valparaiso. Not a few will be won to active membership in our Church. Many more will come to think with sympathy of our ideals, grateful of the chance of an education which we have given them.

An educated man or woman touches, sways, influences the lives of hundreds. A teacher in the years of her service moulds (sic) the character of countless young folks. Every dollar that we place into Valparaiso promises to become a missionary force of untold power.

A Host of Witnesses Urged Action

Valparaiso was not acquired hastily. It is remarkable how hesitant at first everyone was to urge action and yet how inevitably all came to conclude action alone is right. There may be problems, but this is an opportunity of God and we cannot evade it.

The local pastor at Valparaiso, who was familiar with the financial difficulties of the

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school, was the first to see the opportunity. He met with pastors and laymen of northern Indiana and then of Fort Wayne. It was weeks before they faced the possibilities seriously. Committees visited Valparaiso. The National Lutheran Education Association was asked to look into the question. They urged action. The Central District spent six hours of deliberation and finally resolved:

1. That the Central District of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and other States, indorse the movement to purchase Valparaiso University with the ultimate view to offer the institution to the Church.
2. That our Central District of the Evangelical Lutheran Church furthermore encourage its members morally and financially to support the institution provided proper safeguards are made to keep the institution under the control of our Synod for all times.
3. That the Central District of our Synod appoint an advisory committee to act in conjunction with the Central District of the National Lutheran Education Association.

Still the question was not settled. There still were doubts whether it is right and possible to undertake the task.

The Board of Directors of Synod were approached in the matter. They resolved:

“While we cannot identify ourselves as a Board of Directors with the movements to establish a Lutheran University at Valparaiso, or anywhere else, we do not wish to interfere in any manner with the endeavors of any private organization in our midst to establish an institution of higher learning on a soundly Lutheran basis, but wish them God’s blessing in their endeavors.”

The Board of the Walther League went into the matter. They resolved:

Whereas, Synod, assembled at Fort Wayne, in 1923, has by resolution encouraged its districts to foster higher education, and

Whereas, Synod has officially recognized the National Lutheran Education Association, which association, through the Lutheran University Association has acquired Valparaiso University with the intention of converting it into a Lutheran university, therefore, be it

Resolved, That we express our joy because of the progressive movement that has been set on foot, and that we wish the association the Lord's blessing for the consummation of this worthy project.

Group after group said go ahead. It is right. It is necessary. It is a God-given opportunity. Still the men hesitated. They wondered if it would receive sufficient support to carry the project through.

To answer that question sixty men were invited to a meeting at Fort Wayne, September 2nd. They were from every section of our synod, familiar with the sentiment of their districts and respected for their counsel. The decision to act or not to act was placed on the outcome of that meeting.

After a full day's discussion these men resolved:

Resolved, That this body go on record as favoring the acquisition and maintenance of Valparaiso University as a Lutheran University, by the Lutheran University Association, with the understanding, that every possible influence shall be exerted and every possible provision shall be made, ever to keep this university under sound Lutheran control and that the full accreditation of the university be effected as soon as possible.

Resolved, That we individually and collectively pledge our effort to raise approximately \$883,000 to place Valparaiso University on a sound financial basis and that we do our best to carry through the plan as suggested.

Only then was the option closed. Valparaiso became our property.

There was no haste in this matter, other bodies would have acted quicker. There was fear to take the step, often there was the hope of the part of those who were bearing the burden of the first work that it might not go through. But the cause itself had a power that would not be downed.

Valparaiso Can and Will be Made a Soundly Lutheran School

Valparaiso was not acquired to be maintained by us as it is. That would be foolish, because we are concerned alone in a Lutheran School.

That means, in the first place, a faculty which meets our Lutheran ideals. There will be no difficulty in engaging our men. We are entirely free to engage the men we want.

There is no really great problem in securing competent Lutheran men. Other Lutheran bodies have done it. Surely we also can do it. The faculties of the United Lutheran Church, of Swedish and Norwegian Lutheran colleges have doubled since the war. These institutions had no serious difficulty in finding the men.

The right faculty is, of course, the test of the value of Valparaiso for our Church. That test can be met, and preparations are under way now to meet it as speedily as possible. Within the course of this year Valparaiso will have a Lutheran head and within a reasonable time a faculty true to Lutheran ideals.

The other point is Lutheran students. It is surprising how many Lutheran parents are already planning to send their children to Valparaiso.

It is likely that within a few years fully a thousand of our boys and girls will be there.

It is hoped also to serve the sons and daughters of our ministers. Special tuition rates are planned for them so that from their small salaries they too can give their children a chance, knowing their faith will not be lost. This is the custom in all other Lutheran Colleges.

To make Valparaiso Lutheran is the task. It is a delicate and not an easy task. But there is no condition to hinder or make it impossible. Others have done it. We also can do it. Here again we should not pray for an easier task but to be stronger men.

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The Financial Need

The conference of representative men in Fort Wayne voted for an appeal to our people for \$883,000. Three hundred eighty-three thousand dollars is for property, repairs, and maintenance, \$500,000 is for the endowment.

The actual cost of the existing property is \$205,000. Additional grounds are necessary. So while the question was still unsettled whether we would take the school or not, Valparaiso people were willing to give options at low cost on needed plots. In the near future the land must be acquired. It was wisdom to do so at once. It gives the school a fine campus of more than seventy acres, ample for all future developments.

An endowment of \$500,000 is imperative for two reasons.

In the first place the school must have an income in addition to tuition fees, to be able to make ends meet and give the students an adequate education. The lack of such income compelled the present owners to part with the university.

In the second place the school must become accredited with the North Central Association of Colleges to be fair to its students. Only an accredited school can give a Grade A Diploma. The North Central Association, however, requires a minimum of \$500,000 endowment by January, 1927, for an accredited school.

We cannot afford, if we really mean to provide for our youth, to give them an inferior school. It is not fair and will not appeal to them. For that reason an endowment fund of \$500,000 is absolutely necessary. It would be necessary if we were to start a school from the bottom up.

We Must Act Now

So the decision is made. Valparaiso is ours. The great opportunity of a generation is within our grasp. But – will we grasp it? Will we make our hope come true by sacrifice? Will we stand back of oft repeated prayers by determined effort? That is the question. The test is before us NOW.

To meet the need requires funds. That is plain. Other church bodies have built up their schools by sometimes stupendous sacrifices. We have the chance to get much, to advance far with an outlay insignificant in comparison to the sacrifices of others and to the results accomplished. But we cannot escape the necessity of sacrifice. That is the rule of life. That is the rule of the Lord's Kingdom.

Now is the time to bring that sacrifice in effort and means. The amount required is reasonable. It is needed. To fail to get it will make it difficult if not impossible to carry on the school right. It will put a cloud on the enterprise from the start.

There are, of course, many other tasks before our churches and people. Yet to do them and also to do this is not beyond their means and this opportunity has come to us not of our seeking. It is here NOW.

If it is right and necessary to stay the loss of the finest of our youth, if this is the promising opportunity finally to do so, surely then there is a compulsion of conscience to do our part to meet this opportunity. An opportunity is a trust. A great opportunity is a great trust. Action alone proves us worthy of a great trust.

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A Reasonable Plan

A plan is required to meet a large task. The following plan was submitted to the conference of leaders in Fort Wayne, Sept. 2nd. They adopted it. It has since been adopted by a number of local conferences. It is hoped that as many congregations as possible will follow it to the best of their ability because it will accomplish the task without placing a burden on anyone.

I. WINNING COOPERATION

Sympathy and interest are required if our people should do their part. As soon as they are interested, as soon as their heart is touched by the appeal of providing for OUR youth, they will gladly do their part.

Three ways are provided to rouse sympathy and interest.

1. Printed matter.

- a. A weekly bulletin to the leading members of the churches. This is to be mailed from headquarters in Fort Wayne. We hope and pray that each church will mail us their list at once, that they do not miss the first copies.
- b. Two folders to every family. This is to be mailed directly into the homes to reach all. The government allows the pound rate on such matter so that they can be mailed at a very nominal cost.

2. Speakers.

For the states of Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Illinois, speakers are being scheduled directly from headquarters. We hope and pray that names, especially of laymen qualified to do this, will be sent us speedily that we may enlist them. For the states beyond, it is hoped that arrangement for the spoken presentation may be made locally.

3. Newspapers.

From headquarters information will be sent regularly to newspapers in the territory. If this work is back up locally we are likely to receive much space in the newspapers. We have often complained that newspapers do not recognize us. For this occasion let us do our part and get results.

II. A THOROUGH HARVEST

To win sympathy is important. But it means nothing unless we are willing to provide for a thorough harvest. It is a waste of energy because it alone will not produce results.

Personal work is required.

Unless people interested are seen personally either they will do nothing or the amounts will be insignificant and leave us far from the goal required.

1. A chairman in each church should be appointed speedily. Please, send his name and address to headquarters that he may receive helpful information.
2. A group of loyal workers are to be gathered by the chairman who in the given time will personally see people and secure their pledges.
3. A workers' conference will be arranged in each district in Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Illinois, at which the workers from the churches in the district are to meet. Speakers from headquarters will be present to inform the workers.

4. November 29thm December 7th, are the dates for the appeal. It is hoped that all will do their part in that time. To put a task off, usually means that it is never done, and NOW support is needed. There is power and encouragement in unity. There is weakness and failure in division, and for the sake of our Master and our youth we dare not fail.

5. Three-year pledges are provided to enable all to be generous to this cause without stinting other causes in our Church.

III. LARGER GIFTS

God has blessed some more than others. This is a time when from their means they can do a great thing for God's Kingdom. If men of larger means in our Church will do for Valparaiso NOW what such men in other denominations have done it will inspire the confidence required to carry this work through. Already a pledge of ten and a number of five thousand dollars are made. One pastor pledges five hundred dollars, another two hundred and fifty, and not a few a hundred.

We hope that names of men who on a three-year basis could give \$500 or more will be sent us that we may send them literature and in due time arrange to see them. Please, do this, NOW.

“Like a Mighty Army”

We are persuaded this is God's call. His finger is guiding us. He is beckoning us to embrace one of the unique opportunities which has come to our Church.

If we are eager and courageous it is not difficult. If we are united there is no burden. Fear, indifference, division alone means defeat as they have meant for other great opportunities.

If you have prayed for the saving of our youth, if your heart has yearned for those who drifted away, if impatiently you have longed for the chance to meet the need, NOW is the time. NOW we have it in our power to success or to fail. Now let us give ourselves with our means, with our power, eagerly, devotedly, to the most appealing, the most compelling cause of saving the souls of our youth, OUR youth, entrusted to US by our Master.