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FACTORS COMMON TO PROTESTANT CHURCH
CHOIRS IN HELENA, MONTANA, AND THEIR
RELATIONSHIP TO PUBLIC SCHOOL MUSIC

by

GEORGE DANIEL LEWIS
B.M., Montana State University, 1950

Presented in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Music Education

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

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Date Aug 18 1952

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G. D. L.

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INTRODUCTION

Undoubtedly the greatest area of non-professional participation in organized community music is found in the voluntary church choir. Probably no other music organization is so well established through long tradition; yet, at the same time, struggles so valiantly for survival.

The problems encountered in the administration and direction of voluntary church choirs are seemingly as numerous as the individuals involved and as broad as the doctrinal scope of the variety of churches in which these choirs are represented. The voluntary church choir exists in most denominations in the United States today. It is apparent that certain church choirs are more successful than others.

To point up further differences between choir groups is inconsequential. The more important consideration should be concerned with the development and encouragement of the separate groups, so that they can fulfill the purposes for musical expression in the service of their own churches to the best of their capacity. The extent that music plays in the worship service of the church is dependent upon several factors. Probably most important is the tradition of music in the church and how it relates to the doctrine. Other factors could be: the attitude of the minister, congregation,

choir director, and choir in relation to the church service; the philosophy behind the musical presentation; and the level of musical achievement of the group, both in performance and in appreciation.

Since the voluntary church choir is likely to be composed of a heterogeneous group of members, as far as musical training is concerned, one of the basic problems could be that of the musical training of the individual member. The public school system, along with the colleges and universities, should not be discounted in regard to the musical training of the church choir member. The musical training received in the above-mentioned institutions should be considered a very important factor in the development of the church choir member. It is in this light that a study of basic church choir problems is attempted.

THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this study is to determine what motivating factors are common to Protestant church choirs in Helena, Montana, and to discover if these factors can be associated with: (1) Carry-over from school choral programs, and (2) Present status of the choral program in the church itself. It is assumed that a survey of members and directors of choirs in the community will furnish a typical sampling, and an analysis of the information obtained could be used in study of the same problem in other localities.

Delimitations made in the paper will include the fact that members of Helena Protestant church choirs¹ are not necessarily products of the Helena school system. No attempt will be made to compare one church choir against another. The procedure will be carried out as objectively as possible in order to formulate general conclusions of benefit to all groups. No attempt at surveying choirs other than those belonging to the Protestant group will be made in this paper.

Considerable attention has been given to the backgrounds in school and community music life of the individual choir member. An attempt will be made to show definite

¹ Hereinafter referred to as "church choir."

correlation between musical activity in high school and college and its subsequent carry-over into adult life, reflected by membership in a church choir.

THE DIRECTOR

The purpose of the questionnaire for directors,² in addition to the general questionnaire,³ is to obtain that type of information commonly unknown by the average member-- questions regarding choir budget, salary of director and organist, etc. Analysis of the directors' questionnaires is done individually.

No attempt has been made to determine the qualifications of the directors. It is true that the qualified director is in a position to get better results than the "lay" type of musician. Yet, in this study, the emphasis is placed upon motivation from the school training of choir members and not upon the "pulling force" of a director.

Since many choirs the country over have directors who are not music teachers by profession, it was decided to limit the scope of the survey as it affects the choir director in this manner.

Of the seven directors contacted in regard to this study, all responded by filling in questionnaires. These directors represented the following Protestant churches in

²Appendix A.

³Appendix B.

Helena, Montana: First Baptist, First Christian, St. John's Lutheran, Mission Covenant, St. Paul's Methodist, First Presbyterian, and St. Peter's Pro-Cathedral (Episcopal).

In regard to the first question, "How long have you been directing church choirs?" there is a large spread in years of experience. The person with the most experience had been directing church choirs for twenty-nine years. Least experience was one year, indicated by two people. Other directors listed, ten, three, eight, and thirteen years experience, for an average of 8.7 years. This figure corresponds favorably with the median for the group, eight years.

TABLE I
EXPERIENCE, TIME IN PRESENT POSITION, AND SALARY OF CHOIR DIRECTORS

Director No.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
No. of years experience	29	1	13	10	3	8	1
Present position	1	1	9	5	3	5	1
Percentage	69%	100%	69%	50%	100%	62½%	100%
Monthly salary	0	\$50	\$15	0	\$50	\$35	\$50

The relationship of length of time in present position with number of years of teaching experience presents an interesting picture.⁴ Three of the seven directors

⁴Table I

indicate that they started their church choir experience in their present positions. Of the four remaining, each director has spent 50% or more of his total experience in his present church choir job. This high percentage among the four directors indicates a certain stability in their present jobs and a healthy situation as far as being established well in their churches is concerned.

Not all the directors receive pay for their services. (See Table I) Two out of seven, or 28.6%, do not receive any compensation. One of these, Director 1, has the most experience and has been in his present position the longest. Director 3, whose salary is listed as \$15.00 per month, says, "Both the organist and I feel that our music is part of our contribution to our church." Here is direct proof that one person directing a choir is not doing it for material gain. The same could be said for the two who receive nothing for their work.

According to results of the fourth question, no choir member receives pay, to the knowledge of the director. This is in accordance with the previous assumption that the choirs in Helena are purely voluntary. This is different from many church choirs in larger cities.

All organist-accompanists receive payment of some sort. Six of the seven churches pay their organists regular salaries. The one exception was noted on the questionnaire of Director 4, who indicated that the accompanist in

his situation received free-will offerings in lieu of a regular salary. The separate organists are listed as follows:

Organist 1	\$15.00
Organist 2	50.00
Organist 3	15.00
Organist 4	Free-will offering
Organist 5	50.00
Organist 6	35.00
Organist 7	50.00

The average salary for the six persons who are given a definite salary is \$35.00 per month.

Directors seem to be in accord with one another in regard to the question concerning difficulty in getting singers of different voices; i.e., sopranos, altos, tenors, or basses. The need for male singers, tenors and basses, is apparent, since four directors indicated most difficulty in getting tenors and three indicated basses as most difficult to obtain. One exception was found in Questionnaire Number 6, in which "soprano" was checked along with the other preference, "tenor." This almost total agreement in regard to more male singers is an indication of laxity on the part of the men in the churches to respond for choir duty.

Question Number 7 deals with average membership of choirs and maximum membership in the case of special church

days, such as Christmas or Easter.⁵ The choir with the lowest average membership has twelve members; the two choirs with the highest memberships have twenty-two members each. Note that the difference between the highest and the lowest is only ten members. The average membership for the seven choirs is 18.6 members. Maximum memberships listed were not as consistent. The low is sixteen, the high, forty. Both of the top choirs in average membership have high maximum memberships--thirty-five and forty, respectively. From these figures, it would appear that the two top choirs have a much greater potential membership than any of the others. The most consistent membership is found in choir number three. Average membership is twenty; maximum membership is twenty-two. This group does not increase as much as the others, and it has the lowest percentage of increase on special church days.⁶ The choir with the highest percentage of increase is choir number two. The maximum of forty members indicates an 81.8% increase, and, consequently, a potential for higher regular membership.

⁵ Table II

⁶ Table II

TABLE II
 AVERAGE MEMBERSHIP, MAXIMUM MEMBERSHIP, AND PERCENTAGE
 OF INCREASE ON SPECIAL DAYS

Choir Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Average
Average membership	16	22	20	12	20	22	18	18.6
Maximum membership	22	40	22	16	30	35	24	27.0
Increase on special days	37.5%	81.8%	10.0%	33.3%	50.0%	37.2%	33.3%	45.1%

Since the average "maximum" membership for the group is 27.0, the average percentage of increase for the group is 45.1%, indicating a potential of almost one-half above average memberships. The desirable procedure would be to get these people into the choir more regularly so that choir performances would be of a higher caliber. The fact that some choir members get to the service only on special days is disturbing. There is a definite reason for each case, but it is not the purpose of this study to determine why some members are not regular in their church attendance.

Two choirs of the seven function for twelve months of the year. One serves for eight and one-half months, the remaining groups sing nine months. Average months served for the entire group is 9.8. There seems to be little or no correlation between the number of months choir is held and the number of people belonging to the respective groups.

In answer to the question, "Do you have ample rehearsal time in relation to what is expected of the choir?" four directors answered "yes" and three said "no." It is assumed that the group answering in the negative did so for a variety of reasons. Legitimate reasons for wanting extra rehearsal time are: (1) Preparation of an anthem for each Sunday in addition to special choir concerts, (2) the desire of the director to present a more polished performance, and (3) the responsibility of the choir to furnish music for more than one service each week.

All women members of the choirs wear vestments. The men of six choirs wear vestments. Only one director stated that the men in his choir did not wear any choral garb.

The eleventh question, regarding choir budget,⁷ was answered with a variety of interpretations. The question was written to learn what each group spent for new music each year, and was not meant to include money allotted for payment of organist and director salaries. It is evident that three of the seven directors construed this to mean "entire music budget" for the church.⁸

⁷Appendix A.

⁸Table III.

TABLE III

YEARLY CHOIR BUDGETS AND HOW MONEY IS OBTAINED

Choir Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Approximate yearly budget	\$300	\$100	\$400	\$12	\$75	\$900	\$50 ^x
How money is obtained	Bud- get	Bud- get	Bud- get	Bud- get	Bud- get ^x	Bud- get	Bud- get

*Offering from Easter concert also goes to choir.

^xPlus donations.

The three instances where the budget is shown in excess of one hundred dollars is an indication that the director has included organist and choir director salaries. It is highly improbable that a single church would spend three hundred dollars a year for new music. This would be sufficient money to allow for a new number for every Sunday of the year. The possibility of the above being true is remote.

Choir number four has a yearly budget of twelve dollars. This is conceivable in the event that the choir does not use music printed in octavo form, or if anthems or special numbers are sung from hymnals or volumes of choral music already in the library. Another point of interest is that this particular choral group functions twelve months of the year. Only one choir indicated that they receive offerings from programs they present. This is not surprising, since all choirs receive funds directly

from the church treasury. From this we can see that the church choir is considered an integral part of the church, especially so where choirs have been given the liberal budgets indicated on the questionnaires.

Only one choir director had knowledge of any member of his church singing in another church choir in town. This was restricted to one person, and it was stated by the director, "this one is a special case." Two directors each cited a case in which a member of another church was participating in his choir. One was a person who had not been singing in his own choir for over three years, and who had offered his services to the other choir director. The second instance cited a situation in which one director made mention of people singing in his choir, but who were members of other denominations in other towns. This group was composed of school teachers, whose permanent residences were not in Helena.

Of the seven choir directors included in the survey, five indicated that they were members of the churches in which they work. Of significance is the fact that the two highest paid directors are not members of the churches in which they are choir directors. Both receive salaries of \$50.00 per month, although one directs both the junior and senior choirs and the other directs the senior choir only. This fact seems to point up a willingness of the churches to pay more salary, going outside the congregation to obtain

a competent director. On the other hand, it is evident that many directors are willing to donate their services to their own churches, but when called outside their denominations feel free to accept higher pay for their services. In some cases churches get choir directors from outside for reasons of harmony in the group itself. Many people will accept criticism from an outsider more readily than from a member of their own group.

THE CHOIR MEMBER

Information received from the individual choir member was obtained through use of a questionnaire.⁹ The cooperation of the various directors in getting their choirs to fill out questionnaires was of tremendous importance in the success of the project. Questionnaires were given to the directors, who in turn distributed them, along with the stamped envelopes bearing the author's name and address, to the various members of the choirs. It was thought that the use of the stamped envelope for return would save the directors from having to collect each individual return. There is no way of knowing how many people mailed the questionnaire themselves or gave the questionnaire to the choir director and had him mail it. The questionnaires are unsigned, and it is hoped that the provision of the stamped envelopes for return was an encouragement for individuals to answer as objectively as possible, without having the director go through the group of questionnaires from his own choir.

The interpretation of data in regard to the general questionnaire will be made in two categories. The first

⁹Appendix B.

will be the group who indicated on their questionnaires that they had received their high school training in Helena. The second will be that remaining group which was in attendance at high schools other than Helena High School. This division will remain through the first four questions--those pertaining to educational background. The purpose of this is to point up the first hypothesis as stated in the problem--that of carry-over from school music programs. Beginning with the fifth question, regarding suggested ways for improving the member's own choir situation, the two groups are included as one, since present choir situations would seem to have little correlation with educational background as far as immediate steps to improvement are concerned.

Of the one hundred thirty members of the seven choirs, eighty-five returned the questionnaire in time to be included in the digest of information used herein. This is a return of 65.3%. Of this group, eighty-four indicated that they had attended high school at least one year. The other person did not indicate any high school training and did not answer questions one through five; hence, analysis of the first section of the questionnaire is made upon the basis of eighty-four rather than eighty-five.

In order to compare members who indicated they had gone to Helena High School with those who attended high school elsewhere, the entire group has been divided. This division, choir members with high school training in Helena

and those with high school training outside of Helena, is used in analysis of the first four questions. This section of the questionnaire deals with educational background of the choir member.¹⁰

There were thirty-four persons from Helena, or 40.4%. The remaining fifty, 59.6%, are from outside. Since one phase of this study is to determine what correlation exists between school training and church choir activity, emphasis will be placed upon the role played by our educational institutions generally, and more specifically, in Helena.

One important factor to consider in the analysis of persons in the Helena group is the student in high school who has not finished his education. It is apparent at first glance that the Helena group includes a greater number of undergraduates than the outside group.¹¹ This is true, and cannot be discounted entirely, since the study is concerned with getting the general educational background of the choir member at the time of the survey. We cannot assume, however, that those people with one, two, or three years of high school will not go on with their education. At the same time, it is probable that the places of these students at their present educational level will be taken by others joining the choirs as they reach high school age. What would seem a hindrance, the obviously lower educational level of the

¹⁰Appendix B.

¹¹Table IV

Helena group, to the raising of the educational level of the entire group, will be counter-balanced by the fact that these people are entering into Helena church choirs at an earlier age than the outside group. This fact would tend to improve rather than harm the general situation. Of the Helena group, 55.9% have finished four years of high school, as compared with 96.0% of the outside group.

TABLE IV

COMPARATIVE PERCENTAGES OF CHOIR MEMBERS HAVING ONE, TWO, THREE, OR FOUR YEARS OF HIGH SCHOOL

	1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years
Helena	14.7%	14.7%	14.7%	55.9%
Outside Helena	4.0%	0	0	96.0%
Total group	8.3%	6.0%	6.0%	79.7%

Of thirty-four persons from the Helena group, only twelve have at least one year of further education beyond high school, or 35.3%. This figure is necessarily low because of the foregoing point that many of the Helena church choir members have not finished high school. In contrast, it is noted that forty-seven of the group from outside, fifty in all, have at least one year of college to their credit, or 94.0%.¹²

¹²Table V

TABLE V

COMPARATIVE PERCENTAGES OF CHOIR MEMBERS HAVING
ONE OR MORE YEARS OF COLLEGE

Group	Percentage	Number of Persons
Helena	35.3%	12
Outside Helena	94.0%	47
Total group	69.4%	59

Four categories of institutions for higher education have been used in this analysis: Normal school, vocational school, college or university, and other. The last category, other, is used to take care of the miscellaneous entries such as business college, military school, and Bible school.

The least named was normal school, next was vocational school, third was other, and last and most popular was the college or university division.

Of the Helena group, none expressed any normal school training. One person had four years of vocational school beyond high school. Two had one year of college or university, three had two years, three had four years, and one had five years in the same division.¹³

¹³Table VI

TABLE VI

LENGTH OF TIME IN SCHOOL BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL ACCORDING TO NUMBER OF YEARS AND CATEGORY. (HELENA GROUP)

Category of Training	Years in School											
	1		2		3		4		5		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Normal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vocational	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	8.3	0	0	1	8.3
College or University	2	16.7	3	25.0	0	0	3	25.0	1	8.3	9	75.0
Other	2	16.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	16.7
Totals	4	33.3	3	25.0	0	0	4	33.3	1	8.4	12	100.0

One person had four years of training in normal school in the Outside group. Two members had two years of vocational school--one had four years. The college or university division was by far the largest percentage in this group. One person had one year, seven had two years, four had three years, nineteen had four years, and seven had five years or more. The total percentage of persons having four years or more in this group was a startling 55.3%. The total percentage of persons in the Outside group having one year or more in the college or university division alone was 80.9%. This does not include those from the other three divisions. Two choir members indicated one year in the "other" category. Three had two years in the same division. This total, for a percentage of 10.6% for one year in the "other" division, was second high for the

Outside group.¹⁴

TABLE VII

LENGTH OF TIME IN SCHOOL BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL ACCORDING TO NUMBER OF YEARS AND CATEGORY. (OUTSIDE GROUP)

Category of Training	Years in School											
	1		2		3		4		5		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Normal	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2.1	0	0	1	2.1
Vocational	2	4.3	0	0	0	0	1	2.1	0	0	3	6.4
College or University	1	2.1	7	14.9	4	8.5	19	40.0	7	14.9	38	80.9
Other	2	4.3	3	6.4	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	10.6
Totals	5	10.6	10	21.3	4	8.5	21	44.6	7	14.9	47	100.0

A preliminary conclusion is easily drawn in regard to the 94.0% figure taken from the Outside group. A great portion of the church choirs is made up of people with at least one year of training beyond high school. Further consideration discloses that of the total questionnaire return of eighty-four, thirty-three, or 39.3%, have attended some type of college for four years or more.

The degree of participation in high school music organizations presents a contrast between the Helena group and the Outside group. Although several persons from both groups did not check any high school music organizations, those checking more than one raise the average of the group.

¹⁴Table VII

In the Helena group, average participation was 1.06 groups per person. In the Outside group, the average was 1.82 groups per person. This implies that persons who attended Helena High School either did not enter into music organizations as readily as the other group, were not given the opportunity to do so, or have not been in school long enough to take advantage of available opportunities. Music groups shown on the questionnaire are band, orchestra, mixed chorus, a cappella choir, men's glee club, women's glee club, and other. The "other" category includes such groups as mixed ensemble, women's octette, men's quartet, mixed quartet, dance band, church choir, and madrigal groups.

To further show how the musical activities of some members can tend to lift the average degree of participation of the group as a whole, two individual cases are cited here. The first person, from the Helena group, checked orchestra, mixed chorus, and a cappella choir, and wrote in the space provided, women's octette. The second person, from the Outside group, was a member of band, orchestra, mixed chorus, and a cappella choir, and wrote in string trio, string quartet, and vocal trio. It is significant to note that this second person was active in the same capacities in college with the exception of band membership.

Vocal groups were most popular in high school participation. It must be recognized that the number of choices available to the student in high school music is greater in

the vocal field. Most schools with active vocal music departments offer mixed chorus, a cappella choir, men's glee club, and women's glee club, while on the instrumental side the offerings are usually either band or orchestra. Combined totals for participation in Helena vocal groups produced a figure of 79.5%.¹⁵ For the Outside group, sixty-nine vocal music groups of various types were checked. Since there were only fifty people in this Outside group, it is evident that some people were active in more than one organization. The percentage of participation was 137.7%, or 1.377 vocal music groups per person.

Band and orchestra participation was not nearly as great as the vocal. It is significant that, in the Helena group, band participation slightly overshadows orchestra participation. Orchestra participation was greater than band in the Outside group.¹⁶ Band participation exceeds orchestra participation by 25.0% in the first group, while orchestra exceeds band in the latter group by 42.8%.

¹⁵ Percentages given in reference to the degree of participation are not meant to be taken for percentages of individual participation in one group alone. Many members were in more than one group, while some members did not take part at all in musical groups, either in high school or college; hence, the necessary clarification.

¹⁶Table VIII.

TABLE VIII

DEGREE OF MUSICAL PARTICIPATION IN HIGH SCHOOL, BOTH GROUPS

	Helena Group (34)		Outside Group (50)	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Band	10	29.4	8	16.0
Orchestra	8	23.5	14	28.0
Mixed Chorus	13	38.2	26	52.0
A cappella	3	8.8	11	22.0
Men's Glee	0	0	6	12.0
Women's Glee	6	17.6	13	26.0
Other	5	14.7	13	26.0

The participation in orchestra to a greater extent than band in the Outside group indicates greater emphasis on orchestra in schools outside of Helena than in Helena High School.

The mixed chorus division was indicated as the most popular musical organization for members of both groups. This can be due to a number of situations. In many schools where a limited vocal curriculum is offered, the mixed chorus seems to be the most general. In some cases, qualifications for membership in other groups, such as a cappella choir, are harder to meet. Many people feel more secure in a group which uses some form of accompaniment than in one which depends entirely upon the ear and ability for tonal memory, as does the a cappella choir in its purest form.

For the twelve choir members from the Helena group who went to college, sixteen categories were checked, indicating a percentage of participation of 133.1%, a substantial gain for the group over the high school percentage figure of 1.06%. Forty-seven people of fifty in the Outside group went at least one year beyond high school. The percentage of participation for this group on the college level is 157.2%, which is less than the high school participation figure of 182.0% for the same group. From these figures it is noticed that college participation from the Helena group increased substantially, while the activity of the Outside group decreased in approximately the same proportion.

TABLE IX

DEGREE OF MUSICAL PARTICIPATION IN COLLEGE, BOTH GROUPS

	Helena Group (12)		Outside Group (47)	
	No.	%	No.	%
Band	1	8.3	5	10.6
Orchestra	2	16.7	6	12.7
Mixed Chorus	5	41.6	21	44.7
A cappella	1	8.3	13	27.6
Men's Glee	1	8.3	8	17.0
Women's Glee	1	8.3	10	21.2
Other	5	41.6	11	23.4

The increased participation of the Helena group in college music groups indicates an apparent effort on the

part of members of the group to take advantage of music courses offered in college. Another factor could be the more flexible system of scheduling found in colleges and universities. The decrease in the Outside group in college musical activity is not as easy to explain. One possibility is that the out-of-state members may have attended larger institutions, and the demand for their services was not as great as in colleges of the State of Montana. Another reason for this decline in music activity could stem from the great percentage of membership on the high school level for this group. When these students went to college, they may have decided to devote their time elsewhere, since in many instances a great amount of time was given over to music during high school. Probably the only other practical answer to the problem is the fact that many members may not have been able to meet qualifications for membership in college groups.

Explanation of the category called "Other" is made to help the reader recognize that not all musical experience in high school and college was in large choruses or instrumental groups. This classification includes small ensembles, such as duets, quartets, triple trios, dance band, and madrigal groups. In addition to these school organizations named, church choirs and town bands were named.

A rating system for indicating strengths and weaknesses in the choir member's own school music background

was introduced in question four.¹⁷ Members were asked to rate the following points of interest in their school vocal training by indicating "strong," "average," or "weak" after each item: Choral director, facilities for rehearsal, challenging type of music, instruction in vocal technique, adequate rehearsal time, opportunity for performance, and practice in sight-reading choral music. This was done on both high school and college levels, whichever applied to the individual situation.

Considering the group who attended high school in the first analysis, one sees definite discrepancies in answers presented by the Helena group over the Outside group.¹⁸ Twelve of the thirty-four Helena people marked their director "strong," while fourteen of the fifty Outsiders did so. This is a percentage of 35.3% for the former against 28.0% for the latter. Helena directors were rated stronger than non-Helena directors, according to the statistics. Similarly, the Helena group rated the following points higher than did the Outside group: (1) Instruction in vocal technique, and (2) Practice in sight-reading choral music.

¹⁷Appendix B.

¹⁸Table X.

TABLE X

HIGH SCHOOL MEMBERS INDICATING "STRONG" WITH REGARD TO SCHOOL VOCAL TRAINING

Category	Helena Group (34)		Outside Group (50)	
	No.	%	No.	%
Choral director	12	35.3	14	28.0
Rehearsal facilities	5	14.7	9	18.0
Challenging music	7	20.6	13	26.0
Vocal instruction	9	26.4	8	16.0
Adequate rehearsal	4	11.8	9	18.0
Performance	7	20.6	15	30.0
Sight reading	7	20.6	9	18.0

In rehearsal facilities, challenging type of music, rehearsal time, and opportunity for performance, the Outside group gave more "strong" marks by percentage than did the Helena group. An outstanding point to be considered at this time is that in every case where the Helena group was second in "strong" answers, it moved into first place in "average" answers. The same is true of the Outside group. Wherever the group was second in "strong" answers, it moved into first position in number of "average" answers. The number of "weak" ratings given were of such small amount as to be relatively unimportant. There was one exception: that concerning instruction in vocal technique in the Outside group. Fifteen persons or 30% gave this point a "weak" rating in their opinion. By way of contrast, only 17.6%

rated the same question "weak" in the Helena group.

No division between the Helena group and the Outside group is made in the examination of ratings given in the college group, since Helena High School is not concerned with that level of education. All persons who were in musical organizations in college did not answer this part of the question; some were members of the band and orchestra only and probably did not feel justified in rating the choral program in their schools. Of the majority who did take part in vocal music activities, the number rating the various phases in the "strong" category was exceedingly high.¹⁹

TABLE XI
RATINGS OF COLLEGE CHORAL PROGRAMS BY MEMBERS

Category	"Strong"		"Average"		"Weak"	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Choral director	28	47.5	8	13.5	3	5.1
Rehearsal facilities	13	22.0	17	28.8	8	13.5
Challenging music	25	42.4	12	20.2	2	3.4
Vocal instruction	19	32.2	14	23.8	6	10.3
Adequate rehearsal	9	15.2	23	39.0	6	10.3
Performance	17	28.8	16	27.2	4	6.8
Sight reading	13	22.0	15	25.4	10	17.0

¹⁹Table XI

In comparison to statistics taken from the high school group as a whole in this rating plan, the following observations are made of the above information: (1) In general most points rate higher on the college level than they do on the high school level; (2) The one exception to this is found under the heading "rehearsal time."

Members were given an opportunity to suggest means for improvement of their own choirs in question five.²⁰ In order to get specific suggestions, a group of nine items was listed so that the person filling out the questionnaire had but to write in his choice of five. In addition to the nine listed, space was provided for the choir member to write in additional suggestions for improvement in his own situation. The five items were rated according to importance from one to five, "one" being most important, "two" next important, and so on through. The suggested list of improvements is as follows: More rehearsal time, change in rehearsal time, more challenging type of music, easier music, different choir director, better accompanist or organist, more director-pastor cooperation, more specific goals, more attention to choral technique by director, other(s)--indicate.

A system of evaluation by points was worked out for this question. For each "one" marked, five points were given to the suggestion. For each answer of "two," four points were given, and so on through "five," which was worth

²⁰Appendix B.

one point whenever it was mentioned.

The choir members themselves added substantially to the list of improvements offered on the questionnaire by placing write-in answers frequently. The suggestions contributed were:

- More attendance of choir members
- More attention to director
- More support from congregation
- More organization
- More singers
- Punctuality at rehearsals
- More a cappella singing
- More aesthetic attitude
- More tenors
- More practice in sight-reading

The five most heavily weighted answers included:

(1) More rehearsal time, (2) more specific goals, (3) more challenging music, (4) more attention to choral technique by director, and (5) more regular attendance by choir members. The first four from this list were included on the questionnaire; the last one was considered important enough to be written in by the choir members.

The most significant fact found in the analysis of this question was that members chose "more rehearsal time" more often than any other point. In contrast, it can be remembered that out of the seven directors contacted, only three stated a need for more rehearsal. This is almost opposite to what one would think about the case. There is a definite trend, then, for the choir member to expect more time in rehearsal. Here is an opportunity for that director who wants more rehearsal time to have it without being

fearful of whether or not his group will support him. It cannot be said that members will support him completely, but surely the general attitude of members in this questionnaire cannot be overlooked.²¹

The question of easy or difficult music comes into the picture. More people indicated that they wanted a more challenging than easy type of music. This subject of type of music was very popular, and enjoyed more attention than any other subject, but because of its division into two questions, was not rated the highest, although "more challenging music" was number four in popularity.

The bottom end of the list, as it appears in Figure 1, indicates that only a very small percentage is interested in a new choir director. Only two persons, one rating this subject "second" in importance, the other "fourth," showed any interest in the question.

Every suggestion offered by the choir members in regard to question five was usable and made good sense. This fact is a tribute to the high quality of persons responding to the survey, and indicates genuine interest on the part of the choir member in this matter.

The sixth question was "State briefly your reason(s) for belonging to a church choir." Answers were worded differently in most cases, but the general thought was divided

²¹Figure 1.

SUGGESTIONS LISTED BY CHOIR MEMBERS IN ORDER OF THEIR
IMPORTANCE

- ~~More rehearsal time~~
- ~~More specific goals~~
- ~~More choral technique by director~~
- ~~More challenging music~~
- ~~More frequent attendance~~
- ~~More director-pastor cooperation~~
- ~~Change in rehearsal time~~
- ~~More attention to director~~
- ~~Easier music~~
- ~~Better accompanist-organist~~
- ~~Additional singers~~
- ~~More congregational support~~
- ~~Better organization of the choir~~
- ~~Punctuality at rehearsals~~
- ~~More tenors~~
- ~~Different choir director~~
- ~~More spiritual attitude~~
- ~~More a cappella singing~~
- ~~More practice in sight-reading~~

FIGURE 1

into two main categories: the love of singing, and responsibility to the church. Three other minor reasons given were: (1) chance for vocal training, (2) recruited, and (3) family background.²²

Eighty-two of the eighty-four persons in the study indicated some type of reason for singing in a church choir. It already has been stated in the Introduction to this paper that the church choir offers an outlet for people who are interested in some form of community music. The fact that a large group, 42.5% of the total, indicated that they sing in church choirs for the "enjoyment and love of singing" shows a need for some outlet of self expression.

TABLE XII
REASONS FOR BELONGING TO A CHURCH CHOIR IN HELENA

Reason	Number	Per cent
Enjoyment and love of singing	36	42.8%
Responsibility to the church	39	46.5%
Opportunity for vocal training	3	3.6%
Family background	2	2.4%
Recruited	2	2.4%
TOTALS	82	97.7%

The responsibility to the church and to God was the most popular division in this analysis. Many people

²²Table XII

mentioned fellowship in connection with their spiritual activities in the church as being secondary reasons for singing in the choir. One person wrote:

I feel that a church choir is one of the nicest groups one can be identified with, as the members, in my experience, become very close friends, and they are alert and intelligent people as a rule.

The largest group was that in which "responsibility to the church" was indicated as the principal reason for belonging to a church choir. Individual answers in this category ranged from "my share of church work" to the more detailed, "Everyone should do some kind of church work and I feel that choir is my 'niche.' I can help there, due to my training and reading, though my voice is not what it once was." This feeling of responsibility toward the group certainly must be an underlying stabilizing force that keeps many choirs from dying a slow death. There is no substitute for a faithful choir member. Those who form the nucleus in each choir are performing a great service to their churches.

The last two questions were concerned with the member's estimate of his attendance at choir rehearsals and performances during the last year. The average percentage of attendance at choir rehearsals was 82.1%. There were extremes; several people indicated 100% attendance. One person had a low of 15% on his returned questionnaire. It is interesting to note that the same person who had the 15%

attendance at rehearsals gave a rating of 75% for his attendance at performances.

The lowest percentage given for attendance at performances was 60%. The average for the entire group was 84.5%. Again, several members indicated 100% attendance at performances. Comparing the two average figures, 82.1% for rehearsal attendance and 84.5% for performance attendance, it appears that more people attended performances than rehearsals. The important consideration in this instance is whether or not a member who does not attend the rehearsal contributes to his choir's performance, or whether he detracts from the same. The feeling of responsibility to the group may tend to bring this person to the performance, even though he may not have attended the rehearsal; however, this person will have to depend upon his sight-reading ability or upon his being able to follow the choir members who know the music.

Average percentages were over 80% for both rehearsal and performance attendance. This indication of over four-fifths participation is one of significance. The members who returned questionnaires represent those with a high degree of loyalty to their choirs.

OBSERVATIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is apparent, through careful analysis of data obtained in this study, that many conclusions regarding church choir problems can be drawn. Only those which relate directly to the problem, however, will be considered in the recommendations of this study.

Choir directors in Helena churches enjoy long tenure in their jobs, as indicated by the average length of time in position--8.7 years. One person has been directing the same choir for twenty-one years and receives no salary. Two directors have been in their jobs only one year and both receive the top salaries in the study. There is a rather high negative correlation between time in position and salary, but it appears that newly-hired directors are asking for and receiving higher salaries.

There is a potential for greater choir membership in all choirs, as indicated by figures for average and maximum membership. The problem involved is that of finding a method of encouragement of consistent attendance at rehearsals and services. Some choirs are less stable than others in attendance of members from week to week.

The need for more male members was brought out by a majority of the directors. This does not, necessarily,

create an indictment against the church nor against the director, for the same reticence is noted among boys of high school age. From the educational standpoint, the author wishes to state that the amount of adult participation seems directly proportionate to the development of musical insight during childhood. It is rather futile to carry on a program of recruiting men when their backgrounds have not afforded them the opportunities for development of musical enthusiasm and ability. Men who would like to sing often feel their lack of ability to sing parts cannot be overcome enough for them to be successful members of a choir; therefore, although most of them could learn, they are reluctant to join as a "beginner."

The boy of Sunday School age should be encouraged in his musical interests. From these early years until manhood a bond develops between the spiritual aspects of life and music that could be the key to finding satisfaction in participation in a church choir. The responsibility of providing necessary stimulation for young people along musical lines rests heavily upon early education.

The majority of directors, four of seven, stated that they had sufficient rehearsal time in relation to what was expected of the choir. The members, however, overwhelmingly indicated that more rehearsal time would help their own choirs. One of the four directors stated that sufficient rehearsal time is allowed for the amount of work that his

choir is expected to do, although efficient use of time could be employed to a great advantage. Faithful attendance and punctuality are of vital importance to the success of the church choir, as in any like organization, and attention to detail during rehearsal can mean the difference between an average performance and a more professional one.

As far as budgets are concerned, it is doubtful whether a yearly budget of less than fifty dollars is sufficient to carry on a choral program of well-balanced proportions. New music is a great motivating force in maintaining members' interest. In support of the above, the smallest choir in membership also had the least budget.

There is no indication of proselyting of members among churches. Evidence of people singing in choirs other than their own was restricted to two cases. A feeling of unity between groups should exist in view of the above observation.

The strongest relationship between educational background and church choir participation was found in the amount of college training of the group who did not attend Helena High School. Ninety-four per cent of this group had at least one year of college. This indicates a definite trend for college people with backgrounds in music to be attracted to the church choir.

The fact that members of the Helena group did not participate in high school music groups to the extent that

the Outside group did is not necessarily an indictment of the Helena school system for failure to afford their people the opportunity to do so. As was mentioned before, many persons from the Helena group who indicated that they had not finished high school are students still in school. Hence, no comparison should be made on the high school level, since the Outside group is static and the Helena group is in a constant state of flux. There is a possibility for comparison of the two groups on the college level, since those persons in both groups who attended college already have received the bulk of their higher education. The degree of participation of the Helena group, 133.1%, is not as great as the Outside group, 157.2%. It is an increase over high school participation for the Helena group, but still does not approach the Outside group, which had a substantial decrease from the high school participation of 182.0%.

Even with the substantial increase in college participation over high school for the Helena group, those who attended Helena High School and went on to college did not take part as actively as those belonging to the Outside group. Since no definite reasons were given for the difference, it is assumed that the Helena group was not as interested as the Outside group in college music participation. This lack of interest could be reflected back to the school system to a degree, but not necessarily to the school system alone.

The cooperation between school vocal music directors and church choir directors should be on a fifty-fifty basis. One director said, "students should be encouraged to sing in their church choirs." However, that cooperation should go further than was stated by this director. He would have been more nearly right had he added that student members of church choirs should be urged to sing in school organizations.

Definite steps can be taken by the school director to bring about the above-mentioned cooperation. A survey of all students enrolled in chorus classes to find out church affiliation or preference could be initiated at the beginning of each school term. A list of names could be furnished each church choir director, indicating available student material for his choir. The church director could then contact these students in regard to membership in his choir. A follow-up by the school director within three or four weeks would enable him to find out the effectiveness of such a plan. Also, high school vocal students would be encouraged to participate in church choirs if they were awarded grade points in their high school chorus classes or honor points toward an award.

An efficient music program in the public schools produces better material for church choirs. Members who are more mature musically are an immediate help to the director and the choir itself, making it possible to more successfully fulfill the duties of a musical organization.

Subsequently, the church is more likely to give the choir support in interest, finances, and in membership. If the churches are "music minded," the community itself, of which the church is an integral part, will also take pride in the school music. Recognition of these facts is important to the success of both the church and school music programs.

An observation, borne out by the study, is that the Helena group, thirty-four persons, is smaller than the Outside group with fifty members. At first glance, one sees that Helena graduates do not support, in large numbers, the church choirs of this community. It is possible that the city population changes more than one realizes, and that this assumption is not true because of the influx of outsiders. Whether it is true or false does not alter the fact that a follow-up program of Helena High School music graduates would be beneficial in getting better support for the Helena church choirs.

APPENDIX A

Questionnaire for Directors

1. How long have you been directing church choirs? _____
2. How long have you been in your present position? _____
3. Do you receive pay for your services? No _____ Yes _____
Monthly salary _____
4. Does any member of your choir receive pay? No _____ Yes _____
Amount _____
5. Does the organist or accompanist receive pay? No _____ Yes _____
Amount _____
6. Indicate whether you have most difficulty in getting:
Sopranos _____ Altos _____ Tenors _____ Basses _____
7. What is the average membership of the choir? _____
What is the maximum membership (in case of special church days, such as Christmas or Easter)? _____
8. How many months of the year does the choir function? _____
9. Do you have ample rehearsal time in relation to what is expected of the choir? Yes _____ No _____
10. Does the choir wear vestments? Men - Yes _____ No _____
Women - Yes _____ No _____
11. How is the choir financed? Indicate the approximate

yearly budget for the choir, and indicate how the money is obtained.

Approximate yearly budget \$_____. Money is obtained by_____

12. Do you know any member of your church who is singing in another church choir in Helena? Yes _____ No _____

Remarks _____

Do you know of any member of another church that is singing in your choir? Yes ___ No ___ Explain _____

Are you a member of the church whose choir you are directing? Yes _____ No _____

13. Give your opinion as to the degree of cooperation needed between school music directors and yourself in regard to securing student members in your choir. _____

14. Is there a regularly scheduled junior choir in your church? Yes _____ No _____. If so, do you direct it? Yes _____ No _____

Note: It is not necessary that this questionnaire be signed. Please make comments in the margin or on the back, as those comments will add interest to an otherwise cut-and-dried study.

APPENDIX B

General Questionnaire

1. Where did you attend high school? _____

Encircle the length of time spent in high school:

1 year 2 years 3 years 4 years

2. Check any schooling beyond high school: Normal School _____

Vocational School _____ College or University _____

Other (specify) _____

Encircle length of time in school beyond high school.

1 year 2 years 3 years 4 years

3. Check musical organizations of which you were a member while attending high school or college.

High School: Band _____, Orchestra _____, Mixed Chorus _____,

A Cappella Choir _____, Men's Glee _____, Women's Glee _____,

Other (explain) _____

College: Band _____, Orchestra _____, Mixed Chorus _____,

A Cappella Choir _____, Men's Glee _____, Women's Glee _____,

Other (explain) _____

4. Indicate "strong," "average," or "weak" in regard to the following points of interest in your school vocal training by placing S, A, or W after the appropriate item:

	H.S.	College
Choral director	_____	_____
Facilities for rehearsal.	_____	_____
Challenging type of music	_____	_____
Instruction in vocal technique (group). .	_____	_____
Adequate rehearsal time	_____	_____
Opportunity for performance	_____	_____
Practice in sight-reading choral music. .	_____	_____

5. Below are listed several suggested items which, if employed in various ways may tend to improve the quality of church choirs in general. Indicate what you consider to be the five most applicable to your group by placing the numbers 1 through 5 in front of the appropriate items. Indicate most important item by placing "1" in front of it, "2" in front of the next important item, etc., until you have picked five.

- ____ More rehearsal time
- ____ Change in rehearsal time
- ____ More challenging type music
- ____ Easier music
- ____ Different choir director
- ____ Better accompanist or organist
- ____ More director-pastor cooperation
- ____ More specific goals
- ____ More attention to choral technique by director
- ____ Other(s) Indicate _____

6. State briefly your reason for belonging to a church choir. _____
7. Indicate approximate percentage of rehearsals you have attended this year. _____
8. Indicate approximate percentage of attendance at performance by your choir this year. _____