



THE GRAND COUNCIL OF THE
ORDER OF DEMOLAY

FRANK S. LAND
FOUNDER AND
SECRETARY GENERAL

ARMOUR AND WARWICK BOULEVARDS

KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

September 28, 1942

Mr. Calvin E. Uzelmeier
7725 Temple Road
Philadelphia, Pa.

My dear Brother Uzelmeier:

Our country is at war. The whole world is in chaos. Every bit of earth is a battle front. Men are fighting and dying. DeMolay is experiencing its first war.

During such an hour I wish that I might, through some magical formula, knock at your door, sit down and visit with you awhile---but this is impossible. I must depend upon these written words, inadequate as they are, to ask you to join with me in advancing DeMolay frontiers. It will mean doing the greatest "bit" of boy work we have attempted. So do not lay this letter aside and forget about it but please read every word. If it gives you a new vision, I will be eternally grateful. Perhaps new and better ideas will come to you than here expressed but the important point is that DeMolay has heard a "call" and we who hold its destiny in our hands must plan, work and then labor as never before if we truly love youth. Any sacrifices that we make will be very small indeed beside those of our boys at the front.

For twenty-three years DeMolay, quietly but militantly, has been preparing boys for the test they now face. We are not a military organization. Our program has been one of developing character with special emphasis on love of God, love of Home and love of Country. By precept and example, we have been hammering constantly into the hearts and minds of our boys the eternal virtues taught every child at its mother's knee. During the present conflict we must not deviate the slightest from this simple program of character development. This is our work and must be our destiny.

We have taken pride during peaceful pursuits, in the worthwhile evidences of DeMolay teachings. Now we meet the supreme tests of seeing how well our teachings stand the onslaught of treacherous warfare influences. Our task has been to so develop the latent powers within every DeMolay that he will go forth from our midst fortified as well as sustained with unfaltering moral standards, habits of character, ideals of citizenship and democracy that will help him bridge and meet every emergency that he is called upon to face whether it be in secret or before the eyes of the world.

We have undertaken the job of bringing out a boy's masculinity to supplement his home training so that each DeMolay will stand out in the world among men. We must teach not only manliness but honor, loyalty, fidelity, decency, integrity, honesty and sportsmanship as well.

More than 300,000 men have served on Advisory Councils during our history. About 20,000 of these have served as "Dads". You are one of them. Your words, your teachings, your "pats on the back", are finding "testing blocks" in the hearts and minds of every DeMolay that has come under your influence. Today they are at every bastion of freedom--in outposts like the Solomons, Egypt, Iceland, England and Ireland.

Thus far the war has not seriously affected the DeMolay Movement. Hundreds of active DeMolays have enlisted in the armed forces of the nation and thousands upon thousands of majority DeMolays are now serving in the army or navy. It now appears certain that within the next sixty or ninety days, those of our membership in the eighteen and nineteen year old groups will be drafted. When this happens--and it is going to happen--DeMolay must devote itself exclusively to the fifteen, sixteen and seventeen year old boys. At first thought we might be inclined to think that we will not be able to carry on under such conditions but I want you to stop and think for a moment because this condition that has come upon us can prove to be a blessing and opportunity for greater service.

DeMolay started in your town and my town with fifteen, sixteen and seventeen year old boys. Nearly all of them were in high school. Practically none were employed boys or collegians. Our greatest memberships were in the first couple of years of our chapters existence. These boys soon became older boys and they drifted away from high school and its many contacts. The result has been that for a number of years a majority of chapters have been composed principally of employed boys with virtually no contacts or sphere of influence to attract other boys into DeMolay. Today, the largest chapters of the Movement are composed almost exclusively of high school boys. They maintain large memberships because each DeMolay in high school meets scores of boys daily, eligible for DeMolay, while the employed boy is confined to a small circle immediately surrounding him. You and I know this is a true statement of facts.

This letter is meant to stimulate and afford a change of base in DeMolay thinking. My suggestion to you and your associates on the Advisory Council is that we must, at least for the time being, during this emergency, forget any program that involves the eighteen and nineteen year old boys in your chapter and devote your efforts exclusively to the fifteen, sixteen and seventeen year old boys. Right now you are probably electing and appointing your officers for the Fall and Winter terms. With the certainty that the eighteen and nineteen year old boys will be drafted within the next few months, isn't it sensible to clean house, do away with progressive advancement of officers for the "duration" and appeal directly to the high school age bracket for members and officers? You will find that if you appoint the natural leaders in high school to the chapter offices, it will pay big dividends. In other words, start this Fall with a new vision. Start the Fall activities as though you were just instituting your chapter.

With a "peppy" social program to attract these young men, you will find that your chapter will hold the interest of this age group better than any similar youth effort in the community.

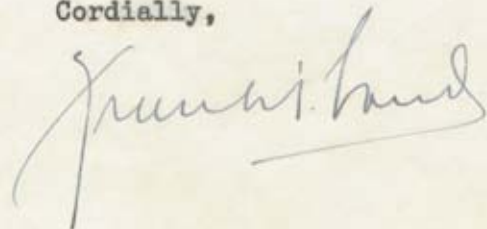
All of this might seem rather disconcerting for the moment in view of the fact that your present chapter set-up may be ever so successful with older boys but we must face the future courageously and with open minds if we are going to bridge the present emergency and keep DeMolay alive in your community. I would not have you, for one moment, feel that I am underestimating the great value of the older youth, nor do I mean by implication or otherwise, that the eighteen, nineteen and twenty year old boys should be ignored and forgotten--that would be nonsensical--but you know, as I do, that during these times, he will not be available for DeMolay activity much longer.

We have here in Kansas City, as you know, the Mother Chapter with a membership of approximately five hundred young men. About four hundred of this number are over eighteen years of age. We estimate that virtually all of them will be called to the colors. Three weeks ago, I called a meeting of the chapter and explained the situation. Only one boy on the line was a high school student. They arose nobly to the emergency and promptly set to work to bring into the chapter, boys of high school age. The officers to a man offered to step aside so that younger boys could take their places in the emergency. Committees were appointed to interview various high school groups. The principal of the high school has aided by way of suggesting who the various leaders are in the student body. These young men were invited to a chapter dinner where they were told that the older boys of the chapter would undoubtedly be called into the service within the next few months and they were invited to join DeMolay with a very definite understanding they would be called upon almost immediately to select the chapter's officers from those joining the chapter. The results were far beyond expectation. Through the efforts of the older chapter boys and the high school leaders, a class of more than three hundred high school boys will be initiated into the Mother Chapter next month. This is only the beginning, for DeMolay in this community is back to its natural field of endeavor. These high school boys are creating more DeMolay activity than has been prevalent in the past fifteen years. A lasting reservoir for future members is being tapped.

I hope you will enthusiastically consider this suggestion and profit by our experience here. I have been quietly testing this plan out in other places and the success has been phenomenal. There is no need or justification for a chapter to be embarrassed by a lack of members, or close for the "duration". It is our duty to make available to every youth the teachings and ideals of DeMolay. We must do all in our power to help them as best we can for the dark days ahead. I trust that with the help of God you will join with me in this effort.

With word of deep personal regard and best wishes, I am

Cordially,



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