

— Reports To Alliance —

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON MORAL AND SOCIAL REFORM

Our purpose today is to present to those gathered a few facts in connection with the need for "Moral and Social Reform". The subject covers a wide field, and we can only hope to skim the surface. While there is need for such reforms in all age groups, we would like especially to speak regarding our young people.

Some shocking things have been revealed in connection with teenage vandalism in the United States. Billy Graham states, "The problem of youthful flaunting of the law has become one of the most serious social problems confronting our nation."

Various things contribute to the making of a juvenile delinquent. He may be the product of a broken home — or a good home. MacLean's magazine reports that one front-rank U. S. social scientist says that "today's — and tomorrow's — young hoodlums are as liable to come from middle or upper class suburbia as from the slums." The magazine goes on to say, "If good homes 'are' producing young hoodlums, why? The most common factor listed by sociologists is simply the attitude toward violence, teenagers pick up from movies and T. V."

The reports in our newspapers and magazines indicate a need for help in guiding our young people. We cannot say how many cases showing similar needs go unreported. As Christians, let us endeavour to do what we can. We can be sure Satan is working — he has his obscene literature, his films to lower morals. There are those to advocate the "do-as-you-please" philosophy and agents who seek to destroy the religious faith of our youth. We who oppose such, must not do it in word only, but in deed as well.

Another phase of the youth problem is "the alcohol problem". J. Edgar Hoover says that the greatest single factor in the rapid increase of delinquency and crime among youth is the drinking habit of either the youths or their parents". Even as immorality is presented to the eyes of our youth in the movies and many magazines, so it seems the liquor interests realize "it pays to advertise". It is encouraging to note that many magazines do not take liquor advertisements. It would be good for us to write them a letter of appreciation. The following quotation re the United States is worthy of note —

"Although beverage dispensaries still exceed places of religious worship by 131,040, there was a decrease in the number of beverage licenses of 3,856 during the year ending June 30, 1958, the temperance group said, while 1,444 new churches and synagogues were built."

C. Aubrey Hearn has suggested ten things every Christian can do about the alcohol problem:

Be an enthusiastic abstainer

Learn about alcohol and the alcohol problem

Study local conditions

Patronize places which do not sell beer or other alcoholic beverages

Safeguard the home against alcohol

Vote for Christian officials who are dry personally and politically

Seek legislation prohibiting alcohol advertising

Help alcoholics

Vitalize organizations that minister to youth

Work and pray for a liquor-free America."

It is not sufficient for us to realize there is a need of work among our young people. Alcohol and delinquency must be fought and conquered.

Where shall we begin? First of all, we can do our best in our homes. Are we providing activities for our children? Are we taking time to read and pray together?

Dr. L. Nelson Bell, Billy Graham's father-in-law, proposed the following experiment:

"Take the book of Proverbs, and in it you will find 31 chapters, one for each day of the month. For one year read one chapter (beginning with the corresponding chapter for the date begun), and I will promise on the basis of personal experience, the professional background of 40 years as a practicing physician, and yet more years as a Christian, that every problem of youth will be found and met in that one book."

Let us not be too busy to guide our families — do not substitute the good for the best.

However, our responsibility does not stop at home. There are needy children in our communities whom we can seek to reach for Christ through our Sunday Schools, Crusader Groups, and Vacation Bible Schools. It has been said that "Childhood is the golden age of conversion." Other groups realize the importance of reaching the child — let us follow their example and endeavour to reach them for Christ. This is one way to decrease juvenile delinquency — and the best way.

If the child has been won, then we must win the youth. A harder task? Yes, but possible. We realize that basically the young people need a change of heart. We may not, however, be able to convince them at once that Christ can satisfy them. In the meantime we can work toward that goal through our youth groups. It will mean work; it will cost money; it will require patience. Are there young people in your area who would go to church if someone showed an interest? Is there a youth group or children's Class that needs a Christian leader? Volunteer your services and help in this way. We have witnessed some of the results of those who have gone "a little farther" in reaching the young. Surely it is worthwhile.

Billy Graham states, "Delinquency among our teenagers can be conquered and cured if we follow a course of intelligent, sincere action. It cannot be alleviated by wishful thinking, by a 'handwringing' attitude, or by unjustified criticism. We must recognize where the basic problem lies. It cannot be solved by the sociologist, psychiatrist or law enforcement officer alone."

Let us seek to win our young people to Christ and guide them into constructive Christian work.

"Lift up your eyes and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest . . . the harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few".

Are we willing to go forth as labourers among our young people and gather a harvest with eternal rewards.

Submitted by —

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Prayer—secret, fervent, believing prayer—lies at the root of all personal godliness. Wm. Carey.

Prayer is the creator as well as the channel of devotion. E. M. Bounds.

Why go to Bethany for high school?

Because of its

Christian approach in learning,
Christian atmosphere for living,
Christian activity for leisure.

Make high school days count for Christ