

SOCIAL AND MORAL REFORM

(Presented at Alliance, Beulah Camp, 1962)

Mr. Superintendent, Ministers and Delegates, Brothers and Sisters in the Lord, we, your committee on "Social and Moral Reform," submit the following report:

An unknown writer has said, "All moral reformers are unconsciously attracted to the vice they seek to eradicate," but this committee assures you that we feel that vice, crime, and evil habits are not attractive to sound thinking men and women. We form a multitude of people like "Lot" of Old Testament days whose Righteous Soul was vexed by the wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah. The statements of a number of well known men are worthy of note.

J. Edgar Hoover, F. B. I. Director, in the United States, says "Crime in America shows a relentless trend upward". He further stated, "I am not easily shocked, nor easily alarmed, but now I am both shocked and alarmed, for a creeping rot of moral disintegration is eating into the vitals of our nation. The crimes that our Youngsters are committing are unspeakable.

Former President, Dwight D. Eisenhower, in a speech marking the dedication of the \$3 million Eisenhower Library in Abilene, Kansas, issued a sharp indictment of America's sense of "beauty, decency, and morality". He protested strongly against "movies and stage", and books and periodicals using vulgarity, sensuality, indeed downright filth, to sell their wares.

Dr. A. W. Tozer, editor of **THE ALLIANCE WITNESS**, says, "I am among those who believe that our Western Civilization is on its way to perish". He said, "future historians will record that we of the 20th century had intelligence enough to create a great civilization but not the moral wisdom to preserve it."

Dr. Billy Graham said in his message on the third night of his Chicago Crusade that teenagers are obsessed by sex and added that the church was largely to blame for a widespread ignorance about moral standards.

Juvenile delinquency has reached an all time high. A Canadian radio commentator said a few weeks ago that \$115,000,000, worth of goods were stolen annually by delinquent children, and the **MONCTON TIMES** issued a statement in the first part of 1962 that during 1961 alone, hold-ups, bank robberies, and such like netted thieves and gangsters approximately \$200,000,000, in Canada.

These crimes are not committed alone by hard and seasoned criminals. One third of the prisoners in Dorchester Penitentiary are under twenty one years of age. Is Dr. R. V. DeLong's statement true, that "behind each delinquent child is a delinquent parent"?

Lord Shawcross, one of Britain's foremost lawyers, says, "parents of juvenile delinquents should be punished by the courts in some cases. He said, "Let parents show a cause why they have not kept their children in order"! He suggested that probation, fines, and even an occasional stay in prison might soon help get the responsibility for bringing up children to where it belonged, in the home.

We feel there are cases where children have grown up in defiance of a good home environment and have broken the laws that are made to govern our land as well as the hearts of loved ones. But usually children who are the chief offenders are those who come from homes that have been broken by divorce or where there is disunity, bickering, and insecurity.

Children facing life with little or no Christian training deserve our prayers and sympathy. Let every young couple starting to make a home realize your "Home is your kingdom", and "Children are the heritage of the Lord", to be trained for His Glory.

Is it any wonder that so many boys and girls learn

about the sordid and rough way of life when they are allowed to view such scenes on T. V. as shooting, fighting, robbery, drinking, smoking, and the performing of over painted, half dressed actresses which make a lasting and harmful impression on their young minds and which too often they try to imitate? Here are two concrete examples. "A deacon's pre-school age son grabbed the hand of a minister's little daughter and said, 'Come. Let's dance.'" Another little girl just home from Sunday School was asked by her mother, "Darling, were you good today, or did your teacher have to tell you to sit down and be quiet?" "Her reply was," Only when I stood up to show them how to do the twist." This may sound humorous, but a man of God said with a sob in his voice, "My grand-children know more about Hollywood stars than they do about the Twelve Apostles."

We do, however, rejoice in those who go out from well disciplined homes where Christian parents have reared their children about the family altar, and where so many learned to trust in Jesus as their personal Savior, to believe the Bible, to revere the Christian Sabbath, and where regular church attendance was a part of family life. Time and space would not permit us to mention scores of young men and women who are today serving their Lord faithfully at home and abroad, the product of our "Reformed Baptist homes."

We deplore the flood of obscene literature that has deluged our news stands for some time, and are gratified to learn that these news stands are being examined in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia in order to eliminate the lewd and the undesirable.

We are encouraged that, at long last, medical science has admitted that the tobacco habit is harmful to the body and that cigarette smoking especially is the cause for eighty-five percent of those suffering from lung cancer and has been warning the public about it. When this was made a known fact, Dr. Sam York of Hartland, then a medical student at Dalhousie, said seventy-five percent of the student doctors stopped smoking—the older ones were more loathe to break from the habit.

So often the question is asked, "Why do teenagers and even younger boys and girls learn to smoke?" "Here is what Iris Thurlwell, Miss Canada for 1961 says:

"There is nothing to be desired in such habits as smoking and drinking to help youth toward their goals in life. As far as I am concerned, I prefer to be an individualist and not follow the crowd. I enjoy the company of clean, clear-headed youth; smoking cheapens a girl. Some girls smoke to appear older, but I believe that one's intelligence is the real mark of maturity."

And, by the way, the proprietor of a Victoria, B. C., tobacco shop said recently that they had sold an enormous quantity of pipes to female smokers since the lung cancer scare.

We as a committee would not infringe upon the Temperance Report, yet we recognize that many of the major crimes committed and many of the more serious accidents that have occurred have been the direct result of drinking. Statistics show that thousands are killed yearly by drink, where only one is killed by a mad dog; yet they shoot the dog and license the liquor. Does it make sense?

As individuals, we may not be able to do much to improve the situation as we see it, realizing we are in the days that are spoken of in the Bible concerning the "increase of wickedness", yet as a church we must keep our standards high, and by precept and example prove to all and sundry that there is a "Way of Holiness."

May it not be said of us, as Tom Reese, the English evangelist, said in Moncton this spring concerning the

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