

# What Is Happening To Our Youth?

One does not have to read statistics from a professionally conducted census to know that many young people who are "raised in the church" are being lost to the cause of Christ. I want us to examine five key elements in family life and society which are counteracting the influence of the gospel on our children.

## ***Permissiveness***

In many instances, parents have abdicated their God-given role. They set no firm guidelines, have no definite rules of the house, and often allow themselves to be manipulated. Parents are often literally afraid to have firm rules because they are afraid of the child rebelling. They do not know that love is not some kind of soft attitude, but that there must be a certain kind of toughness to love, amply shown in the Book of Proverbs. It does not mean being roguish, tyrannical, or unmerciful in the demands it makes. But youth need guidance. They need someone to tell them "how far," some "cans" and "can'ts" with good sound "whys." And in some instances the "why" may be simply "because I said so."

## ***Work***

In many instances young people are pushed and shoved into the "job market" without due consideration as to how the job will interfere with their worship, study, or the influences they will face. None of us want our children to grow up to be lazy. We want them to "learn the value of the dollar" to that, at least for most of us, "money doesn't grow on trees." But often that part time job, which may be taking far too much of their time, is during hours on Lord's Day or during mid-week Bible study and every night of a gospel meeting. And then the parents, having allowed, encouraged, or demanded that their children work, wonder why their child is no longer interested in spiritual matters.

## ***Materialism***

Not only are children being shoved into the work area to earn their "spending money" or to "buy some wheels," but they see parents who are often more committed to providing "stuff" than they are to living for the Lord. Frequently the parents are recreation-crazed, and allow recreational activity to keep them from services of worship and periods of Bible study, or they often put their work ahead of worship, especially if "overtime pay" is involved.

## ***Humanism***

Like an octopus with tentacles, humanism is attacking from many directions, approaching for various sources. From early years, humanism's eroding influences bombard our young people incessantly; and often parents are unaware of it. In many instances, parents cannot be aroused to a sense of concern when they are told of these influences. Evolution is only one of humanism's tentacles, but it is a powerful one. How can one who is constantly told that he is but the higher form of lower life fail to ultimately act the part? It is bound to dilute spiritual influences unless strong teaching is given to the contrary. "Value clarification" advocates teach youth there are no absolutes, no real definitive standard of right or wrong. This being true, what is to be expected but that he should cast aside the "old fogey" ideas of parents, preachers, Bible class teachers, and elders?

## ***Hypocrisy***

Children are very incisive, easily able to discern a sham. When they repeatedly see hypocritical behavior on the part of adults who are in some authority over them, it has a terrible effect. Elders, preachers, parents, policemen, governmental officials advocating one course while practicing another send for uncertain sounds to youth. Especially in spiritual matters, if they see no real devotion or depth of spiritual life, it devastates them.

Norman Fultz