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College of Family Living

American Teen-Agers of the 1960's— Our Despair or Hope?

Blaine R. Porter

Teen-agers of the 1960's are growing up in the midst of the greatest scientific breakthrough in history. Such areas as education, employment, goals, values, and morality present problems of an unprecedented nature. This generation of teen-agers faces the challenge of making wise choices regarding power, money, sex, prejudice, and their role in the world. They must find a moral code that will suit their needs in the society in which they live. In order to successfully meet the challenges which face them, our teen-agers need to have parents, adults, and community and national leaders who can be models and heroes to them and who can set an example of fairness, morality, and inspired leadership. In spite of the serious problems and challenges which presently face us, this generation of teen-agers may be one of the most trustworthy and capable we have had in a long time.

Doubt, anxiety, cynicism, and indifference still permeate much of our thinking about adolescents. This appraisal can partially be explained by the adverse publicity and reporting of teen-age behavior which have appeared in the public press during the last several years.

I do not believe that the basic needs, drives, fears, and feelings of teen-agers are materially different today than they have been for previous generations. On the other hand, the world in which we live and the probable world of tomorrow are so different and likely to be so different that problems and challenges facing the present generation of teen-agers are unique in many respects.

Presidential address delivered at the National Council on Family Relations annual meeting, Miami, Florida, October 1964. First published in *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, Vol. 27 (May 1965), pp. 139-47.

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Today's younger generation has grown up in the midst of the greatest scientific breakthrough in history, one which simultaneously shrank and extended the ordinary man's world almost beyond recognition. When we consider that some 90 percent of the research scientists who have ever lived are still alive today, and that about half the research and development money spent in all the history of the United States was spent in the last eight years, we can be sure that this technological acceleration is by no means at an end. These expenditures are going to continue going up, with increasing effects on our daily lives. The great question is: What kind of effects? Up to now, the benefits have far outweighed the difficulties of adjustment.

David Sarnoff predicts that science and technology will advance more in the next 36 years than in all the millennia since man's creation. Naturally, we all hope that the further advance of technology will bring further rises in living standards, personal comforts, recreation, learning, travel, free time for cultural and humanitarian pursuits, everything to which a free society should aspire. But these results will not be automatic. If we fail to make adequate investments in what is sometimes called our "human capital," then the most brilliant flowering of technology in all history could prove to be, in human terms, a mass catastrophe. I think never before in history has mankind faced the possible social errors that were irremediable, at least in terms of survival of the race. Always in the past there was a second chance.

The main challenge of the future, at least to United States society, will revolve not around the production of goods, but around the difficulties and opportunities involved in a world of accelerating change and ever-widening choices. Change has always been part of the human condition. What is different now is the pace of change, and the prospect is that it will come faster and faster, affecting every part of life, including personal values, morality, and religion which seem most remote from technology.

The Angel Gabriel in *Green Pastures* put it very succinctly when he said, "Everything nailed down is coming loose."

The American teen-ager is brought up in a world of baffling conflicts and contradictions. Few if any societies have ever been more protective of their children. American youngsters are given the best medical care. They are fed according to the latest nutritional dictates with abundance, if not overabundance. Obesity has replaced malnutrition as a serious problem.

Yet, despite the protective shield against physical harm or hurt, they are exposed to the most questionable aspects of adult society with a minimum of protection—much less, in fact, than is provided for the young in countries which offer their children far fewer material advantages. For a number of reasons, ranging from the purely commercial profit motive to the misguided interpretation of freedom, no motion picture, no matter how unsuitable, is effectively made off-limits to minors. The worst excesses of crime and violence are made easily accessible to children on television and in print. The adult world's frustrated and juvenile obsession with sex saturates the adolescent world with inescapable and distorted images. Yet the political speech-making and educational sermonizing stress such phrases as "moral and spiritual values" in a way that makes them appear to be a commodity to be bought and delivered—quite apart from the realities of life. Children are still reared on talk about the morality of thrift and saving for a rainy day, while they are surrounded by signs urging their elders to "Fly now, Pay later."

No nation's youth has ever been given a better insight into the ways of science and the machinery of their own bodies. Yet the spiel of the medicine man and of the cure-all side show have been given vast network billing; and the same youngsters who understand intricate rocket technology are confronted almost daily with diagrams and "scientific" cartoons intended to make them believe totally false and meaningless "facts" about the scientific powers of products ranging from laxatives to floor wax.

The majority of American states have ordered their schools to "teach" the dangers of alcohol and narcotics. Yet the cocktail party is the ultimate form of social respectability, and the legal approach to the narcotics problem is little short of medieval.

Our teen-agers are growing up at a point in time and space when a "new morality" is being peddled, which says, in effect—dirty books are not dirty, swear words are not profane, pornography is art, promiscuity is liberalism, nihilism is courage, and agnosticism is open-mindedness.

In general, about one-third of the youth of this country have never had it better, insofar as their employability is concerned. Those now in school who are achieving well, who find schooling a self-fulfilling process, who anticipate completion of secondary school and some education beyond, face an economy that will usually welcome them. On the other hand, those who have left before at least graduating from high school, and those now in school who

find it unsatisfying—unrelated to their goals and values—face an economy that has less and less of a place for them.

Our youth of today will be able to have far less confidence in the permanency of a way of life or a professional pursuit. The world is changing so rapidly, and technological changes are occurring with such great frequency, that youths of today must be flexible, adaptable, and prepared to make immediate and major adjustments in their occupational lives. Special skills can become obsolete very quickly.

These young men and women are today's children living in tomorrow's world and preparing for the real takeover. Today their strength lies in their energy and their ability to dream. Their weakness may lie in their impatience. World conditions have created a sense of urgency which permeates and influences all our actions. Our opportunities have never been more challenging; but they include, unfortunately, the opportunity to make fools of ourselves.

THE AMERICAN TEEN-AGER AS PICTURED BY THE POPULAR PRESS

If we were to limit our appraisal of the present characteristics of the American teen-ager to the newspapers, popular magazines, and radio and television newscasts, we would essentially see the following: "Teen-age Gang Steals Car," "Juveniles Arrested in Gang Killing," "Youth Dope Ring Smashed," "Police Raid Juvenile Vice Party," "Venereal Disease Rates Soar Among Teen-agers," "Delinquency and Crime Rates Among Youth Multiply Startlingly," "Premarital Pregnancies, Illegitimacy, and Abortions Among Teen-agers Become a National Scandal." We could sprinkle in the hundreds of youth-inspired disturbances which do not make the national headlines. The blot on our national scene is ugly and symptomatic.

Let me summarize very briefly some of the findings of a Gallup Poll in which over 3,000 boys and girls between the ages of 14 and 22 were interviewed.¹

Our typical youth will settle for low success rather than risk failure. He wants to marry early, after a college education. He wants two or three children and a spouse who is affectionate, sympathetic, considerate, and moral. Rarely does he want a mate with intelligence, curiosity, or ambition. He wants a little ranch house, an inexpensive new car, a job with a large company, and a chance to watch TV each evening after the smiling children are asleep in bed.

¹George Gallup and Evan Hill, "Youth: The Cool Generation," *Saturday Evening Post*, 234 (December 1961), pp. 23-30, 63-80.

He is a reluctant patriot who expects nuclear war in his time, and he would rather compromise than risk what he has. Essentially, he is quite conservative and cautious. Youths as a whole are quite religious, yet quite critical of the church as an institution. They do not seem to connect religion with honesty. They regard rigged television quizzes and payola as facts of life. Cheating in school, cribbing on examinations, or taking credit for another student's work is widespread.

According to this report, we have a generation of teen-agers who want to travel first class, who want to retire early. They are willing to compromise, to conform, to exist in intellectual poverty.

William Peterson reports a study of ten northern Illinois high schools in which more than half of the students would rather be a good athlete or a leader of extracurricular activities than a brilliant student.²

It is a popular belief today that young people are drifting and shiftless, too ready to settle for the easy buck, for a sort of middle-class, middle-aged security, less concerned with their own capacity to do a job than with what the job will pay.

According to this view, when we need all our sense of purpose and capacity for sustained effort, we seem in danger of losing our bearing or surrendering to a "cult of easiness."

POSITIVE VIEW OF TEEN-AGERS

While the authors of gloom and doom spread their propaganda, and while the popular view presents youths as being irresponsible, sexually promiscuous, frequently defiant and delinquent, some views and appraisals of other facts are more optimistic. These appraisals present a view of youths modifying but not rejecting the values and standards of the adult world.

Teen-age marriages have been increasing. Since 1890, the median age of the bride at first marriage has declined from 22 to 20; of the bridegroom, from 26.7 to 22.5. Many of these very young marriages do not work out well, and a disproportionate number of them end in divorce. But a great many marriages at all ages do not work out well. Teen-age couples are confronted with problems, to be sure; but a goodly percentage of them show signs of solving those problems and of making their marriages lasting and fruitful unions.

In spite of school dropouts becoming an increasing problem with

²William Petersen, "Rock 'n' Roll," *Science*, 134 (October 13, 1961), pp. 1061-1062.

increasing numbers, we have witnessed in the United States a consistent increase in the number of students who graduate from high school. In 1954, 76 percent of students who entered the tenth grade graduated from high school; in 1964, this figure had increased to 79 percent. In terms of numbers, school dropouts are increasing; but percentage-wise, we are making gains, not experiencing losses. Teen-agers in greater numbers and increasing percentages are attending, continuing in, and completing high school.

Now what about juvenile crime and violence? Everywhere outbreaks of teen-age lawlessness have set in motion high-level conferences and have produced a barrage of condemnation aimed variously at teen-agers, parents, schools, mayors, governors, TV, movies, and advertising executives. It is no consolation that the young criminals in New York City—the 60,000 juvenile delinquents—amount to fewer than four percent of all the young people in the city. The conditions against which they are reacting will, unless they are discovered and changed, produce even higher percentages. Future reaction may be even more violent, but we must not lose sight of the other 96 percent.

Youthful contempt for law, property, for the sensibility of other people, and for themselves as men and women does not make a pretty picture when seen in the mirror of the nation's press. But the whole picture of American youth is bigger than the blot, and this picture is relatively clean.

Teen-agers today know more about almost everything than has been true of past generations. They know more about other people, more about science, more about political crises. In general, American youths are bursting with energy and confidence. There is something really beautiful about the forthright expression so common to young Americans.

Recently I read in the newspaper of 600 teen-agers who were involved in a riot in New York City. The same evening, by chance, I happened to see part of the telecast of 10,000 youth assembled in Cleveland to listen to Billy Graham. Regardless of one's view about religion *per se*, or the brand espoused by Billy Graham in particular, one would certainly agree that such a gathering involved a far larger number of teen-agers and for a more positive and orderly purpose.

Still more recently in my own community, four youths were apprehended for stealing hubcaps; and possibly others who might have totaled 50 (and this is being extremely generous) were involved

in spending their time in some destructive or questionable behavior. But at the same time, 12,000 youths voluntarily assembled to listen to a former member of the President's Committee on Youth Fitness and heard him admonish them to live a life that is moral, honest, and meaningful; to develop the capacity to become loving, mature, and contributing adults.

None of this is to say that all is well with our teen-agers, nor with the world in which we live. The challenge of providing a deep and meaningful educational experience rather than superficial specialization is still more of a hope than a reality. The definition of roles which they must assume as men and women in our world is still confused. The values of our society remain blurred. A world at peace, in which our children can live without the constant threat of war, is still not in sight, and for most of mankind, poverty is still the rule and freedom only a dream.

Never before in the history of mankind have so many young people been confronted by such fear-inducing, anxiety-generating circumstances as face the youths of today. The marvel is that so many of them plan and conduct their lives as well as they do, that respect for self remains in so many young people when their elders show so little reverence for mankind. The world we live in is no defense for the way we live; but to sell youths short on the basis of a few thousand or even several hundred thousand miscreants is to fail to measure the depth, the intensity, and the scope of youths' current struggle.

CHALLENGE TO TEEN-AGERS

What are some of the alternatives confronting our teen-agers of the 1960's? It is possible that they could repudiate the traditional values of our culture. There could be sharp increases in violence and rebellious behavior of an unprecedented kind. There could be sharply increased political apathy, distrust of political, religious, and social leaders, and more and more movement toward a pleasure-oriented, fun-loving way of life.

The future could hold not only increasing numbers, but increasing percentages of school dropouts; current unemployment problems of youths could result in increased social problems in adulthood for this generation of teen-agers. The willingness to settle for security and safety in employment for those who do find employment could result in increased mediocrity and an abandonment on the part of many capable persons of the pursuit of excellence.

No single authority guides our conduct. In spite of governmental laws, societal traditions, and religious commandments and admonitions, we are free to be prejudiced or promiscuous, to cheat or to chisel. The one source that should be the most singularly authoritative in our lives (namely our own inner control—our conscience, influenced by carefully thought-through convictions) is left frustrated and floundering in what is frequently referred to as a sex-obsessed, pleasure-oriented society. It seems obvious to many serious-minded, professionally oriented students of human behavior that we are currently facing a moral crisis. Even many who seriously and honestly want to try to live moral lives are confused and uncertain as to what is right and what is wrong.

Out of this moral confusion will come either a society of license and brutality or a reorganization of ethical and moral standards based on the realities of our world today. The great changes resulting from the spectacular developments in science in great measure have contributed to our moral crisis. The bomb, the computer, the vending machine, the oral contraceptives have challenged our traditional sense of responsibility and have presented us with difficult new moral choices.

Is it honest to take advantage of or cheat a machine, or should honesty be measured on the basis of entirely human criteria? Are premarital and extramarital sexual relationships morally permissible if, for all practical purposes, the fear of pregnancy is completely removed, or should the rightness and wrongness of such behavior be measured by other standards? Is it moral to spend billions of dollars a year to race the Russians to the moon when many of our own people continue to suffer the consequences of cancer, mental illness, and old age that might well be removed or at least significantly diminished if our talent and money were to be diverted in their direction? Are we moral or immoral if we maintain a provincial attitude of being concerned only about our wants in our hometown, our community, or even our country when over one-half of the world's population goes to bed hungry every night? What element of morality is involved when one person is purchasing his second home in the country, in the mountains, or on a lake while other persons in the world do not have enough money for even one pair of shoes? Is it moral to rig prices, manipulate markets, bribe politicians, use deceptive packaging, and exploit employees? Is it moral to deny one human being equal opportunity with his neighbors because of a difference in race?

In our American society, where money worship is the major source of happiness, we Americans are preoccupied with success in terms that can be measured by money and material goods to the extent that the ability to make money excuses everything else. Note the cases of Bobby Baker and Billy Sol Estes. But on a less spectacular level than these individuals are the behavior patterns of most all of us when we are dealing with a machine or a big company or the government. Many an individual who would not steal from his neighbor or even a total stranger does not hesitate to falsify his income tax return. Taking material items and goods from a large company or institution is frequently justified in the minds of many individuals because the company is so big it won't miss them. As a nation we are notorious for distorting facts and magnifying injuries in order to fraudulently obtain claims from insurance companies. Law enforcement officers, social workers, counselors, clergymen working with young people who are in difficulty because of their behavior, are fully aware that they frequently witness the young people parroting, in both words and actions, the moral philosophy of their parents.

In a rapidly changing world, we have lost some of our traditional moral guidelines. We are groping painfully and often blindly for new standards that will enable us to live morally and ethically. Dishonesty and immorality are not just wrong when and if we are caught. Inherent in every act of dishonesty and immorality is something which attacks and detracts from the integrity, self-respect, decency, and well-being of some individual; often, if not always, ourselves and often more than one person. But we cannot turn back to earlier, more simple or rigid patterns of behavior. The teenagers of the 1960's have more freedom of choice than any previous generation. They have choices to make about power, money, sex, prejudice, and their role in the world. They must find a moral code that will suit the needs of the world in which they live—not a sick world, but one in which maturity, growth, and the well-being of all mankind make life worth living, the kind that enables men and nations to grow and hope and to build a better life for their children. To paraphrase John F. Kennedy³—the events and decisions of the next decade or less may well decide the fate of man for the next 10,000 years. There will be no avoiding those events. There will be no appeal from these decisions. And we shall be remembered either as part of the generation that turned this planet into

³John F. Kennedy, Address before the U.N. General Assembly, September 25, 1961.

a flaming funeral pyre or the generation that met its vow to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war."

The teen-agers of the 1960's face the challenge of continuing the crusade to improve the lot of millions of Americans and still more millions throughout the world who fail to realize the minimum level of health, housing, food, clothing, and education, compared to what is possible in the world of today. They face the challenge of continuing the crusade for a world at peace where the rights, dignity, and individual worth of every human being are recognized and protected. Our young people who will be the leaders of tomorrow can only be satisfied with what the people of our country *can* become, not with the mediocrity which many of them live through because of poor education, inflexible customs, and clumsy distribution of opportunities for employment.

Our teen-agers will be challenged by increasing demands for higher education and with making productive use of increased leisure time. They will be confronted with a world of technological advance which will require an unprecedented amount of responsibility. They will face a world which demands increased skill in personal relationships, ranging from the small basic unit of the family to international relations.

As our teen-agers assume their responsibilities of citizenship, they must take upon themselves the ideal of the worth and dignity of man and the determination that man must rise above the levels of class and nation to the higher level of humanity.

They must develop individuals who believe in the saving power of minds—minds that are freely inquiring, deeply informing, but thoroughly uncommitted to much of our present society and culture. A healthy world cannot be conceived by minds committed to a sick one, by minds with large vested interests in things as they are. To be helpful to a warring world, minds must be free from national and racial superstition, prejudices, idolatry—free from the worship of systems and institutions created by men themselves but piously regarded as a special favor from a special Providence.

We must have minds that are daring, courageous, not afraid to doubt; minds with the courage to see and accept reality, to face the consequences of every truth that is discovered and disclosed. Minds of faith and minds with a conviction and belief that the world is structured for survival, not destruction; for life, not death; and the feeling that even in bad men and bad societies, there is a built-in power of self-regeneration. We must have individuals who can love deeply and broadly.

CHALLENGES TO ADULTS

Our teen-agers have vigor, stamina, imagination. They have pride, alert thinking, volatile emotions. We must find a way to help them develop the proper responsibility to go along with these. I have some ideas as to what needs to be accomplished, but I am not sure how we can achieve these objectives. I share them with you in the hope of stimulating you to further thought and action. By sharing our concern, knowledge, and skill, we may be able to make a contribution toward helping this generation of teen-agers climb to the highest level of achievement yet witnessed in the history of the world.

We need to help our youth know that there is exhilaration in intense effort applied toward a meaningful end. The religious precept that you must lose yourself to find yourself is not less true at the secular level. No one who has observed the devoted scientist in his laboratory can doubt the spiritual rewards of such work. The same is true of anyone who is working toward goals that represent the highest values in his society. We want meaning in our lives. When we raise our sights, strive for excellence, and dedicate ourselves to the highest goals of our society, we are enrolling in an ancient and meaningful cause: the age-long struggle of man to realize the best that is in him.

The task we face as adults of keeping our ideas alive is partly a question of leadership. If our youths are to capture a sense of mission with respect to the purposes we care about most, our adults must have the capacity and the vision to place the challenge before them. It is hard to expect an upsurge of devotion to the common good on the part of our youths in response to adults who lack the moral depth to understand such devotion or the courage to evoke it—or the stature to merit the respect which follows.

The values we cherish will not survive without the cost and attention of everyone. They must be nourished in each generation by the allegiance of believing men and women. The fact that millions have died violent deaths while defending individual freedom cannot insure survival of a principle if we cease paying our tithes of devotion. No nation in history has ever had to put up with so much vulgarity, bad taste, and ugliness in its surroundings. History has flung us an exciting challenge by making us the first of all nations in which men of every rank display a measure of taste; and we have responded by displaying bad taste on a massive scale. Let us be honest about it. We have the wealth and leisure and techniques

to make a great culture an essential part of our lives, an inspiration to the world, and a monument to future generations; and we have not even come close to the mark.

Is there something we can do to halt and expunge the obscene elements and spreading violence in our society? How can we improve our image? Norman Cousins has some suggestions for us to consider:

We can re-examine the indifference to violence in everyday life. We can ask ourselves why we tolerate and encourage the glorification of violence in the things that amuse us and entertain us. We can ponder our fascination with brutality as exhibited hour after hour on television or on the covers of a thousand books and magazines. We can ask why our favorite gifts to children are toy murder weapons.

We can ask whether we are creating an atmosphere congenial to the spiraling of violence until finally it reaches a point where living history is mauled and even our casualness toward it is pierced.

We can resensitize ourselves to the reality of human pain and the fragility of human life.

We can be bigger than we are. We can rise above the saturating trivia, redefine our purposes, and bring to bear on problems that combination of reason, sensitivity and vision that gives a civilization its forward movement. "Our ideals are all right, W. MacNeil Dixon once said, but they are unreal until they become articulate."⁴

The missions which our teen-agers must go on will not be easy for them, for they will have to redirect some of their deepest urges towards ends that their fathers would have found unthinkable. And these missions will not be easy for them to complete, for we cannot be sure that mankind, even under the most prudent leadership and with the best of luck, will be spared the agonies of nuclear war. The fact that it calls for new ways of thinking and for calculated risks is, however, no reason not to enter upon it boldly.

The world of tomorrow, which our youths are moving into, will be characterized by major and rapid technological changes. However, advancement in education, transportation, and technology must be accompanied by moral responsibility. Our current attitude seems to be that instruction in moral and religious values is taboo. Without adequate instruction in values, there can be no wonder that the typical youth finds few values clearly definable or secure. We live in an age when many persons, including parents as well as profes-

⁴Norman Cousins, "The Legacy of John F. Kennedy," *Saturday Review*, (December 7, 1963), pp. 26-27.

sional persons, hold many misgivings about and often strongly resist giving children any religious training or making any attempt to influence or determine their values on the assumption that it is taking unfair advantage of the child. They say, "I propose to let my children grow up as far as possible unbiased in order that they may choose their own values; embrace, if at all, their own religious philosophy." If we do not educate a child, the first one that he meets on the streets, in school, or among his companions will begin the work of educating, impressing, biasing, for this is a continuous process. Whether he will be biased or not is something over which we have no choice—it will be something that will be done, either wisely and well or unwisely and ill.

If our democracy is as precious as we claim, if freedom is as rare, democracy as unique, and equality an inherited God-given right, we owe it to our American youth to teach them their heritage; otherwise, they will dissipate it. Before it is too late, we must drop our fear of indoctrination and build a patriotism which will give every young American pride in his nation and community. *This Week Magazine* recently surveyed history books issued before 1920, compared with those issued since. Nathan Hale said, "I regret that I have but one life to give for my country," in 11 of the old texts and in only one of the new texts. Patrick Henry said, "Give me liberty or give me death," in 12 out of 14 earlier texts and in only two of 45 recent ones. But John Paul Jones set the record. He said, "I have not yet begun to fight," in nine of the old books and in none of the new ones.

In all I have said, which has been critical and harsh, I have not condemned young people. I have not said they are a lost generation or hopeless. Nor have I implied that they are to blame. I have not tried to assess blame; I have tried to analyze what I believe to be basic areas of desperate need.

Our youths are as strong and as weak, as intelligent and as frivolous, as serious and as silly, as disciplined and as wild, as religious and as worldly as we have made them. If they have lost what we or our fathers cherished, it is because we have not made it meaningful to them; and, consequently, they do not cherish it. Surely a nation that can usher in the atomic age and break the sound barrier and conquer outer space will not collapse and die because it cannot cope with its youths. The nation that has finally laid its hands on the precious heritage of freedom, equality, and economic opportunity surely will not dissipate that heritage by failing to adequately interpret it to its youths. A quotation from Mohandas K. Gandhi

comes to mind and seems appropriate here: "Sometimes in the night, this truth awakens me—that of all the sins the most unforgivable is the sin of weak decency—the sin of the cowardice of the righteous, the sin of the just and silent in the presence of injustice."

Our youths are still in a state of becoming; and in order to become the best, to experience the best within them, they need to have parents, adults, and community and national leaders who will set an example of fairness, untouched by favoritism—individuals who will provide inspired leadership.

Adolescents need heroes. If heroes are not offered to them, they will create their own as they have managed to do with such dismal results as the teen-age idols of rock and roll.

James Reston wrote in the *New York Times*: "New models and styles are met daily by television, but most of them are models of cars, of styles of dresses and hairdos. The youth of our nation need something more heroic as a model—a Gettysburg Address or a Churchillian oration or the flight of a Lindbergh or the quiet courage of a Pasternak." Our nation does have a whole new set of heroes. Their names are Carpenter, Cooper, Glenn, Griffin, Shirra, and Shepherd. This is why John Glenn himself is almost as important as his flight into outer space, for he dramatized before the eyes of the entire nation the noble qualities of the human spirit. The memorable performance of Colonel Glenn may not stamp out juvenile delinquency overnight, but the models of human character are probably more important than this age believes.

Not all the models can or must be national in scope. Good teachers and strong parents can provide an image that makes the phony mass culture of the vulgar and untalented idols fade. What is needed is the patient development of the kind of character and mind that conceives itself too clearly to consent to its own betrayal.

A young person is a dynamo of energy. He needs help, not control, in determining what to strive for with his energy as well as the point of the compass at which he should aim. As parents or professional workers, we cannot command genius or ambition or altruism to appear in any youth, but perhaps we can show how a youth's capacities may best be directed in his search for happiness and accomplishment. Once he is moving in the right direction, a youth needs to realize an ancient but still valid truth—that nothing can be had for nothing. If a man wishes to reach the top of a mountain, he must not shirk the trouble of climbing. He may fail, and failure has a certain dignity, but not failure to try. If as professional persons and adults affecting the lives of teen-agers, we are

able to point out the folly of being misled by mirages, and to inspire young people to look destiny steadfastly in the face and to measure their strength when there are difficulties, we will have discharged an important responsibility and will have shown young people how they may more adequately fulfill themselves. As parents and adults, we cannot rightfully abdicate our responsibilities to our youths. They are still in the process of becoming. They do not need our tyrannical control, but they do need our guidance and example.

To communicate true values, we must have true values. I would urge that we look beneath the surface of our opinions, our convictions, our fears, and examine more thoughtfully and more honestly our own standards. If we define for ourselves the things in which we truly believe, the things we value above the expedient or practical or self-gratifying, then we shall be able to convey them to our children. If, for example, we say education is good because it has stimulated our own lives, sharpened our ability to appreciate, distinguish, serve, then our children will put more than a dollar value on a diploma. They will seek learning rather than grades. I find myself annoyed with the frequent reference to the fact that a person with a college degree can earn \$280,000 more in a lifetime than he can with only a high school diploma. It would be good to hear now and then some other reasons or values for obtaining an education.

If we see work as having a focus and providing the satisfaction that makes the effort worthwhile, then our children will have something more upon which to expend their energy than the matter of having fun.

I do not believe that the apathy of our young people, when it exists, has its source in indifference to the "finer" things of life, or disdain for them. Rather, it rises from a disenchantment with the adult life they see around them and from their despair over the phonies adults often pawn off to them as substitutes for real values. If we would transform that lesson of life into the pursuit of truth and happiness, we too must undertake the quest.

SUMMARY

We need leaders of moral character and fiber who have the courage and the sense to speak and to act in order to provide the kind of a climate in which youths may truly prosper. They need not only our pulpit pronouncements; they need an example of the fusing of pre-

cept and example. They do not need any more diatribe, they need some direction; not critics, but models.

Scientific studies can help and are badly needed, but I want to suggest that an area which has been ignored is that of arousing their devotion and commitment. In the first part of the fifteenth century, a French peasant maid by the name of Joan of Arc was called upon to save her country from its enemies. With her sacred sword, her consecrated banner, and her belief in her mission, she swept her enemies before her. She sent a thrill of enthusiasm through the French army such as neither king nor statesman could produce. On one occasion she said to one of her generals, "I will lead the men over the wall." The general said, "Not a man will follow you." Joan replied, "I will not look back to see whether anyone is following or not." But the soldiers of France did follow Joan of Arc and she saved her country from the British and then fell into their hands.

While the fires were being lighted around the stake at which this 19-year-old French peasant maid of Orleans was to be burned alive, she was given a chance to regain her liberty by denying what she believed. In choosing the fire above her freedom, she said:

The world can use these words. I know this now. Every man gives his life for what he believes. Every woman gives her life for what she believes. Sometimes people believe in little or nothing, and yet they give their lives to that little or nothing. One life is all we have, and we live it as we believe in living it, and then it's gone. But to surrender what you are and live without belief is more terrible than dying—even more terrible than dying young.

This kind of devotion and commitment can not only exist in a teen-ager of the fifteenth century, but could exist in our current generation of teen-agers.

There is no single simple key to the problems which readily exist or the challenges which face our generation of teen-agers. There is no grand or magic formula to be adopted by one or two agencies or one or two communities. Successfully coping with the challenges and responsibilities must be the product of many groups—schools, churches, community agencies, families, professional organizations, etc., the sum of many acts. It must be dynamic, not static, changing in order to meet the challenge of the new generation. Our solution must be a process, not a destination.

We are not helpless before the task or hopeless of its success. Confident and unafraid, we must labor on, not toward a status of

“teen-age tyranny” but toward a society of responsible teen-agers and adults.

It is my conviction that our teen-agers are responsible individuals who are proud to offer such devotion when given the opportunity. My optimistic willing and hoping leads me to a view that the academic and intellectual performance of our youth will exceed that of their parents. I believe that they will come up with a modern interpretation and definition of values and standards which for years have been an inherent part of our culture and society, so that they will have something finer and more functional than what currently exists. I believe they will produce leaders who will find increasing effectiveness in defending the freedom and rights of people throughout the world. Certainly our young people have been among the most active crusaders for civil rights.

They undoubtedly will be heirs to a greater amount of leisure than has been true for any large group of people in the history of the world. But they may do a much more successful job in adapting to this way of life and making productive use of their time than have their parents. In general, they will be more highly educated, more widely traveled, more physically healthy, than previous generations. Let us hope that they will be more alert and emotionally healthy, more socially stable, more politically capable than their predecessors. If they are to help create and live in a world of peace and productivity, they must develop traits of faith, integrity, courage, loyalty, responsibility, and determination.

I do not want to minimize the serious problems and challenges which face us as adults, parents, and teachers, living today with teen-agers in the 1960's. But actually, this generation of teen-agers may be one of the most trustworthy and capable we have had in a long time. Today's youngsters are honest and free in their feeling and thinking. They seem able to face a perilous world situation without the frenzy of the 20's, the bitterness of the 30's, the oversimplification of the 40's or the apathy of the 50's. Some four or five percent (or even ten percent) get into trouble, and the trouble they get into is extremely serious. But considering the temptations, frustrations, and complexities to which they are subjected, and the confusion that surrounds them, the 90-95 percent who do not get into trouble deserve congratulations.

There is much that is very good, and gracious, and promising in our teen-agers. I want to affirm my faith in the people of this land and the teen-agers of this decade. I have great faith because I know so much that is so good about so many.