

Come to the Fun House —

The Objective of Our Youth Department

Why do we have a youth work? Luther Warren, who later became one of our leading known evangelists, started the first youth society on his own, in Michigan, in 1879. Warren had a deep Christian experience, and he wanted to help our young people come to Christ. He also wanted to provide a gathering place where the young people could socialize, pray together, share their concerns and goals, and plan and work together to bring still others to Christ.

The first denominationally sponsored work for our young people began, in 1893, in Australia, under the urging of Ellen White. The next year the first sunshine band, to encourage the sick and

bed-ridden was started in South Dakota. Luther Warren initiated that project also.

We wish Luther Warren were with us today. Unfortunately, he would be shocked if he was.

Times have changed. If today you walk into the youth room at many of our youth gatherings, you will find a far different objective:

The leaders focus their attention on providing our children and young people with fun. The goal is keep them entertained. This is done by providing an equivalent to the wild stuff found on television, video games, and rock music—and calling it Christian.

Here is a letter we recently received from friends in Florida:

“This past Friday, we went to the Florida Conference Camp meeting. Our fourteen-year-old daughter wanted to go to the junior-high meeting; and so, naturally, as any caring and responsible parents would do, we decided to stay long enough to see what the program was going to be.”

Would you also enter the youth room with your offspring to see what was going on in there? *After reading this, you will never again leave them at a strange church room, and bid them good-bye for an hour.* You will go inside and see what is taking place in there.

“We were ‘greeted’ at the door by a young man who told us that parents were not allowed to enter the room. Instantly we were alarmed, and our curiosity was aroused!

Presidents: Worldwide Divisions and Unions, and North American Division Conferences—

How much longer will the God of heaven tolerate the growing worldliness in our church! It is a subject for prayer and weeping.

But, I can tell you that it is not a matter to be swept under the rug. Each of you are denominational leaders, and each of you has the authority to protect the youth of our church.

Those of you in the Western world (North America, Europe, and Australia), can labor to reverse the trend toward this worldly pattern in

our youth gatherings—which amounts to a *pleasure-presenting love of worldliness*. By appointing youth leaders who love God’s Word and abhor sin and lowered standards, you can redeem the past.

Those of you in the other national areas can take steps to protect your young people—so they will not follow in the tracks of the corrupt Protestantism which is invading our churches in the West.

May you be faithful to your calling, is my prayer.
— Vance Ferrell

“Why would parents not be allowed to enter an assembly where their child was encouraged to go? What could be happening in a room where only the children were allowed entry, and parents were not given liberty to also enter? What were the activities going on in there that they did not want parents to see or participate in?”

“The Bible says, ‘where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty’ (2 Corinthians 3:17), but here was something far different. If the activities behind that door were for the purpose of uplifting our children to Jesus our Saviour, then anyone should be permitted entrance to observe and participate and be welcomed regardless of their age!”

One has to admit that this had the appearance of a plan to captivate young minds by forbidden activities they should not be indulging in or even seeing—before the parents learned what had taken place. Yet, surely, we should be able to trust our children with these men. Are they not youth leaders in the church here in North America?

At this point that mother and father had a major decision to make. *They decided they were going through that door!*

“Against the young man’s protests, we went inside anyway.

“Almost immediately, we could see why parents were not wanted. Some kind of liquid smoke was being released into the air, to give the appearance of a cigarette-smoke room.

Why would the youth leaders want to emulate cigarette smoke? Was this to give the young people encouragement to later seek out similar places filled with smoke—such as bars, nightclubs, and casinos? Was it done to implant the idea that, entering places where there is smoke, would be to open their lives to a daring, new adventure?

Or had something been added to that air, to deaden senses, make the will more pliable, and deaden the voice of conscience?

“Then the song leader got up and welcomed the young people, stating

that the number one thing at camp meeting was to have ‘FUN!’ We always thought that the number one thing at any worship service was to learn more about Christ and the JOY of salvation. There is a vast difference between the two.”

It is mistakenly thought that anything goes, as long as it will keep worldly young people in the church. Trying to lead them to Christ might offend them, and perhaps they will not come back with their parents—and the offerings they bring. But if the leaders will just pretend all those youth are already saved and bound for heaven, then they can just focus on making the place a club-room, and the entertainment one vast party (the name they give it is “Celebration”).

“You are already saved,” they tell them; “now let’s have fun!”

In order to keep worldly youth coming back, entertainment is presented which lowers the standards and morals of those young people present who want to live clean, godly lives.

In the effort to keep everyone in the church, without changing them into Christians,—everyone is transformed into worldlings! That is, everyone daring enough to attend the church’s youth meetings for a time.

By this time, these parents were at the back with their fourteen-year-old daughter. What would happen next? They did not have to wait long to find out.

You see, it is not only the work of youth leaders to attract our youth to a love of the world; they feel obligated to also separate their loyalties from their parents!

“The man in front then commented that he hoped that even the parents who were ‘spying’ on them would have a good time. The word ‘spying’ denotes enemy. But parents are not the enemy! They are the beloved friends and protectors of their youth! Parents who are conscientious are not ‘spying.’ It is their responsibility under God to make certain that the children He has given them are

trained in the fear of the Lord.”

Do you believe those parents were doing their duty to disobey the young man and enter that room? He had been given orders to keep parents out. What was going on inside was too embarrassing for parents to see. The man up front was equally determined to get them out! So he heaped ridicule upon them, as he tried to turn everyone in the auditorium against them.

This is “youth work”? Yes, it is, but it reminds us more of Hitler’s Nazi Youth in the late 1930s. They were sent to youth camps where they were taught that they were young moderns, and the standards of their parents were nonsense.

“You see, our goal has always been to help save souls, especially those of our children. Does that mean then that the youth leaders are working for the enemy of souls?

“But then the music started! Oh, what music it was! What a disgrace to have this kind of music on a Friday evening at or near sundown when the Holy Sabbath day was drawing on!

“There was not one moment of reverence shown for the Sabbath. Instead, frivolous ditties were sung. There were no song books to sing from, and the youth were taught to mindlessly chant along as people sang wildly up front. They were also told to raise their hands in the air, in the manner of a Pentecostal meeting.”

Are those young people—the next generation in the church—being trained for the next downward level that Adventism will soon enter?

“There was shouting, hand clapping, and applause. In one song, the youth were instructed to take steps to one side of the room, and then to the other—while kicking their feet up as one would do in wild dancing.

“At one point during this so-called ‘song service,’ the young man, who earlier had met us at the door, looked at us and said, ‘I thought you said you were leaving.’ We did not reply.

“After the unholy Celebration style

of music, there was a skit by the Forest Lake Academy drama club. Two girls in tight-fitting blue jeans got up and started acting. They were talking together about Jesus casting out demons. They said that made Him a 'pest exterminator!' It was so base, bringing Christ down to that level, that we were appalled and could not stay any longer."

What else happened in there? Those parents did not find out, for they could take no more.

"Since Friday evening is the beginning of the Sabbath, my guess is that this was the premier, or best, meeting of them all. But if that is so, what were the rest like!

"We wanted so badly for camp meeting to be a blessing, but it has turned out to be a curse."

Is this what we are supporting? Men trying to steal our children from us, corrupt their principles, and lead them out into the world?

"The church has steadily gone downhill, offering the children common, ordinary, worldly entertainment, instead of teaching them the joy of Christian service and self-sacrificing love for others.

"Where are the songs of hope and blessing? Where are the stories of real missionaries who have sacrificed their lives for the saving of souls so that the youth can be inspired to give their lives to the Lord's service? Where are the parents whose burden it is to instruct the children to honor and obey their parents and unify families and not split them up?"

Why did the conference office permit this to take place? What is happening in our church!

The objective of these men is to make worldlings of our youth. They are stealthily leading the young people out to Babylon, and, in the process, turning the church into a Babylon. Within less than a decade, those same young people will be the young parents in the church. Many will be church workers.

"The theme for camp meeting this year is 'United in Christ.' But it ought to have real meaning for all, the youth as well as the adults, or it has no meaning. From what we witnessed

Friday night at camp meeting, the young people are not being taught about the Christ of the Bible, but about some fairy tale character that tells them they can be saved IN their sins, not FROM their sins. And, in the process, they are told that they should seek for FUN; that is what life is all about.

But there is more! The letter goes on to explain how close the church is walking with the world. We are trying so hard to ape the worldlings, that the attempt is making monkeys out of us!

"If you take a good look at the titles of each of the meetings throughout the week during the camp meeting, it makes you shudder. Here are titles for nearly all the meetings:

" 'The Lion King,' 'Star Wars,' 'Jungle Fever,' 'Jurassic Park,' 'The Empire Strikes Back,' 'Clear and Present Danger,' 'Crossroads,' 'His Majesty's Secret Service,' and 'Back to the Future.'"

"Each title has to do with the names of movies and their themes; they have nothing to do with Jesus or Christianity.

Trying to copy as closely as possible the "great things" of the world, is actually a training program for our youth in the deep things of Satan.

Christ declared of the Temple of old, "Your house is left unto you desolate." He said that because *they* had made it desolate. *He* had not done it. Men today are desolating the church which had been assigned the task of giving the final message of obedience by faith to all the world (*Revelation 14:12*).

They are changing that message into a call for indulgence by the very young people who were supposed to give the final message.

"Each of the leaders wore T-shirts with the words, 'Jesus is King of the Jungle.' But this brings Christ down to savagery, instead of lifting Him up so He can draw men out of their sins. What a mockery of the King of the Universe!

"We as parents expect more, yes, demand more of the leaders of this

church. If we continue on as a church in the direction we are going, this church will not go through."

The above glimpse we have seen of a youth department at one of our camp meetings is in no way unusual. We have received reports of similar activities elsewhere.

And what is the effect of all this on young minds?

An insatiable yearning is implanted for more of the same thing. It makes them wild, and they go out through the doors of such meetings—determined to find more of it out in the world.

The teaching of the church is to them quite obvious: There is nothing wrong with Babylonian living. The only lesson the youth leaders are teaching is this: "Go where it is, and enjoy it!"

Several months ago, a friend visited from an eastern state. He almost wept as he shared with us an experience he had just been through a few days earlier. He had also attended a youth gathering.

This one was at a summer camp, and he had been invited to show the children some of the wild animals he kept at home.

Here is his story:

"I drove into the camp, and parked by the auditorium. Stepping to the door, I went inside. The children were about junior or earliten age. Because our young people from all across the state were there, the assembly hall was packed with them. The noise was, to say the least, terrific.

"There was not a parent layperson there. They ought to have been.

"Up front, a young minister was playing a guitar and leading them in singing. It could have been a Baptist or Pentecostal youth rally. There was really no way a person could tell. The clothing, the songs, the jumping. The scene was indescribable.

"When the young minister saw me standing at the back, he nodded to another young minister, who walked

over.

"I explained what I had, and he told me to bring it on in.

"So I went out to the car and lifted out a wooden crate, lined inside with hardware cloth, and carried it into the building.

"Once inside, the pastor up front announced, 'We have something special for you,' and then walked off the stage and took a seat in the audience near the front."

In order to get the full impact of this, you need to know that this person is a very mature person, extremely calm in voice and demeanor, and he has a deep concern to tell souls about Christ.

"I went up front and set down the crate, where everyone could clearly see it. All eyes were upon me, for every young person in that room wanted to know what was in the crate. There was an eager excitement in the air, and I began talking to them about the plan of salvation.

"Then reaching down, I opened the top of the crate, and poured out the contents onto the floor of the stage; then set down the crate off to the side.

"Quickly, the two large snakes coiled, and rattled furiously. Throughout the room everyone was totally silent. Not a sound, not a movement. They all sat there, in rapt attention.

"Then I began to tell them about God's plan for their lives. In a short time I had arrived at the most important part.

"I had told them about how Satan is like a snake who wants to catch and kill us. But how God can deliver us.

"But, by this time, the snakes had uncoiled and had begun slowly moving. Little by little, they began edging toward the audience. Total silence. No one moved; no one spoke.

"Then, as the snakes got closer, I reached down with the forked stick, and, pinning each one to the ground, lifted one after the other up and placed them back in the crate.

"Shutting the crate, I continued explaining what God can do for us. The total silence and attention continued. The youth wanted what I was bringing them. It was obvious.

"But then I said it: I told them that God could help them resist temptation.

"Immediately, as on a signal, the young minister up front stood to his feet. Stepping to a place directly in front of me,—he began playing his guitar and leading them in another light song. Totally ignoring the fact I was there, he tried to divert the attention of the young people by pretending that my talk had ended. They were ready for an altar call and a dedication of their lives, but he had heard me tell the young people that they could resist sin.

"And that made all the difference. He must not let them hear that! Whatever happened, he must not let them hear that!"

"Well, there was nothing left for me to do but to pick up the crate and walk out of the room, and drive off.

"I wept as I drove. What had happened to my church?"

Yes, my friend, what has happened to your church?

Why are modernists determined to destroy it? Why are they being permitted to do it?

At this juncture, someone will ask, "What do they have in mind? What are they trying to accomplish?"

The answer is simple enough: There are men in our denomination who believe with all their hearts that the solution to the problems in the church is to provide the membership with so much entertainment—that they will not want to go elsewhere,—and that more people who want that kind of thing will come into the church!

Of course, they have a point here: There are more people in the world who want entertainment than who want sin-denying, self-sacrificing Christianity. But that is not what the church is for! It was called by God into existence to lead people out of the world, not entertain them in it.

It was tolerance of sin which corrupted the church in the days of Constantine. The teaching of modernists back then was the same as now: "Only declare yourself to be a Christian, and you are one; you are

saved!" It is tolerance of sin which is destroying it now.

There are influential men among us today who are not Christians. They do not believe the Spirit of Prophecy, much less bother to read it. They do not believe we have a heaven to win and a hell to shun. They love the world, and they want the rest of us to love it as they do.

The kind of worldliness you will encounter at our youth gatherings is what you will find at our denominational academies, especially in North America and Australia. There, as at our colleges, the concern is to placate sin so enrollment will stay up and tuition will keep flowing in.

The name of the game is pleasing people with worldliness. Flatter them that they are already saved, if they keep coming to church. Offer them novelties and trinkets to fascinate the eye and ear. They, in turn, show their thanks for worldly presentations with loud clapping.

Did you know that, prior to the recent 1995 General Conference Session, an announcement was made in the pages of the *Review*, calling for young people to find sponsors to send them to Utrecht,—so they could be taught and take part in clown performances on the streets of that city? That was done, and the people of Utrecht saw what we were like: a shallow church who teaches their youth to be clowns.

Oh, how heaven mourns. The people who had been chosen to obey God's moral law by faith in the Son's enabling grace (righteousness by faith), and give a final message to come share in that obedience—that people are failing Him!

Will you and I fail Him also? Will we stand true through the final crisis, just before us? Will we warn those around us to repent before it is too late?

Guard your children. Give them the best, and God will bless you for your efforts.