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THE ADOLESCENT AND THE INNER-CITY

A Research Paper Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
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in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Divinity

by

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Advisor

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The World Today

Today's problems are in some respects the same problems that have faced mankind throughout his history. Mankind today is still faced with trying to avoid wars and maintain peace, with dealing with those who commit social and anti-social acts, with the problem of food production and distribution, with the problem of poverty and other similar problems.

On the other hand, there are also many unique factors in today's society. There is, for instance, the presence of the atomic bomb which threatens civilization with annihilation. More people are crowding parts of the world than ever before, and more of these people are being crowded into cities. Further, the increase in population presents more severe problems in food production than ever before.

The tensions that exist in modern life affect also the world of the teen-ager. Just as mankind in general is faced with a unique situation compared to previous centuries, so also is the teen-ager. In some respects this is the greatest century in history. Scientific accomplishments in this century have equaled those of all other centuries

put together. The wealth of some countries in the world is unequaled in history. But on the other hand, there is vast poverty not only in other lands but also in the United States.

The people of the United States are a mobile people, moving more often than ever before in the history of this country. Frequent movings help to increase tension and lessen community controls as well as producing a feeling of "rootlessness." Change, turmoil, ferment, disorganization and disruption are commonplace in today's world. These conditions are reflected in all areas of society, among all ages.¹

The change and turmoil in the world is partially reflected in the fact that many of today's products do not have lasting value. Automobiles not only have mechanical failures but also become technically obsolete as well as outmoded in style. Clothes go out of style, often before they have been worn frequently. The world of ten or fifteen years ago bears little resemblance technically to that of today. And even more drastic changes for the future are predicted by many commentators. Today's rate of change has increased vastly. Again, many commentators predict that the future rate of change will probably increase even more. These changes are affecting not only the technological situation but also personal values, religion and related subjects. Today life lacks a sense of permanency and stability.

Some observers of the contemporary scene feel that

moral decay has taken place in modern American society. Some, in fact, feel that we have reached the end of a long period of moral and ethical decay and that soon the decay will cease.

According to Haskell M. Miller, Understanding and Preventing Juvenile Delinquency,²

The head of Harvard's sociology department has said that we are functioning near the tail end of a bankrupt, senseless stage of culture in which value convictions are deteriorating and in which criminality and many other forms of personal and social disorganization are but "symptoms and consequences of the crisis."

Increasingly intimate personal relationships are giving way to more cold impersonal secondary experiences. The individual assumes more and more an anonymous nature as he becomes

an impersonal statistic in the "lonely crowd." Under such conditions he finds it ever harder to be sure of who he is and what is his place and worth in the world.³

The family, for example, exists under the environment of reduced stature and function, loss of independence, and an increased strain on its inner ties.⁴

Many writers feel that one of the biggest problems facing the adolescent today is the paradoxical nature of today's society. On the one hand society is very protective of children in terms of healthy and other physical needs. But children are exposed through movies, literature and other mass media to the more questionable aspects of adult

society.

Further, adolescents are aware of the dichotomy between the ideals of American society and the realities of American life. For example, there is a vast gulf between the ideal of racial equality and actual racial relations. Another example would be the ideals of sexual behavior and actual sexual behavior as reported by Kinsey and others.

In addition, children are taught the value of saving money for future needs and at the same time are confronted with a "buy now, pay later" philosophy. In the schools, children are taught to respect scientific findings, and in advertisements they see these findings of science twisted, distorted, and misused.

Blaine R. Porter, "American Teen-Agers of the 1960's-- Our Despair or Hope?"⁵ says

Our teen-agers are growing up at a point in time 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.

The moral climate in America, then, is one in which the previously accepted norms are being rejected. The result is sometimes seen as hypocrisy or moral decay. Many writers view the present scene with alarm and are fearful of the results of this moral environment upon the adolescents.

Today both in the United States and throughout the world, the urban sections are the sections that are most

rapidly increasing in population. A large portion of the adolescent world is growing up within the urban centers of the country, and these centers are, therefore, important for an understanding of adolescents. Future population growth, for the most part, will take place in the urban areas, and in the near future it is expected that eighty-five per cent of the population will be living in metropolitan centers.⁶

Area of Investigation

The subject to be investigated in this paper is that of the inner-city adolescent, with special reference to the problem of delinquent behavior.

The aim of this paper is to see what are the special problems of the adolescents as they grow up within the inner-city environment. Although the role of the church is considered, the major topics examined in the paper are the inner-city and adolescents.

Limitation of Problems and Definition of Terms

The specific age level of the adolescents considered in the study is basically that of the middle teen-age years with the two extremes of the teen-age years receiving less attention. Primarily it is the senior high school age group that is examined in this paper, although, of course, this group includes variables of age, maturity, problems,

and so forth.

The term "inner-city" is a term that has many connotations and is used for many types of areas. Frequently it is used to indicate the central portion of a city, regardless of the socio-economic conditions found there. One congregation in Chicago, for example, that is considered "inner-city," includes the upper income areas of the "Gold Coast" as well as federal housing projects and a portion of the slum Negro ghetto. It is this latter portion of the inner-city, that of the underprivileged, which is considered in this paper.

Methodology and Over-View

The methodology used in the study involves two approaches. The first is that of research in what has been written in these fields. The twentieth century has been depicted as a century of rapid change. The cities and the people living in them also are changing under the various pressures exerted upon them and upon society as a whole. Because of this factor of rapid change and because this paper is a contemporary study rather than a historical study, it was necessary to limit the amount of materials used in the research. The year 1955 was chosen as an arbitrary terminus a quo.

The second approach has been that of the interview. Persons especially familiar with the areas considered were interviewed in order to provide contemporary commentary and

background for the paper. The major support for the paper, however, is derived from the journals and books researched.

The first topic to be considered is the city and the inner-city. By doing this, the background and framework for the study of the adolescent and his problems is provided. After the description of the city, the general examination of the problems of the adolescent is undertaken. Finally specific problems of the teen-ager are treated, especially the problems of juvenile delinquency and sexual delinquency.

CHAPTER II

THE CITY

Much of the migration to the city has been by southern Negroes. Today over seventy per cent of the Negro population in the United States lives in urban areas. The non-white population in the cities has increased in the last decade from thirty-nine per cent to fifty-one per cent, although the non-white population as a whole makes up only slightly more than ten per cent of the total population. The District of Columbia, for example, has a population of fifty-four per cent colored people.¹

The non-whites have a tendency to go to the central city because they have not had access to the suburbs. The whites, coming from rural areas to these cities, frequently go directly to the suburbs while many of the whites already living in the central cities move to the suburbs.²

In the last decade, the only age groups that increased among the Caucasian population in five of America's large cities are those from ten to fourteen and those over sixty-five. In New York City, the Caucasian population declined by more than 475,000 between 1950 and 1960, but the Caucasians aged fifty-five and over increased by more than 265,000.³

The Inner-City

Heavy concentrations of the poor, the old, and those discriminated against are developing in the central city. This increase of population in the inner-city frequently results in problems of crime, social unrest and other ills. The concentration of ethnic and economic groups has complicated the problem.⁴ In all of the city's problems the key element has been human beings.⁵

Robert C. Weaver, The Urban Complex: Human Values in Urban Life⁶ points out that

Slums in American cities today house families which hold a wide variety of values and evidence a variety of behavior patterns. Some are households with female heads and are stable nevertheless; others may be ungrammatical but adhere to high moral standards; still others evidence all the attributes of middle-class behavior and are dedicated to its values, if not recipient of its rewards. All three groups have ambition and talent, but fight an uphill battle for themselves and their children. It was from these families that public housing made its earlier selections and its initial successes. It is these families which, if they have access to decent shelter in good neighborhoods, will immediately respond to the new environment.

In addition, there are many among the residents in slums and blighted areas who, with a minimum of assistance, could and would adjust to better housing and neighborhood facilities.

But there are also certain elements concentrated in the slums which present well-defined problems. These groups are responsible for many of the problems associated with the inner-city. These groups include

the confirmed wino, the established prostitute, the overt homosexuals, the hardened criminals and the like who either resist rehabilitation or require long-term assistance of a most intensive type. They are multi-ethnic and constitute the real "hard-core." In addition, the classical problem families are well represented among slum residents.⁷

Probably the worst consequence of our continuing to discriminate against these peoples in the slums is that we condition them to remain the victims of a submerged status.⁸

Today over twelve million people live in American urban slums.⁹ There are many identifiable problems in the inner-city. Among them are poverty, run-down housing, welfare cases, crowding, concentration of the lower classes, isolation of other classes, internal mobility, crime, health problems, broken families, inadequate community services, skid rows, alienation, dirt, fire hazards, language problems, and the manifold results of the general slum environment.¹⁰

In addition there are the problems of mass transit, land utilization, and the system of local governments.¹¹ Taken together or separately, they present a challenge to contemporary American society. With this rapid over-view of the environment of the inner-city, we shall examine the characteristics of the adolescent.

CHAPTER III

THE ADOLESCENT

The Fourteen-Year-Old

The child of fourteen experiences many adult emotions and drives although with the family structure the adolescent remains close to the child. Both the nervous system and the reproductive system have developed or are developing. Generally the girls have matured much more than the boys. Most girls have experienced menstruation by this time.¹

Increasingly the child of fourteen wants to be independent of adult authority. Because he is experiencing new drives and insights, the fourteen-year-old needs to learn by the trial and error method, according to some authorities. But he also needs boundaries set by the adult world to protect him. The emotional response of the fourteen-year-old seems to be inconsistent.

Intellectually also the fourteen-year-old is developing rapidly; his interests are broadening to many new areas.

A friendly relationship with significant adults are important to him also. They provide an image for him to identify himself with and to aim toward. They also offer him a foil against which he can test his own strength and against which he can temper his own judgments.²

The age of fourteen is a good age to begin to develop providing in-depth religious experiences. The church can

help the adolescent find an adequate self-image. Special guidance can be given to the adolescent in the areas of vocation as well as in the sex role.

If it can demonstrate to him that there are fascinating insights to be gained in the field of religion, the church can start him on a process of spiritual investigation that will be lifelong. If, on the other hand, it refuses him the opportunity to be unorthodox, it can smother creative insights that could enrich both the growing individual and the church.³

The fourteen-year-old is really still at the beginning stages of adolescence. Many of the influences which he experiences now will have great import for his future.

The Fifteen-Year-Old

Although the fourteen-year-old was interested in asserting his independence from both childhood and the older adult world, the fifteen-year-old is even more interested in doing so. He is aware of the possibilities of making important decisions about his own life and wishes to do so, although at the same time he also feels some insecurity in making these decisions. He becomes increasingly critical of the ideas and decisions of the older people with whom he comes into contact.⁴

In terms of weight and height development, most boys have passed girls. In terms of sexual development many boys are still behind the girls.

Although almost all girls will have experienced their first menstrual period by the age of 15, only 60 per cent of the boys will have passed into adolescence by the middle of this year.⁵

Emotionally the fifteen-year-olds are attempting to establish their own identities. The self-image of the fifteen-year-old is flexible and as a result he often appears moody. Teachers often become objects of attack because they are seen as authority figures. Frequently the "drop-out" problem appears at this age.

Family ties generally weaken as the fifteen-year-old strives for freedom and independence. Boys are less interested in girls than girls in boys. As a result girls often become interested in older boys. Both experience a strong desire to "belong."

The fifteen-year-old, in spite of a frivolous exterior, often is searching for answers to fundamental social and religious questions. He responds to those who allow him to develop his own answers rather than to those who present unyielding solutions.

In religious matters, many adolescents at this age express disbelief in religious concepts and fundamentals such as heaven or even God. Nevertheless, the fifteen-year-old has a deep fear of death. Many also question the teachings of their own church body and are interested in exploring the teachings of other denominations as well as religions.⁶

The Sixteen-Year-Old

The sixteen-year-old has overcome some of the problems of the previous years. He has more self-confidence,

independence, and ease and is therefore able to project a more grown-up and dependable image.

Physically the sixteen-year-old grows at a slower pace with few, if any, dramatic changes. Both boys and girls are very interested in their own physical appearance. As a result, the youth who is unusual physically has trouble developing self-confidence.⁷

Emotionally the sixteen-year-old is more stable now; he has adjusted to life. Generally the more immediate problems of school, work, dates and so forth occupy his attention far more than do the problems of the future. Boys and girls frequently have different interests;

Whereas boys are mainly concerned with sports, studies, jobs, and cars, girls are thinking about dress, talent, social life, and marriage.⁸

Antagonism towards school and teachers has disappeared at this age in most boys and girls. They have alert minds and wish to assume responsibilities, although their judgments are not matured. The choice of a career is a definite concern and may have already been made at this point in time.

Sixteen-year-olds are interested in people and like to be with other people, especially of their own age group. They have a lively interest in the other sex. "Most boy-girl relationships are still quite superficial and just for something to do."⁹ Both sexes enjoy parties.

When there is apparent disinterest in church or church activities, it should not be taken as a lack of interest in religion, but rather as an indication that the church

has not met the needs of the youth. Sixteens want help in thinking through their problems and straightening out their beliefs. When the church meets these needs, there is genuine response.¹⁰

Both boys and girls at this age are sensitive to worship and react deeply to liturgical forms. Most believe in a "divinity" and a life after death and can distinguish right from wrong.

The Seventeen-Year-Old

Seventeens are faced with new adventures in the near future, such as college, full-time work or the military. By this time they feel that they can manage their own affairs adequately without help from the outside world.

After age sixteen girls change little in weight and height although boys continue in slow development for three years or more. Little attention is paid to general health although much attention is paid to physical appearance.

The seventeen-year-old is able to tolerate criticism and redirect strong feelings into outlets that are harmless or that actually solve problems. Most of his fears are social fears. The fear of being unpopular is his most important problem.¹¹

Girls tend to be more concerned with school responsibilities but both can to a degree solve involved problems and apprehend abstractions, especially in relation to specific examples. Interests have broadened outside of the school setting and specialized skills and abilities are developing.

It is at this age that friendships deepen and become

more intimate. Group acceptance is most important and the ones excluded from general acceptance often become resentful and hostile. The need for acceptance is often demonstrated by "falling in love."¹²

Religious doubt frequently finds expression at this age, especially in doctrines peculiar to a particular denomination. The conflict between religion and science often arises at this age also. Although not yet able to exercise fully natured judgment, many youths desire positions of leadership. A special need at this age is in the area of vocational guidance.¹³

With the specific needs and developments of the various age groups established, the next topic is that of the general life of the adolescent.

CHAPTER IV

THE LIFE OF THE ADOLESCENT

The Task of Adolescence

The problems of the teen-ager are all inter-related. Put in the most general terms, they comprise the problem of growing up. In order to mature properly into adulthood, the adolescent must achieve his self-identity. The adolescent must answer three questions: (1) Who am I? (2) Where do I belong? and (3) Who will understand and love me?¹

In answering these questions the adolescent comes to terms with himself and determines who and what he is and in what direction his life will lead. He sees himself in relationship to society and decides, consciously or unconsciously, what forms his actions will take in inter-relating with that society and individuals that comprise his environment. It is through these relationships that the teen-ager gains his self-identity.

The French philosopher Gabriel Marcel has pointed out that man experiences who he is through the relationships of his body with the outside world. Man becomes aware of himself because of his connections with the world and his independence from the world.²

In a similar way also the teen-ager experiences himself

by discovering his self-identity apart from the world of the adults. The teen-ager experiences this factor as an achievement of independence. From the viewpoint of adults, this quest for self-identity and independence is experienced by many as open rebellion and complete rejection of their world.³

The rebellion against the adult world which many adolescents experience achieves not only independence but also a more complete revealing of the individual and group-ego and self-identity.

Alexander A. Schneider, The Adolescent's Search for Identity,⁴ says

Self-identity means a clear awareness of one's role and status in life, and one's goals and purposes, and one's relationship to reality, to society and to a Supreme Being.

Rebellion and rejection then are a normal part of the life and experience of the adolescent. It is through these experiences that the adolescent achieves his task of becoming an adult.

The Adolescent and the Adult

An important need for the adolescent in his development, in spite of a rather general need for rebellion against adult society, is that of an example after whom he may pattern much of his life at this point. If the adolescent does not feel forced to follow the adult, he frequently will spontaneously imitate him. The example chosen by the adolescent

may be a positive or negative influence in society.⁵

The adolescent who is to grow in the faith of the Church has certain needs which are fulfilled by the Church. One of the decisive factors related to the adolescent's growing in the Christian faith is the presence of the signs of the faith in the daily environment coupled with the sacramental life, according to Pierre Babin, a Roman Catholic source.⁶ In addition, the presence of people strongly committed to the faith provides very strong support for the teen-ager.

As seen in the previous chapter, adolescence includes not only psychological and emotional changes, but physical changes as well. Teen-agers often grow up without an adequate understanding and awareness of the changes which they experience and of the significance of these changes. Babin says that adolescence is a life of revolution with the eventual aim of a "new equilibrium."⁷

To both the teen-ager who is going through adolescence and the adult who is observing the process, adolescence is a period of much chaos which seems to result in little that can be termed constructive. The adult who has a knowledge of the problems of the adolescent in today's society often is not surprised at the need for aid and assistance; he is surprised that so many experience it with little pertinent damage.⁸

To the teenager, limited by his inexperience and as much hampered by tenuous defenses as by the internal drives against which they were erected, the abrupt

pubertal shifts--in endocrine balance, in the reproductive apparatus, and in the demands the environment places upon him--typically spell chaos. There is nothing to which he can anchor for long. . . . Small wonder that in the face of such internal and external revolution he should seem to side with anarchy, and indulge in turbulent, violent behavior that is unpredictable, contradictory, and often self-defeating.⁹

Some of the chaos experienced by today's adolescents has been attributed to the insecurity which they feel. This insecurity in turn has been attributed to the number of shocks they face and the absence of any dependable authority.¹⁰ The shocks which youth face involve the realization of the dichotomy between what adults say and what adults do. Further, authority in many areas of life has been minimized. Popular speakers expound philosophies of sex without restrictions and decry any sort of authority.¹¹ Male heads of homes have experienced a growing loss of authority as well as respect in their own homes. Rioting in cities, as in the summer of 1966, can be seen as a rejection of authority.

Some observers of the adolescent have come to the conclusion that the teen-ager stands in isolation. He stands isolated to a small degree from his own peers; to a larger degree, he is isolated from the pre-adolescent; to an even larger degree, he is isolated from the adult world.¹² Part of this alienation of the adolescent from the adult world is founded upon what adolescents see as hypocrisy and grave moral failure among the adults. Edgar R. Friendenberg, at least, sees a real foundation for this distrust of adults.¹³

The result of the alienation felt between adolescents and other age groups is that more and more they look to their own contemporaries for guidance, social standards, and rewards, instead of looking to the example set by the adult community. As the authority of the adult world declines, the authority of the adolescent's own leaders increases.¹⁴

Reaction by adults to the alienation ascribed to the adolescent varies. Some feel that direct action by adults to influence the standards of teen-agers can lead only to further rejection. According to some studies,¹⁵ the better educated and more suburban the family is, the less effective adult attempts will prove to be. Other writers feel that attempts to reach teen-agers not only should be made but also can be successfully made. But they point out that success will not come easily. In order to penetrate the barrier between the world of the adolescent and that of the adults, the adult must seek to enter the world of the adolescent and understand him within the framework of the adolescent world.¹⁶ Much testing of sincerity will be demanded before the adult is accepted.

Among lower-class youth such as are found in the inner-city, there is a greater atmosphere of despair and disillusionment. David Schlie¹⁷ points out that the gap is wide between their desires as well as the images they receive through mass media and their own environment. Lower class youth are painfully cognizant of this gap and this knowledge creates

a deep insecurity about themselves.

Education

A slum culture influences its inhabitants for better or for worse. Basically the negative influences are examined in this paper. One of the problems confronting the youth in the inner-city is that of getting an adequate education. Schools in the inner-city often are inadequate and are staffed with inexperienced teachers, according to Richard LaBore.¹⁸ Further there is the stigma attached to belonging to the lowest social class which acts as a barrier in the way of the adolescent attempting to improve himself. And the inner-city resident is usually the victim of prejudice.

As a result of these influences the teen-ager who lives in a slum does not fit into the main stream of our society and finds it difficult to improve himself.

One of the biggest problems is that of reading. According to Sophia M. Robison, "The School and Delinquency,"¹⁹ a large percentage of children in the New York City school system cannot read or write; nor can they handle more than elementary arithmetic problems. She states, "It is clear that reading disabilities, as likely barriers to social and emotional adjustment, are apt to impede the rehabilitation of the delinquent."²⁰

Education does not, then, constitute an automatic deterrent

to delinquency. In fact, it may spur delinquency by suggesting to the juvenile ways in which he can accomplish his antisocial activities.

The next topic to be examined is that of delinquency. Some of the problems of the inner-city have been discussed as well as the problems of adolescence. The juvenile who fails to adjust properly presents special problems.

CHAPTER V

DELINQUENCY

Definition

Of special concern to the inner-city worker is the juvenile who reacts to his environment in ways unacceptable to society and who is therefore considered delinquent. The term "juvenile delinquent" is an ambiguous one, varying from source to source. However Norman V. Lowrie, "Juvenile Delinquency,"¹ points out

It is becoming generally accepted, however, that delinquency is not a distinguishable syndrome but is a rather loose evaluative term which covers a wide conglomeration of interpersonal and environmental phenomena.

State and local statutes which define juvenile delinquency vary. As an example, the New Jersey statute 2A:4--14² defines juvenile delinquency as:

Juvenile delinquency is hereby defined as the commission by a child under eighteen years of age of (1) any act which when committed by a person of the age of eighteen or over would constitute:

- a. A felony, high misdemeanor, misdemeanor or other offense, or
- b. The violation of any penal law or municipal ordinance, or
- c. Any act or offense for which he could be prosecuted in the method partaking of the nature of a criminal action or proceeding, or
- d. Being a disorderly person,

or (2) the following acts:

- e. Habitual vagrancy, or
- f. Incurrigibility, or
- g. Immorality, or
- h. Knowingly associating with thieves or vicious or immoral persons, or
- i. Growing up in idleness or delinquency, or
- j. Knowingly visiting gambling places, or patronizing other places or establishments his (or her) admission to which constitutes a violation of law, or
- k. Idly roaming the streets at night, or
- l. Habitual truancy from school, or
- m. Deportment endangering the morals, health, or general welfare of said child.

Admost all juveniles, especially in the inner-city, could qualify as juvenile delinquents under one or more of the regulations in the New Jersey statute. Nevertheless, not all juveniles in the inner-city are considered delinquents. There is more to being a delinquent than being defined so by a statue. That "more" is formal action on the part of the law enforcement agencies of the community, such as police complaint, court action, commitment to an institution.³ The seriousness of juvenile delinquent activities also varies greatly,

At one extreme we have a teenage criminal . . . who seems quite deliberately to be serving an apprenticeship for a criminal career. At the other extreme we have the socially confused teenager. . . . They are less dangerous to society than to themselves. They should not be regarded as menaces, but rather as children

pathetically in need of whatever help or guidance we can afford to give them.⁴

It is clear then that a juvenile delinquent can be a number of different types of people. A juvenile delinquent might be an insecure child, an adult criminal, or somewhere between the two extremes.

The Environment and Juvenile Delinquency

Increasingly studies have shown that delinquency is not restricted to financially deprived neighborhoods but is "more or less normally distributed among all socioeconomic levels."⁵

The major difference between the economic classes seems to be the number of cases reported and dealt with by the courts. A much larger number of delinquents from the lower economic classes comes into contact with the courts than do delinquents from middle or upper class families.⁶ Similarly, a larger number of delinquents from the lower classes are confined to institutions where they are further exposed to the elements which first influenced them towards delinquency "with the important difference that these factors are severely intensified and there is no escape from them."⁷

According to Haskell M. Miller, Understanding and Preventing Juvenile Delinquency,⁸

The delinquent as distinguished from the nondelinquent is; (a) temperamentally--restless energetic, impulsive, extroverted, aggressive, destructive (often sadistic);

(b) in attitude--hostile, defiant, resentful, suspicious, stubborn, socially assertive, adventurous, unconventional, nonsubmissive to authority; (c) psychologically--tending to direct and concrete rather than symbolic, intellectual expression and less methodical in his approach to problems.

David Schlie⁹ reports that among the youth with whom he has worked there is often a distrust towards the adult community. In the household there is a lack of love, and discipline is carried out only to please the family rather than as an aid to the child. Most of the adult world is seen as "phony." There are few meaningful persons in the lives of the youth in the inner-city.

This absence of meaningful personal relationships is an important factor contributing to delinquency. Richard V. McCann, Delinquency: Sickness or Sin?¹⁰ says

We found that many of the delinquent youths whom we came to know lacked meaningful persons in their lives. Rarely had they experienced a personal relationship with anyone who could serve as an inspiration, as a model, as an ideal. On the other hand, most of the non-delinquent boys and girls with whom we talked had experienced a rich network of meaningful relationships with other people.

Five times as many boys as girls are involved in juvenile delinquency that is reported. The factors of "school retardation, chronic truancy, and attitudes of hostility, defiance, and suspicion"¹¹ are often involved in these cases of delinquency. Other important factors involved unstable homes and economically deprived homes, although frequently enough delinquents do come from homes that are

economically, socially, and emotionally stable.¹²

Norman V. Lowrie, "Juvenile Delinquency,"¹³ says

Boys most often commit acts of stealing or malicious mischief while girls often present problems of ungovernable behavior, running away, or sexual offense. Most cases have histories of problem behavior.

A significant factor in fostering juvenile delinquency is the attitude of the slum culture towards crime.¹⁴ Not only does the slum culture not have a strong negative reaction to juvenile delinquency, it frequently also accepts it as normal. As a result of the various influences in the slums, such as the poor education, the prejudice and so on, Paul H. Furfey, "The American Teenager,"¹⁵ says

The slum teenager fits smoothly neither into our educational system, nor our economic system, nor our social system. . . . Under the circumstances it is not particularly surprising if a slum teenager seeks a warped sort of self-realization in violence when he is a boy; nor is it surprising that the slum girl acts on the realization that her body has a monetary value.

In many ways, then, the continuing problems of the inner-city must first be solved before an approach can be made towards solving the problems of those teen-agers within the inner-city who do not adjust adequately to the society.

Delinquency in Racially Mixed Areas

Juvenile delinquency is highest in areas of "maximum racial heterogeneity."¹⁶ These areas have a high degree of instability and very weak social controls. There is a higher rate of juvenile delinquency in these areas than in either

all Caucasian areas or all Negro areas, especially when the racially mixed area is predominantly lower economic class.¹⁷

The reason for the higher rate of juvenile delinquency is because adults generally tolerate youthful deviance less in the changing neighborhood than in the more stable areas. As a result the high rate of delinquency may be mainly a high rate of reported delinquency. Charles V. Willie and Anita Gersherovitz, "Juvenile Delinquency in Racially Mixed Areas,"¹⁸ report

In a racially mixed area, white adults apparently call the police more readily in response to the "disorderly" behavior of Negro boys, and in the same neighborhood, police may also be called more readily by Negro adults to investigate the "disorderly" behavior of white boys.

Thus the adolescents in the neighborhood become involved with the police in a formal way more frequently.

Delinquency and the Negro

The problems of the inner-city are intensified in those areas where the inhabitants also struggle with the problem of being Negro. According to Erdman B. Palmore and Phillip E. Hammond, "Interacting Factors in Juvenile Delinquency,"¹⁹ race as well as sex and school performance plays an important role associated with juvenile delinquency. Negro family life is not strong, especially under slum conditions,²⁰ with the result that

The disorganization of Negro family life in the urban environment together with the absence of communal

controls, results in a high delinquency rate among Negro boys and girls.²¹

Family problems seem to influence the Negro adolescent towards juvenile delinquency much more than similar problems influence Caucasian teen-agers.²² There also is an interaction between family deviance and poor school performance, especially among the males. However, boys doing well in school appear to be less influenced by a deviant neighborhood and family.²³

Vice and criminal activities occur more openly and more successfully in the Negro neighborhoods where there seems to be a more general acceptance of these activities. James F. Short, Jr., "Perceived Opportunities, Gang Membership, and Delinquency,"²⁴ says

Informal observation suggest that vice organized on a large scale does flourish in Negro communities and that "independent entrepreneurship" in such forms as small (and large) policy wheels, marijuana peddling, street-walking prostitutes, pool sharks, professional burglars and robbers, and the like, is more common in lower-class Negro communities than in lower-class white communities.

Boys who belong to gangs are more likely to become engaged in illegal activities than are those who are not gang members. In addition Negro gangs are more prone to delinquent behavior than are Caucasian gangs. The reverse also appears to be true. Legitimate occupations are observed and recognized less by gang members than by nongang members.²⁵

Racial and economic factors play their roles here also. Caucasians see more legitimate occupations and see them more

often as real possibilities than do Negroes. Further, middle-class boys of either race see these possibilities more than do lower-class boys.²⁶

Juvenile delinquents are not isolated from the activities of the church. But there has not been a definitive study of the "type, quality, or intensity of religious training and experience of delinquents as compared with nondelinquents."²⁷ Miller²⁸ does point out that according to one Protestant study, eighty-five per cent of the delinquents studied attended Sunday School regularly or occasionally, fifty-four per cent had joined churches and almost sixty-six per cent were from homes where one or both parents were members of a church. According to Guy L. Roberts, How the Church Can Help Where Delinquency Begins,²⁹ a large percentage of juvenile delinquents are positive in their attitudes towards the church.

Illegitimate Babies

The break-down in the moral structure of society is indicated not only by the rise in juvenile delinquency, but by the rise in illegitimate births among teen-agers. In 1962, 245,000 young women bore babies out of wedlock. In 1945, 51,700 of the babies born out of wedlock were born to unmarried teen-age girls; in 1960 the figure had risen to 91,700.³⁰

Non-white mothers have a much higher rate of illegitimate births than do whites. In 1960, sixty-three per cent of the

estimated 224,300 illegitimate babies were born to non-whites.³¹ Births out of wedlock are much higher among Negroes than among Caucasians, but induced abortions are much higher among Caucasians than among Negroes.³²

The highest rate of out-of-wedlock pregnancies occurs in those areas marked by lack of education, high unemployment, low employment opportunities, poor housing, inadequate recreational facilities and low income.³³ The people in these areas tend to have a much greater acceptance of premarital coitus without birth control methods, in addition to a lesser negative reaction and stigmas attached to illegitimate pregnancies. Further, the moral uncertainty and value confusion present is no match for the sexual drive and erotic curiosity. Frequently delinquents consciously or unconsciously choose pregnancies as a symbol of acceptance.³⁴

Of all the illegitimate babies, about thirty per cent are released for adoption.³⁵ Seventy per cent of all illegitimate babies released for adoption are Caucasian. In 1961, of the estimated 66,100 adoption petitions filed for illegitimate babies, only ten per cent were for non-white babies.

Premarital Intercourse

The adolescent's need for acceptance and popularity among peer groups is extremely strong and plays an important

role in promoting sexual activities. Helen E. Terklesen, Counseling the Unwed Mother,³⁶ points out

It is heart-breaking to watch other girls fight the battle of pre-marital chastity as long as they can and then know that they surrender, simply because they are no longer asked for dates either alone or in groups. They are sometimes no longer even part of the girl's groups. In a society that prizes popularity more than virtue, there is little satisfaction in being a lonely virgin.

In the inner-city slum, middle class standards are frequently seen as luxuries which cannot be afforded, even if they are desired. People in the lower economic classes are less able to control their circumstances than are the upper classes. Terklesen³⁷ says "This fact influences the perspectives of these people so that they live for the day and not for the future."

Race plays a less important role in sexual behavior than does economic class, and in the near future ethnic differences will play an even less significant role in the pattern of sexual behavior than will social class differences. The most important factors inhibiting intercourse outside of marriage are morals, respectability, religious belief, and family training.³⁸

No relationship between sexual behavior and delinquency in general has been established. Both forms of activity are seen as demonstrations of emotional problems and rebellion among some youths and as the accepted behavior of some gangs. Winston Ehrmann, "Changing Sexual Mores,"³⁹

writes

Some of the sexual practices of male gangs seem to be essentially extremes of the same kind of behavior existing among other youths. Although exploitation of one sex by the other sex occurs in all groups, the principal difference between the gang member and the nongang member seems to be that the former's behavior may be more openly and frankly exploitative and less subtle and sympathetic toward the female.

Premarital coitus is generally accepted among the lower-class youths and is seen as a desire for acceptance, an expression of a need for relationships, and as rebellion against adult standards.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY

The tensions of modern living that are felt by the adult world produce their results among the world of the teen-agers also. These tensions arise from such factors as the mobility of contemporary society, the rapidity of technological and scientific change, the threat of atomic war, and so forth. Some writers have described the modern world as being at the end of a deep cultural and moral corruption. The urban population, especially the non-white segment, continues to increase in the United States. Much of the non-white population is concentrated in the inner city. This area is marked by problems such as crime, poverty, prejudice, overcrowding, and alienation.

After this overview of the city, attention was paid to the task of adolescence which was seen as answering three essential questions: (1) Who am I? (2) Where do I belong? and (3) Who will understand and love me? The teen-ager discovers his identity in reaction to the adult world, often in the form of rebellion. Particularly among inner-city youths, there is much despair and disillusionment. Schools in the central city are usually inadequate. Frequently the youths face the stigma of class and racial prejudice.

Juvenile delinquent activities vary in seriousness from truancy to murder. The major difference in delinquency among the economic classes is not the delinquency frequency but the number of percentage of court appearances. The lower the economic class, the larger the percentage of court appearances. There is a similar correlation between economic class and percentage of confinements to institutions.

In addition to such factors as family instability and low school achievement, the absence of meaningful personal relationships is an important factor in causing delinquency. In the inner-city, the residents are more ready to accept delinquency as normal. This acceptance of delinquency plays an important role in fostering delinquency. Another factor noted in the study was that racially changing neighborhoods have higher rates of delinquency than do racially stable areas. Basically the high rate of delinquency is due to increased complaints to the police rather than to a real increase in delinquency.

One factor connected to the high rate of delinquency among Negro youths is weak family life. Community controls also seem poor and as a result crime and vice are more open to observation and participation among the residents in the Negro areas of the city.

A final factor is that of births out of wedlock, the incidence of which is rising in the United States. Included in this rise is an increase in the number of teen-agers

involved. In the inner-city, middle class standards of morality are often viewed as luxuries that cannot be afforded. This factor is one reason for the higher percentage of sexual delinquency in these areas. Economic class is more important than race in matters of sexual morality. No relationship between sexual delinquency and other forms of delinquency has been established.

Implications and Conclusions

If adolescence is seen as a time of confusion and chaos, say students of the problem, then the church should provide genuine understanding and love. When adolescents rebel, the church that understands can also accept the adolescent. Those who are sensitive to the confusion of the adolescent can also help him.

When the adolescent is discovering who he is, the church can further help him to discover who he is in relation to both God and his fellow men. When the adolescent seeks to determine where he belongs, the church can help him discover that he belongs to God. When the adolescent searches for understanding and love, the church can provide him with God's understanding and love as well as that of man, as the teen-ager moves through the problems of adolescence.

Teen-agers in the inner-city are in dire need of help in understanding the specific problems they face. In an environment of general lack of interest and concern, the

church particularly should concern itself with people in need, church leaders agree. When teen-agers are involved in delinquency, the church has an opportunity to help them at the very point of the troubles they encounter. In an area in which there often seems to be no purpose and meaning in life, the church can help the adolescents find genuine meaning and value in life.

On the one hand, the church needs to do what it can as an institution and corporate body to promote understanding of adolescence. The church can help provide aid for teenagers' parents as well as for teen-agers. On the other hand, individual Christians can become involved with the teen-age world. By being involved they will have an opportunity to understand adolescents as well as providing opportunities for meaningful personal relationships. Further, they will help the teen-ager become acquainted with the world of the adult.

The exact way that the church as a body and the Christian as individual can help will depend upon the specific problems and situations that arise. Like the adolescent, the adult also must frequently depend upon the trial and error method.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter I

¹Haskell M. Miller, Understanding and Preventing Juvenile Delinquency: Practical Resources for Individual, Church, Family, and Community (New York: Abingdon Press, 1958), p. 32.

²Ibid., p. 31.

³Ibid., p. 33.

⁴Ibid., pp. 35-39.

⁵Blaine R. Porter, "American Teen-Agers of the 1960's-- Our Despair or Hope?," Journal of Marriage and the Family, 27 (May, 1955), p. 140.

⁶Robert C. Weaver, The Urban Complex: Human Values in Urban Life (Garden City: Doubleday, 1964), p. 1.

Chapter II

¹Robert C. Weaver, The Urban Complex: Human Values in Urban Life (Garden City: Doubleday, 1964), p. 10.

²Ibid., pp. 10-11.

³Ibid., p. 11.

⁴Ibid., p. 17.

⁵Ibid., p. 26.

⁶Ibid., p. 28.

⁷Ibid., p. 29.

⁸Ibid., pp. 30-31.

⁹David R. Hunter, The Slums: Challenge and Response (New York, The Free Press, 1964), p. 3.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 21-24.

¹¹Weaver, pp. 7-8.

Chapter III

¹W. Kent Gilbert, The Age Group Objectives of Christian Education (The Board of Parish Education of the Lutheran Church in America, 1958), p. 65.

²Ibid., p. 68.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. 69.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid., p. 72.

⁷Ibid., p. 73.

⁸Ibid., pp. 73 and 76.

⁹Ibid., p. 76.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid., p. 77.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid., p. 80.

Chapter IV

¹Francis I. Frellick, Helping Youth in Trouble (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1965), pp. 54-63.

²Gabriel Marcel, Homo Viator, Emma Craufurd, translator (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1962), pp. 13-28.

³Interview: Rev. Richard LaBore.

⁴Alexander A. Schneider, "The Adolescent's Search for Identity," The Adolescent: His Search for Understanding, William C. Bier, editor (New York: Fordham University Press, 1963), pp. 138-139.

⁵George C. Hagmaier, "The Pastoral Counsellor," The Adolescent: His Search for Understanding, William C. Bier, editor (New York: Fordham University Press, 1963), pp. 170-171.

⁶Pierre Babin, Crisis of Faith (New York: Herder and Herder, 1963), pp. 28-29.

⁷Ibid., p. 73.

⁸Interview: Rev. Richard LaBore.

⁹Robert J. Campbell, "Sex and the Teenager," The Adolescent: His Search for Understanding, William C. Bier, editor (New York: Fordham University Press, 1963), pp. 28-29.

¹⁰Babin, p. 135.

¹¹Playboy, passim.

¹²Paul H. Furfey, "Peer-Group Influences in Adolescence," The Adolescent: His Search for Understanding, William C. Bier, editor (New York: Fordham University Press, 1963), pp. 21-22.

¹³Edgar Z. Friedenberg, "The Isolation of the Adolescent," The Adolescent: His Search for Understanding, William C. Bier, editor (New York: Fordham University Press, 1963), p. 112.

¹⁴Paul H. Furfey, "The American Teenager," The Adolescent: His Search for Understanding, William C. Bier, editor (New York: Fordham University Press, 1963), pp. 1-10.

¹⁵Friedenberg, p. 16.

¹⁶Furfey, "The American Teenager," p. 16.

¹⁷Interview: Rev. David Schlie.

¹⁸Interview: Rev. David Schlie.

¹⁹Sophia M. Robison, "The School and Delinquency," The Adolescent: His Search for Understanding, William C. Bier, editor (New York: Fordham University Press, 1963), p. 84.

²⁰Ibid., p. 85.

Chapter V

¹Norman V. Lowrie, "Juvenile Delinquency," Values and

Ideals of American Youth, Eli Ginzberg, editor (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), p. 137.

²Richard R. Korn, "The Counseling of Delinquents," Handbook of Counseling Techniques, Ernest Harms and Paul Schreiber, editors (New York: Macmillan, 1963), p. 117.

³Ibid., p. 118.

⁴Paul H. Furfey, "The American Teenager," The Adolescent: His Search for Understanding, William C. Bier, editor (New York: Fordham University Press, 1963), p. 2.

⁵Korn, p. 121.

⁶Lowrie, pp. 139-140.

⁷Korn, p. 123.

⁸Haskell M. Miller, Understanding and Preventing Juvenile Delinquency: Practical Resources for Individual, Church, Family, and Community (New York: Abingdon Press, 1958), p. 23.

⁹Interview: Rev. David Schlie.

¹⁰Richard V. McCann, Delinquency: Sickness or Sin? (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), p. xi.

¹¹Lowrie, p. 139.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Furfey, p. 8.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Charles V. Willie and Anita Gershenovitz, "Juvenile Delinquency in Racially Mixed Areas," American Sociological Review 29 (October, 1964), p. 743.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 740.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 743.

¹⁹Erdman B. Palmore and Phillip E. Hammond, "Inter-acting Factors in Juvenile Delinquency," American Sociological Review 29 (December, 1964), p. 850.

²⁰Interview: Rev. David Schlie.

²¹Edward F. Frazier, The Negro Family in the United States (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966), p. 268.

²²Palmore, p. 850.

²³Ibid., p. 851.

²⁴James F. Short and others, "Perceived Opportunities, Gang Membership, and Delinquency," American Sociological Review 30 (February, 1965), p. 59.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid., p. 66.

²⁷Miller, p. 27.

²⁸Ibid., p. 26.

²⁹Guy L. Roberts, How the Church Can Help Where Delinquency Begins (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1958), p. 68.

³⁰Helen E. Terklesen, Counseling the Unwed Mother (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1964), p. 18.

³¹Ibid., pp. 18-19.

³²Winston Ehrmann, "Changing Sexual Mores," Values and Ideals of American Youth, Eli Ginzberg, editor (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), p. 688.

³³Terklesen, p. 19.

³⁴Ibid., p. 39.

³⁵Ibid., p. 22.

³⁶Ibid., p. 23.

³⁷Ibid., pp. 40-41.

³⁸Ibid., p. 44.

³⁹Ehrmann, p. 53.

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