

Plenary Session
Base House
December 30, 1969

101462

John Lloyd

REPORT ON THE YOUTH CULTURE

Grace and Peace is ours from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

This morning I want to talk about the youth culture in terms of contextual reeducation. By reeducation I don't mean we have to learn anything new. I was addressed last night when it was said that we have the capability of teaching in any situation, that the Word is in every situation, so we always know what we're about. The problem is in fitting that situation. Take a mountain climber. When a mountain climber climbs a granite mountain, he uses different materials from what he uses to climb a sandstone mountain. If he uses that hard pick that just ~~kkkch~~ into a granite rock on sandstone, he's just going to rip that mountain apart and fall down, and he won't go anywhere—or at least not up. So we have to be sensitive to that when we move on the youth culture.

In our time I think we have intellectually pretty well gotten around acceptance of the youth culture, acceptance of different cultures; but we still tend to emotionally reject that in ways. I see people looking at me here and everywhere, and they're going ——— — "Oh huh, ... Why is it you look like a monkey? Why is it that you intentionally add confusion to chaos? Intellectually we've gone through Civil Rights and other things that have helped us to understand that man is man, but why is it that you want to put yourself in a situation that you know that emotionally we have trouble dealing with? Why is it that you want to be a nigger?" I think that we all have this emotional rejection in us. We have to be very sensitive to that when we consider the youth culture both personally and corporately as a body.

In this sense what I have to say is just a contextual expression. Intellectually I'm sure I'm wrong as hell, and probably just terrible. But the mere fact that I'm saying it sets the context, and in that one sense I can't be wrong in anything I say. What I want to do is talk for about thirty minutes, and then for ten minutes anyone can ask questions that the spirit moves them to. I want to briefly outline the past, present and future of the youth movement today, and then I'll go to an accountability chart of what I did in the week I spent in Madison, Wisconsin. I'll talk a little bit about that in a few minutes.

In the past in the youth culture, in the youth movement, there were mainly students. That's not surprising because it's often students that are involved in the movement, because studenthood by definition is a spirit struggle. You're confronted by things all the time that continually call your profession into question. So you're naturally going to react to that and call that question into question. It was the students that got the youth culture going — the youth movement going. And it was mainly was in urban areas. Those areas increased the consciousness by being an urban area. The time I'd talk about that was about 1963, 1964, not too long ago. Exactly what it was might be a little harder to come at. One way I think of it is that it was an individual spirit awakening of students, and it was a recognition of this awakening in their fellow students. They realized that they weren't willing to fit into the pattern that had been laid out for them, and they realized that other people weren't willing to fit into the pattern that had been laid out for them. This recognition brought about a communityizing, and recognition bonded them in commonality. The first expression of that was the arrival on the scene of Haight Ashbury, an attempt at a whole new different life style, different expression of what it means to be alive, to be a human being. The symbol that I would hold up of that past other than the manifestation of

Haight Ashbury would be the Berkeley Free Speech Movement. It was commonly interpreted that our situation could be bettered through dealing with political structures, or with the economic structures of our country at that time. Behind that was an interpretation of the aesthetic realm of life as faith. They took their sensitivity or insights into the troubles of society as an aesthetic expression, and they adopted this as their faith or their stance towards life. That has been seriously called into question, which leads us up to the present.

Who is it in the present? It's still students, but it's also ex-students. There's a growingness that is spreading outside the student in the movement of the youth culture. It comes from those that are ex-students in the sense of the dropouts, and those that are ex in the sense that they never became students in the traditional sense of the term. Where is it now? It's still concentrated in urban areas, but it's global. It's in Tokyo, it's in London, it's in San Francisco, it's in Paris, it's in New York, it's in Amsterdam, it's in Moscow, it's in Peking: it's global. It's still urban to a large extent. There's a growing despair in the spirit development of youth today that they can't live from the aesthetics that they once thought was the answer—that they once were sure was the stance that would deal with mystery for them. This has been called into question with students and young people very heavily, and it sinks them into a great despair about their being. One way to look at it is that parents of youth culture followed the economic rabbit. That rabbit went hop, hop, hop, hop, hop up at nine, hop down at five, and they hopped it out into the suburbs, following that trail. But when they stopped in the suburbs where they wanted to go, the rabbit began to defecate and smell a lot, and they began to wonder if the economic rabbit was so pretty. Youth didn't have to worry about that because they had never known anything else. They were born right into that situation, and it was just obvious that this smells. "I'm getting out!" So they did.

As the Berkeley Free Speech Movement symbolizes, they got out originally through the political realm of life. They said to themselves, "On the other side of these bad political structures that we find in our country, there's going to be a beautiful world. It's the fascist regime, it's the system that's messing us up. If we just deal with that, everything is going to be fine." But it became more and more obvious that that was not true. You don't have very many political activists, outside of heavy, heavy intellectuals, who over-intellectualize, who stay in the youth structures of revolution, of change. They just have proved to be insufficient as an answer. The bulk of the youth have now moved away from that political bunny into the culture bunny. That's the one that we're in now. The aesthetic, sensuous realm of life is still very much in the minds of youth today. They followed this bunny way out into the woods. They were exactly sure this was the thing to do, that they would catch this bunny, and that everything was going to be real nice. But they're getting out in the woods now, and they see that they're never going to catch that bunny. But, hell, they don't know what to do. If they stop,—well they already know that politics and economics isn't the answer. So what is? It's culture that's got to be it. What is the answer?

So heavy despair sets in on youth, because he can't stop yet he doesn't want to keep going. He knows it's futile, but what's the alternative? So there's despair in youth—any type of youth, I don't care exactly where he'd fit in—right, left or anything like that—there's despair in those people, in us. Culture is a question that's hard to deal with because it appears on the surface that it is right. But the youth have got to push at that culture just that question that it's forming of the culture.

On their adoption of culture I'll read a little quote from the prophet of the youth, Abbie Hoffman. Abbie Hoffman is not some kind of crazy nut who's off trying to express his censures. He's a very serious, mature man taking a very serious stance toward the problems of our time. This is a quote from him. It says, "The culture is the style. The culture is the definition. It forms the politics. When I appear in the Chicago courtroom, I want to be tried not because I support the National Liberation Front,

which I do, but because I have long hair. Not because I support the Black Liberation Movement, but because I smoke dope. Not because I'm against the capitalist system, but because I think property eats shit."

Now Abbie is sure that culture is going to explain away the problems he's found, and he wrote a book called Woodstock Nation. If I had to hold up a symbol of present youth activity, it would have to be these pop festivals that are going on, high energy expressions of youth's being. I'm a prime example of that. I went all the way from San Francisco, California, to Woodstock, New York, to sit in the mud, the smell, the cold, and the rain! I don't know why I went! But it was a strange experience. All across the country you'd see brothers and sisters going to Woodstock, and you knew where they were going. You didn't even ask. In a place like South Dakota you'd walk up to someone you'd never even seen before and--"How much farther is it?" Something was just magnetizing the youth. And we all got there, and we began to wonder why it was that we were there. I left after a day and a half--hitchhiked right back to California to go to another one. Found out when I got to California that it had been cancelled, thank goodness.

But what Abbie says about Woodstock is this: "What we found was hope, hope that the love, the drugs, the sex of Woodstock, of the new nation of the young and of the young's music, could break the shackles of the establishment. Hope that the coming together and the struggle that was involved to do so would signal other struggles together for change, and that the Culture--capital C-u-l-t-u-r-e--could become stronger than its keepers, break out of the plastic uptown za za pink tentacles of the Rock empire and all the debris." That's what Abbie found.

After going back to Madison, I would question that. There's always been hope, maybe in all youth--part of being young--but an even stronger hope in the youth of the sixties, an irrational hope that cuts back against everything, that somehow, some way things are going to work out. But people can't live on that hope any more. Time! time is calling that hope into question. You don't make any progress, and you say-- --your hope is just questioned.

In our group we question this hope now. And the youth are questioning this hope. Recognizing as they did in the past that they had a commonality in spirit awakening of being a human being, they're recognizing now this questioning. This was a commonality in the past that drew them together. Now it's driving them apart. There's a withdrawing of "togetherness," an exit into the country. There's just a thousand ways you withdraw--physically, mentally--just a thousand different ways to withdraw from the issues that are pounding them on the head, because they haven't been able to answer them. In psychological terms--I don't want this to be misleading; if a person read this in Life magazine he would say, "There it is. Why there's the youth culture all right." But we can't look at it like Life magazine would look at it. We just have to use the definition. I would call the youth today heavily paranoid and schizophrenic. That is, they have delusions of persecution and grandeur. These delusions are based on fact. There's no question that the youth are persecuted in one sense, and there's a very heavy paranoia among the youth of anybody over 30, in the sense that that makes them, from the mindset of the youth, the economic and the political that they have already discarded. And students today don't "grow up" in one place. They don't "grow up" in Colorado. They don't "grow up" in Germany. They grow up all over the world. This kind of makes you schizophrenic. You can move in any kind of situation without undergoing some of the problems that people before you did.

What I want to talk about now is the appreciation the youth today have of drama. "The whole world is a stage" is not a saying; it's a fact to the youth. They are trying to find being existence, and they have to express this through drama.

They can't express it in any other way. Music festivals are drama. There's a perversion to that drama, and that's sensationalism, back on the sensuous or the aesthetic bunny rabbit. But there's a gift also in that drama. That gift is creativity. It's imposed by the culture—an embedding in the culture that allows them to be creative in a way that people tied down in other ways are incapable of. This comes out in just a whole new different life style, new art forms that are imaginal, creative, explosive, that impact people. More than just a hit, in fact, they grab people. You—"What?" You look at it a second time. And that's a gift. But it's also a perversion.

In the future I'd still talk about students. I'd also talk about children, or those under 10, 15—I don't know what it is any more. Where will I talk about it? I'm going to talk about it in the future as being all over. I'm going to talk about it as impacting the rural areas in a heavy way—that the urban areas will already have been impacted. I'm talking about a person who grows up in Hoetown, Kansas, who's going to be a lot more radical, a lot more urbanized than he has been in the past. When? I'd just talk about the future in terms of the next year, because something's going to give in one sense or another, and the youth's going to be a new type of person there. To talk about the future is a very hard thing to do. But I would talk about the future of the next year as a continual withdrawing, because youth are pursued by their spirit in an unanswerable question that they haven't been able to answer. They're just going to withdraw into the country into their own thing, which manifests itself as—meditation—that's a very big thing today. There's health foods, natural, body—just a thousand ways to withdraw from the situation you find yourself in by concentrating your energy and your efforts onto one specific area. I predict this. In fact it's happened. There may be an increase in irrational acts in existence accordingly, because they have gone through the economic realm, they've gone through the political realm, they're going through dullness of the cultural realm, and they'll continue along these lines without finding an answer. They're going to appear to be very irrational. There's going to be a polarization of people and ideas, and a decay of the youth society, of the world society, in one respect. Youth are now polarizing. They're making the same mistakes they used to point to their elders and accuse them of. Intellectually they understand that they're part of the world and must stand present to all mankind, but emotionally they're just withdrawing from any association with things their intellect tells them are evil, or that are destroying them.

As a symbol—I don't know what to hold up as a symbol of the future. Maybe just the children of this Order, the age that they are, as a sign that the context, because of the rapidity that we're in, is just changing so fast. New human beings are being developed in the sense that the context that I was exposed to and the people in front of me is happening much sooner to them. People are coming to college already going through things that they used to go through in college, or that I went through—considering things in high school that I never seriously considered until I was in college. This is happening with the Order children at an even faster rate. You are setting the context of a 22 year old in a 10 year old, and what that could do—

I want to pass out the chart that I made and say a few words about it. The data that's on the chart is in an interpreted form. There's a lot of thought behind it, so it's confusing. It's full of a lot of intellectual mistakes. What the chart is is my looking at people looking at themselves. It's not the people looking at themselves, but it's my looking at them. If you asked them what their operational image was, or something like that, they'd probably give you a different answer. But I would give you this answer. This chart in one way is worthless if you try to take it intellectually or try to see if there's a direct relation between what's in the box and what the question is. But as a contextual statement I think that it has some value for us.

YOUTH CULTURE TODAY

MOVEMENTAL LEFT

NON-MOVEMENTAL LEFT

TRADITNL

ATHLETIC

INDEPENDENT

Tom

Ken

Benj

Rob

Phil

Kate

Dave

Dan

Wayne

Dave

OPERATIONAL IMAGE	Sensitive Revolutionary	Revolutionary	The happy wanderer (Bob Dy Ian)	Lover	Spiritual Father	Edge Inhabitant	Handsome Intellectual	Independent Success	Concerned Athlete	Lucid Lover
EMOTIONAL TONE	Manic Depressive	Interested Non-chalence	Despair	Insecure and Despair	Suppressed High Energy	Bounce over Despair	Cynicism	Joker	Worry	Despair
Indiv. Understanding of EXISTENTIAL QUESTION	What bring joy	Method of Revolution	What do I do with my life	Where can I go to escape	How do I reach relation with finality	What is there to do now that I am FREE	How can I achieve my image	What vocation will support my image	Responsibility	How live ↓ ↑
DRUGS	Lots of grass	Occasional grass	Occasional grass	Now grass only	Grass, others when warm	Not much any more	Grass, scared of others	Grass	Grass	Grass, occasionally others
SEX	Compelling Danger	Infrequent	Maintains Image	Opiate of Existence	Good girl one of life's necessities	Essence of life	Supports image	Supports image	Infrequent	Quiet Enjoyment
SYMBOL	Leather craftsman	Job	Clothes and Guitar	Community Dope Dealer	Baby and Health food	Wheeler Dealer	Application to German school	New car	Good dresser	Pretty lover
TREND TO	Irrational Acts	Violent Usurpation	Drunkard	Psychiatric Institute	Hermit	Prostitute (Mind and Body)	Self-centered teacher	Success-oriented Businessman	Sensuous Physical Ed. Teacher	Localized Bourgeois Routine

I don't have time to go through the chart to any great extent. I'll just explain it a bit. The Movemental Left is not really the Movemental Left. The Non-Movemental Left is the important category. The Movemental Left are those that work in the structures such as SDS or something like that, but they're no longer relating. It's as much coincidence as intentionality if they relate to the Non-Movemental Left now. The Traditional, Athletic, and Independent are also tremendously affected by the Non-Movemental Left. That is the center, or that is the movement of the youth culture today, and it is affecting the whole world, whether you're young or not. I'll just take a sample here. This guy Ken under movemental Left—he thinks of himself as a revolutionary, so he works with SDS. About three or four weeks ago SDS had a three day action in Madison. What they did was to make a few talks; and they marched around up to the capitol, and maybe they broke a window, and then they went home. But their big move was when they went into the Administration Building and busted up a lot of property, and someone told me that they destroyed photo ID's, but I question that—whether they had duplicates. That's the kind of area they're moving in. The SDS is not making it anymore. Nobody really pays much attention to them anymore. Anybody who's been in SDS more than five years is a heavy intellectual, a heavy Marxist more than likely. That's the only way that he can sustain himself on that political thrust.

In the Non-Movemental Left I'll talk about this guy called Rob, who is a very sensitive, intelligent person, but who is being just hit over the head by the fact that aesthetics are not enabling him to live his life. He is a poet of some sorts, and I want to read a poem that he wrote. He wrote several of them. I don't want to read the poem for its intellectual content or its clarity, but just as a stylistic expression of youth. There are not many youth that would disagree in one sense with this poem.

Grrr Ruffulstuff

I am an island in this

Classroom livingroom

Experiencing Yeat's one time desire

To be colder and dumber than a fish.

People arguing that is obvious

Proceeding point to point

Logically

Following the subject

Of course we're against the war in Vietnam

Mixon doesn't care about us

When we demonstate

Why weaken the military

Teacher?

Do you think?

I think that there are rational reasons

But the people. What about the people?

What about freedom?

Don't you think that there is

Reaction to dissent?

In one sense there are pockets of power.

And there is it. Unable to talk.

For if I counter

Then I must counter

Every logical statement

Every word.

And what is pedagogy, then, but

A series of countering?

That was his stylistic expression. It's a cynical poem, but it's a poem dealing with the mystery of his life, and he's incorporated the cynicism to hold between him and the mystery, much as a Stoic will hold his stoicism between him and the mystery.

The guy on the far right, an Independent who's been in the Traditional and Athletic category, is now not really associated with anything but him and his girlfriend, not anything in the concrete sense. He's had a very difficult time deciding how to incorporate a new faith to his lucidity. He sees that aesthetics isn't the answer but-- how to incorporate a new faith to live in between the arrows, or as some of the prophets of the time, the Rolling Stones, say, "in between the sheets." They say, "Come on, Baby, there's a place for you in between the sheets. Come on now, Baby, don't you want to live with me?" There's no question to me that that's what they mean, in between there. This guy Dave is incorporating an age-long problem in man, and not just the youth culture. There's always been a problem of categorizing your life as doing good versus feeling good. The high priest of LSD, Timothy Leary, says you do good if you feel good. He's very serious when he says that.

I don't have time to talk through this chart as much as I'd like. It's grounded in the individual situation of these people, but I believe it to be representational of youth today all across this country and in much of the world.

I'll close by talking about a relationship to the youth culture in terms of the musical Hair. The musical Hair to me is not a revolutionary theater in the way that the living theater is. It's more a commentary on the social values and the social structures. The one redeeming or saving factor that I would hold up is the song "Let the sun shine in." The way that comes to me is, "Admit the Word." Students and youth today are somewhere between vaguely subconscious and vaguely conscious of the Word. That is, they know the Word--not in the traditional word of the Word, but they know the Word; but they don't know how to admit the Word into their life or their lifestyle. If it's not aesthetics, then--- --. That's the cry that I hear continually from the youth, and the position I see us in is to be enablers for them to admit the Word.