



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

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"Young People's Formal Dinners" -- acceptable behaviour or symptomatic of a deeper problem?



And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God , Romans 12:2.

A response by Rev. Thomas Martin to last month's article

I am happy to respond to the article "Young People's Formal Dinners" that appeared in last month's edition of "The Burning Bush."

I have been involved in young people's work for some considerable time now and as most people know it is perhaps one of the most difficult areas to work in. The Lord has given me a burden for the youth of our denomination and as a consequence I have sought to do all that is possible to encourage, help and support them through the hard and demanding times we are living in. God has blessed our denomination as far as the young are concerned.

My involvement with young people has taken me beyond the regular Friday Night Fellowship meetings in that I have been responsible for organizing numerous "Dinners and Games Nights" for them. During that time, it has always been my desire to keep such events controlled, decent and proper. I am not opposed entirely to Young People's Dinners, Church Dinners and games etc. provided they are disciplined and governed by decency and under the control of responsible individuals who are accepted by their congregation.

However in these past few years it is correct to say there has been a very worrying trend among our Young People as far as non-church socials and formal dinners are concerned. It has caused me great concern and last month's article contains, I believe, some things that cannot be dismissed lightly.

I would agree that a formal dinner is a mimicking of the world and an aping of an event that is clearly associated with the pleasure-seeking of this world. Even if some disagree with this view of a formal surely they cannot dismiss the fact that the immodesty witnessed at recent events renders it a function at which there can be no place for a professing Christian?

On the issue of non-church socials it is correct to say that some of these functions are "being used to break down the line of separation between believers and the world, between separatists and the ecumenical apostate denominations." I feel our young people should take this matter seriously and let their separatist principles as Free Presbyterians govern them with regard to all ecumenically organised events. They should stay away from such socials. Furthermore it is right to say that some of these socials are similar to a disco. I have talked to some young people who told me of certain socials that use coloured and dimmed lights. Dry ice which produces a mist covering the floor has even been used thus



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giving the function the appearance of the television programme, "Top of the Pops." Thankfully, these young people have come away from all that but others have not.

In the light of these facts and more it is clear that some counsel must be given and protest made against these worrying trends. I would like to add my voice in support of much of what your article has said and warn all our young people of the dangers of many of these functions. Could I say a word to all the young readers of "The Burning Bush." I believe the Lord has created us with spiritual and physical needs which must be catered for in order to benefit the whole man. He must eat spiritually and he must eat physically. He must rest spiritually and he must rest physically. He must have spiritual enjoyment and he must have physical enjoyment. Recreation I believe is part of God's plan for man's physical well being and I would contend for right, proper, decent and lawful pursuits for young people. Just make sure that the things you engage in and the places you go to are helpful and beneficial to you both spiritually and physically. There is a danger in neglecting one and feeding the other or in caring for one and poisoning the other. Both I believe need that which is wholesome and good. However, the Bible puts greater emphasis upon the spiritual as opposed to the physical. In 1 Tim 4:8 we read, "For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." We should always keep this in mind when it comes to all legitimate forms of recreation.

Let the Lord and His Word be the judge of what is right and proper. The Scripture reminds us in 1 Cor. 10:31, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."