



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

"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.

This subject just will not go away! In this issue, I had intended writing a concluding article on the distinction between the feasts of the world and the feasts ordained by God, but when I received the following e-mail, I decided to publish it. The name of the writer has been removed by me. There is in this letter that which should concern every parent, minister and elder, indeed every Free Presbyterian. There is a most serious decline in standards of behaviour taking place before our eyes and we would need to face up to it and act in keeping with the responsibilities of our God-given office.

I would like to thank you and the Rev. Thomas Martin for taking the time to deal with the issue of "Young People's Formal Dinners" in the light of the Scriptures. Both articles have been a blessing to myself and many other young people, and have certainly provoked much thought and consideration into how a Christian should conduct themselves.

Another topic, which I feel would also be profitable to examine, would be the more commonly occurring style of 'Social'. These have, for a long time, been the mainstay of many a Christian's weekend recreation and therefore warrant a thorough examination.

They normally take the form of something reminiscent of a Sunday-School party, where chairs and balloons are used to play traditional, harmless games. For the most part they are a time of good fun and fellowship. Friends are made, acquaintances are renewed and God's children are able to meet with each other in a safe and responsible environment. It now saddens me to say that not all 'socials' are conducted in this fashion anymore.

dancing

Line dancing has replaced the games. Keyboards, synthesisers and even drums and electric guitars have replaced the piano and accordion. Top-40 'hits' and 'dance anthems' are being sampled and mixed to replace the simple melodies. The music does not provide something to play the games to -- it provides the tempo with which to play them at!

worldliness

A definite air of worldliness has crept into even the Free Presbyterian Youth. Socials have now become a 'cattle-market' where the intentions of a lot of young men are anything but decent, noble or moral. The female dress code has degraded. In these warm, and sometimes frenzied, conditions perspiration can be seen running down the walls of smaller venues. In response, some young women wear more revealing clothes - not least because it is



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a means of getting the much-wanted male attention! The young men are more interested in 'eying up the talent' than actually participating in the games. 'Innocent' fun is a thing of the past. Promiscuity and immodesty are rife. Unsociable hours and rowdy behaviour are the result of many 'parties' running on past midnight. On many occasions police have cautioned the 'boy-racers' about blaring horns, flashing lights and loud music late at night. Such is the behaviour that even though a Saturday night party is finished before the Sabbath our young people are still found travelling the roads or sitting in chip shops well after 12 midnight. So much for preparing themselves for the Sabbath!

In looking at the venue and operators of these socials we also find some more alarming facts. One particular 'social-band' --Phillipi, which is from the Cookstown area and have made socials popular in recent years, have even started using smoke machines and flashing lights. They have made the transition to the pubs and clubs even easier for the weak in spirit by providing, what is promoted as, an acceptable alternative. From beginning as a 'Praise Band' playing 'alternative' and 'modern' Christian praise, they have turned into little more than a circus act whose sole aim is to "do whatever it takes" to get a crowd (Paddy Quinn - Phillipi Promotions). They have recently shown how 'Christian' they are by playing for an ecumenical march in Cookstown last New Year's Eve. One of their band members, a Church of Ireland minister's son, even refused a gospel tract on his way into an off-licence!

It may be one thing to attend and pay into an Orange Hall for such an event, but how can any Free Presbyterian young person justify paying into a Church of Ireland Hall? Especially in places like Kildress which entertained the 'Toronto Blessing' and supported the ecumenical Evangelicals & Catholics Together movement! In doing so such young people have actually been guilty of funding the Apostasy!

It is a fear of mine that by imitating the habits and practices of the world and by shadowing the evil practices of a rebellious generation inevitably our young folk will err and fall, even though intentions may be commendable. I must stress that most socials in the Free Church are carried off in a proper and ordered manner e.g. in the various Youth Rally Christmas parties. How much more it then saddens me to hear that two young Free Presbyterian men have introduced line dancing and secular music into their socials and that many of our young people support them. When will the lesson be learned?

(Concerned Young Person)

While the sentiments expressed in the letters we have published are those of the writers and are not necessarily shared completely by the Editor, we give our general endorsement to the concerns referred to.

Perhaps next month we will get round to considering the distinction between the feasts of the world and the feasts ordained by God.