

# Youth Cultures

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## Introduction

Proverbs 22:6, “Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not turn from it.” “Train up a child” are words which we have heard, and most likely have memorized, since the days of our catechism instruction. As adolescents and teenagers these words probably seemed easy enough for our parents and later for ourselves to fulfill; but the more mature we became, the more we realized what a gigantic task, “to train up a child in the way he should go” is. The Lord has entrusted to us; whether we are parents, grandparents, pastors, teachers, etc., a large task. We should be honored by the trust which we have been given, and therefore need to take the task as deadly serious: it is a matter of eternal life or death.

The members of the WELS and ELS do conscientiously take on the job of training children. We become aware of this by looking at the amount of money and dedicated work put into our Christ-centered education system, to “feed his lambs” whether here in the United States or among our foreign friends. Yet many of our youth flow out of our churches and away from their Savior. There are numerous reasons given for this happening. We tend to place the blame all over from home, to parents, to church, to school, to television, to the Internet, and in each case we’re probably somewhat right. However, let us not forget the sinful nature of ourselves and our children; plus the dreadful fact that the chief deceiver himself wants our children. “Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour” (1 Peter 5:8b).

Devour is an accurate description of what the devil does to souls. Webster defines devour by using such words as greed, engulf, consume, destroy and voracious (insatiable). The great deceiver is insatiable in his quest for people to join him in hell. He uses many means and ways to attempt to gain our souls. “Youth Cultures” of the new Millennium is one of the most heinous (shockingly evil: Webster) tools directed at our adolescents and teens.

## Purpose of this Essay

The purpose of this essay is to give to you an awareness of these satanic schemes, so that you may use all your resources of the Word and Truth to guide the children and the parents of the children in your congregation away from this evil. We know Proverbs 22:15 all too well, “Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far from him.”

Anyone who has disciplined a child knows that this is a long and weary task, but God gives us strength for this task: “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30).

Ephesians 6:4: “Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. “Colossians 3:21: “Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.” Both of these passages emphasize the precise manners which training a child may take. We know that if we become too lenient they could easily wander away from Christ, but being too harsh or demanding could cause embitterment and exasperation. Such action lets the devil in and may lead them to the cultures, which teach a doctrine of no morals, no God, and only self accountability.

Before reading further, please read the addendum containing descriptions of today’s youth cultures. Note that the value systems of these cultures are empty of any morals or Christ centered thinking. Another place which would help you in an education of cultures is to read the lyrics of the CDs of the singing groups mentioned on these sheets. These thoughts are noted in the introductory passage to the list: Deuteronomy 32:17:

“They sacrificed to demons, which are not God - gods they had not known, gods that recently appeared, gods your fathers did not fear.”

### **Clarification of the Cults Versus Gangs**

Cults are not gangs. They are more terrifying than gangs; they seek to kill the soul as well as the body. Some, but not many, gang members may be part of a cult. Gangs are a tight loyal group. Gangs are territorial and do fight other gangs for turf, drugs and drug sales. Gangs are dangerous in that they sell drugs and endanger outsiders when a gang war is going on, i.e., drive-by shootings. Gangs want your loyalty and commitment to sales and territory.

Cults want your mind. Cults have no loyalty—they are loosely knit. If knit, they are held by life style, not by purpose. Drug use and experimentation with drugs are major, and are either done alone or in groups. If these groups gather, it is at parties called Raves. A description of Rave parties and the drug of choice at these parties is spoken of under “I. Raveer Culture” on the addendum.

### **Who Joins a Cult**

Usually children who are not strongly bonded elsewhere join cults. They are often loners. They don't know how to trust; but they do know that they need to survive all the mixed up emotions they have inside them, emotions caused from not being able to be close to anyone.

The following is a list of symptoms which may lead youngsters to think they need a cult:

1. They do not and cannot trust.
2. They are not emotionally honest, and in fact are frequently not able to identify their feelings or what is behind those feelings.
3. Often, their parents haven't demonstrated emotions to their children. The parents appear cold, but their children are one step beyond cold. They are indifferent to self and to others. They do not respect anyone, including themselves.
4. They are not capable of reciprocal give-and-take relationships due to an inability to give and receive affection. Their backgrounds of abuse, neglect, unresolved trauma or pain, loss and abandonment often were formed during the first year or two of life, prior to conscious memory of events. But the subconscious forms a reaction to this trauma. There often is cruelty to others, especially younger children or animals, as others have been cruel to them.
5. They do not know why they feel and act as they do. They are operating in the only way they know how to survive. There is blatant rejection of authority, because they feel they can't trust it.
6. Lying may become pathological, and is used when they refuse to accept responsibility for consequences or actions.
7. School performance is below ability—they really don't care. Remediation needs to begin with helping them see that they need an education; otherwise it's just a circle of futility.
8. There is a lack of long-term friends because they manipulate each other for money, usually used for drugs or CDs. They have no eye contact with authority. They often steal for drugs.
9. There is an aggressive refusal to follow parental guidelines; they develop no self-control, and often are self-destructive. There is a superficial phoniness around adults or those they want to manipulate.

10. Problems develop with food, substance abuse and sex as they are used as self medicating devices to stop the feelings of pain; the dreadful emotion of pain of no personal attachments.
11. Thoughts about fire, blood, or gore are common, and are often verbalized to intimidate or impress others.

### **Satan is the Center.**

Those who join cults do so because their spirit is killed first by feelings of rejection or abandonment from those they thought they could count on or trust. Because they feel abandoned and empty, they suffer from depression, a sense of loss. Because of a lack of parental caring and attachment, they feel shame (ashamed of themselves) since they don't know why they were rejected.

They join cults to feel unconditionally accepted. Children ready to join the cults may be cruel to or even kill animals, often during ritualistic Satanic sacrifices. Those most likely to join a cult lack empathy and sympathy of others because they were never trained to have it. Back to the word "train," our duty to them. This is where Christ, with his unconditional love needs to be taught. They need to know that Christ has no conditions with his love; his arms are open to all.

### **How to break them from the culture**

1. They need to hear over and over again about how Christ died for them; Christ is their individual, personal Savior. Just as Christ was the personal Savior to the thief on the cross: "But the other criminal rebuked him. 'Don't you fear God,' he said, 'since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.' Then he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.' Jesus answered him, I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise'" (Luke 23:40-43).
2. Listen to them talk about their loneliness and validate their feelings. Don't try to argue them out of their feelings. If they say they feel bad, they do.
3. Learn to see the world and their place in it in through their eyes, not yours.
4. Talk them through their early trauma and abuse. Listen and offer them empathy with sympathy. Help them move on to trust others and to forgive those who hurt them.
5. Work through any grief and loss issues with them. Talk about the losses and then help them plan how to fill up the emptiness. Christ gives the best fullness.
6. Restructure their faulty thinking patterns, which usually consist of categorizing everything in the negative. If they say all adults are bad, point out that the generalization "all" is not correct and have them name someone who is not bad.
7. Help them develop a positive sense of identity first of all as a Christian walking with Christ, and then move on to good son, good student, good friend roles, etc.
8. Reshape their behavior to more appropriate and socially acceptable levels in the light of God's Word. Help them to see that their actions can make others hurt in the way they once hurt. Help them to develop empathy.
9. Practice with them how to relate to others in a respectful, responsible, and reciprocal way. Use role play to do this. One easy role play is to have them practice with you how to interview for a job.
10. Help them to develop thoughtful decision-making skills by using skill building decision-making techniques. Teaching critical thinking and positive behavior can be done by brainstorming with the child what may happen if they do such and such. Help them to evaluate between good and great ideas. Do things from planning a Christmas list to picking a school

curriculum. Guide them to be good planners of their future lives. Use the following four steps for problem-solving training:

- a. Define the problem.
- b. List alternative solutions
- c. Evaluate solutions and negotiate an agreement
- d. Plan to implement the agreement

11. Give them the experience in accepting, loving, nurturing care. You might have them pair with

you as you go on your nursing home visits. Help them love and respect the patients, and teach them to accept the patients' love in return.

12. Increase self-control abilities through professional Christian therapy, which presents the Savior as all loving, all caring and all powerful.

13. Narcotics Anonymous, Alcoholics Anonymous, Adult Children Of Alcoholics or other appropriate groups may be used as support. Help them to find groups which will enhance their faith in Christ, not detract from it.

14. Keep encouraging them to gain social skills by partaking in sports, hobbies, church and youth groups.

15. Use questions to lead them to see their talents and abilities, not the lack of them.

16. Teach them stress management by using Biblical passages and thoughts, not drugs.

17. Help them look for and find positive adult models such as teachers, aunts, uncles. Start a list of positive adult figures willing to bond with these children and help them grow.

18. Challenge them to become predictable and routine rather than live the helter-skelter life of the cult. Encourage regular school and work attendance, which gives good training in life style.

### **Conclusion**

We are here to help our children with what is so clearly stated in 1 Peter 5: 8-11, "Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings. And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen."

## **Addendum: Understanding Youth Culture “Youth Cultures” of the 2000’s**

Deuteronomy 32:17: “They sacrificed to demons, which are not God - gods they had not known, gods that recently appeared, gods your fathers did not fear.”

- I. Raver Culture: Referred to as raves, party people, party kids, candy kids.
  - A. Music: Rave music is house music(techno music) produced at rave parties by a series of electronic blips and beeps organized into musical patterns.
  - B. Dress: “Phat” pants (wide legs), funky short hair, T-shirts, tank tops, lamies (lamine tags), for guys. Girls usually dress more provocatively, halter tops, short skirts, plastic jewelry, glow in the dark accessories, toys (bubbles, play dough, rainbow slinky), pacifiers, candy (blowpops, twizzlers, sweet tarts, pixie-sticks), glitter.
  - C. Trends: This culture is centered completely around the music and party scene. When cults gather, it is at Rave parties. Raves are all night parties usually beginning at 10:30 and running until 8:00 am. Usually middle school and high school children are present with older people. The locations change and are located in abandoned warehouses, where usually some adult promoter rents the warehouse, advertises through the underground, supplies drugs to his sales people and then leaves town before the Rave. He manages to get a profit from his loyal sales people—who often stay loyal with the promise of more drugs and money. Satan uses the gang’s greed for power and money to steal the mind of the youth into cults.
  - D. Drugs: At the Raves are teenagers and drugs mixing. Often the powerful mind altering drug Ecstasy, which causes many deaths, is the prominent drug. These children have become so uncaring under the drug’s influence that if someone passes out the teens have been known to dance right over the bodies or throw them in the trash. In the nineties, teenage juice bars were started as legitimate teenage hangouts. Unfortunately, these have turned into Rave joints and places to easily obtain drugs.
  - E. Money: Ravers profess to not care about money. They consider themselves to be the hippies of the new millennium.
  - F. Values: Ravers refer to P.L.U.R. Peace, Love, Unity, and Respect.
  
- II. Gangster Culture: (Gangster, thugs, druggies, hoods)
  - A. Music: Hip Hop rap. Hard core rap, including artists like Jay-Z, Dr. Dre, and Eminem.
  - B. Dress: Hip Hop dress is expensive but baggy. Rap dress is more street.
  - C. Trend: Ghetto is cool. Old school is cool.
  - D. Drugs: Pot is part of the culture, not considered a drug, just part of life. Dealing is an integral part of the culture. Drinking is big. Street drugs like crack, heroin are present.
  - E. Money: Money equals power and is a huge focus. The easier it comes, the better man you are.
  - F. Values: Power. Respect. Loyalty
  - G. Role of Women: Women are workers of the culture. They are viewed almost exclusively in terms of sexual roles. They are to be kept in their place.
  
- III. Gothic Culture:
  - A. Music and Literature: The Gothic Culture is as much dictated by Literature as it is by Music. It’s roots are in Gothic Literature such as Edgar Allen Poe and Mary Shelly’s Frankenstein. Goths are intrigued by horrors films, vampires, things of the night. Music includes Marilyn Manson, Nine Inch Nails, Tori Amos, Sisters of Mercy, Dead Can Dance, Mettalica and Korn.
  - B. Dress: Goths refer to Goth Glam. They wear black (black leather, bondage, chains). They’re known for outrageous hair dyed in outrageous colors (purple, red and white, jet black).
  - C. Trends: Role playing games (Doom, Dungeons and Dragons, Vampire: The Masquerade), self-mutilation, preoccupation with witchcraft, sorceress, vampires, but not Satanism per se.

- D. Drugs: Most drugs, except for pot, are not very prominent.
- E. Money: Most Goth kids indicate that money is not important to them.
- F. Values: Goth kids love to question anything that is considered the norm. Most Goth kids will tell you that they tried early in their adolescents to be accepted by the “mainstream” and were not. Obsessed with suicide and death.

#### IV. Straight Edge Culture:

- A. Music: The Straight Edge culture is a music focused culture. Straight Edge bands are usually local bands with groups, of small but very loyal followers.
- B. Dress: Typically, Straight Edgers have “uniforms” of their local scene and the local scenes really set the tone for dress and attitude.
- C. Trends: Straight Edgers are primarily middle class, heterosexual and Caucasian. It is a male focused culture in which women are girlfriends to band members. Girls gain status by dating someone who is something, they are not considered something in their own right.
- D. Drugs: This is the only youth subculture that maintains a strong anti drug sentiment.
- E. Money: Straight Edgers have a disdain for the things that they consider to be materialistic.
- F. Values: Straight Edgers focus on purity of mind and this is accomplished by not using drugs, alcohol, nicotine, and not participating in promiscuous sex. They have rigid rules and beliefs. For example, it is not acceptable to date outside the edge, if you leave, you are not welcome back. In some locations, Edgers are hostile and rejecting of those who do not share their beliefs, culture, nationality or race.

#### V. Punk Rock Culture

- A. Music: Punk began in the 70’s as an alternative to traditional rock. Punk is anti rock music which began as an attempt to encourage experimentation with music as well as sex roles, fashion, politics. The music is loud, harsh, angry, vulgar. Ex: Offspring.
- B. Dress: Unlike most music trends, Punk actually started as fashion in England.
- C. Trends: Punk rock has been the spring board for many other youth cultures:
  - (1) Christian Punk
  - (2) Oi! Punk: (Rancid) More violent, rageful, loud, sexist, racist and hate filled. Much of the Oi! Punk focuses on a skin head mentality.
  - (3) Unity Punk: Unity Punk promotes classic Punk (Against All Authority).
  - (4) Skater Punk: Skate boarders, roller-bladers and extreme sports nuts.
- D. Drugs: Drugs and heavy drinking have historically been part of this culture.
- E. Money: Punk rock takes pride in it’s working class roots and reacts with hostility to money and the concept of capitalism.
- F. Values: Punk is a highly male dominated culture. Lives are short because of guns, booze, fast cars and drugs.

#### VI. Alternative/Grange Culture:

- A. Music: Alternative music began as the decades’ alternative to traditional rock. This musical movement was lead by Nirvana. (Kurt Kobaine, Nirvana’s lead singer, committed suicide in 1994). It focused on internal angst and romance and all that is wrong in the world.
- B. Dress: The Alternative Culture provided a total rebellion for how youth dressed.
- C. Trends: The Grange Culture focused on depression, suicide and things that were wrong with the mainstream world.
- D. Drugs: Drugs have always been an integral part of the grange/alternative scene. Pot is a given, but lots of beer, opium, and heroin are important to this scene.
- E. Money: The hard core Grange youth made a point to insist that money did not matter.

F. Values: Grange, much like the hippie movement, tried to focus on “social issues,” and talked about injustice, denounced cruelty and materialism. The concept of suicide is an option for them.

VII. Preps:

- A. Music: Preps have a great deal of freedom in their musical choices.
- B. Dress: Prep clothes are oversized and comfortable. The key to prep clothes is “expensive.”
- C. Trends: Preps set the trends for the belonger kids.
- D. Drugs: The drug of choice for preps is alcohol and lots of it.
- E. Money: Money is key to this culture and it shows in what they wear, what they drive, where they live and what kind of parties they throw.
- F. Values: This culture does not have as many defining beliefs as many youth cultures. They tend to value the concept of careers which will bring them money and success.

VIII. Wannabe Gangsters

- A. Wannabe gangsters can want to be a part of any of the aforementioned. They are the most vulnerable because they don't know the rules and often are ridiculed and victimized.