

# CRIME AND THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

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The criminal is the product of spiritual starvation. Someone failed miserably to bring him to know God, love Him, and serve Him. As a result, the criminal's mental attitudes and actions are guided by a selfish individualism. He has no respect for the law—he hates it. Moral traditions are subject to his scorn as he declares war on society.

Unfortunately, there are many in the United States today who flout the laws of both God and man. This is borne out by facts and figures in the possession of the FBI.

By the end of 1946, a total of 1,685,203 major crimes were recorded in the United States—the highest annual total recorded in the past decade. Crime in urban areas in 1946 increased 7.4 per cent over the previous year as sharp rises were noted in murders, robberies, aggravated assaults, burglaries, larcenies, manslaughters by negligence, and rapes.

The upward crime trend in the rural areas was more pronounced in 1946, with an increase of 14 per cent. In each crime classification the rural upswing exceeded that in the cities.

**A Shocking Record**  
The gravity of the crime situation in 1946 was reflected by the fact that during the average day 36 persons were slain, 33 were raped, and 185 others were feloniously assaulted. During each 24 hours, on the average, 172 persons were robbed, 981 burglaries were reported to the police, 630 cars were stolen, in addition to 2,580 miscellaneous larcenies of various types being committed. Although a comparatively small percentage of the total offenses were classed as violent crimes against persons, it is significant to observe that every 5.7 minutes in 1946 there was a criminal homicide, rape or assault with intent to kill.

The rise in crime during 1946 revealed that we are still faced with an abnormally high rate of juvenile misbehavior. Youngsters under 21 years of age were responsible for 51 per cent of the auto thefts, 41 per cent of the burglaries, 28 per cent of the robberies, 27 per cent of the thefts, 26 per cent of the rapes, and 18 per cent of the arsons. More than one-half of all crimes against property during 1946 were committed by persons under 25 years of age.

The upward sweep in postwar crime is characterized by criminal incidents reminiscent of gang events following

World War I. Gangsters, hoodlums and trigger men are eagerly recruiting youngsters into the criminal army. Guns are finding their way into the hands of mere boys who are ready to laugh at the law and kill if necessary.

I recall one case where two police officers were dispatched to a cabin on the outskirts of a town to locate several boys who were wanted at that time for questioning. The officers located the boys and were at once confronted with a defiant group of youngsters rivaling the hostility of hardened gangsters. Four boys armed with machine guns held the officers at bay. As the two officers awaited reinforcements and sought to avoid bloodshed, the boys retreated to the swamps along a nearby river. The youngsters were surrounded and called upon to surrender. Their answer was a volley of gunfire. In the pitched battle which followed, a 14-year-old boy was killed. The others surrendered.

These youngsters turned out to be the ringleaders of a youthful gang which had perpetrated a wave of thefts. On two successive nights prior to the gun battle, the gang of boys had burglarized a National Guard armory and had made away with an arsenal consisting of sub-machine guns, rifles, hand grenades, several thousand rounds of ammunition and other government property. Previously, the boys had stolen several cars, burglarized storehouses, an automobile agency, a bowling alley, and a private residence.

The leader of the gang was 18. He led a band who refused to practice the very necessary virtues of honor, decency, and love of God and country. Certainly, these boys had very little chance to learn and appreciate these virtues because they had been exposed to indifference, lack of parental guidance and drunkenness.

After reviewing the thousands of case histories which have poured into the FBI, I am firmly convinced that there are two factors in our outlook which if not checked will plunge us headlong into national decadence. The first is the failure of the home itself as the first classroom and, second, our national indifference toward evil influences in our life which are beyond the immediate control of parents.

**The Initial Responsibility**  
Criminals are not born. They are the products of neglect, the victims of indifference, the results of an age which has tossed morality in the junkyard. Moral chaos and crime run hand in hand as they eagerly attempt to destroy peace, order and happiness. If we are to get down to fundamentals in approaching the problem of crime it is necessary to begin to build the spiritual structure of the child at the cradle. This responsibility rests initially with the parents. The home must be the first great arena of teaching. In the final analysis, the child who fails to learn honesty, discipline and respect for authority from his parents can quickly become ex-

posed to the virus of crime.

Unhappily, there are many homes where parents are untrained in their obligations to their offspring; where unguarded talk is as regular as three meals a day; where disrespect for authority and criticism of officials are common occurrences; where childish independence is encouraged, and refractory conduct is condoned; where breaches of discipline and anti-social whims are overlooked; and where God and religion are considered too old-fashioned in an age dedicated to materialism.

The children of such homes need help and the Sunday schools can do much and are doing much to bring God and religion into the starved souls of these youngsters. Our Sunday schools are not sending forth children who easily succumb to life-wrecking temptations. Instead, the boys and girls who have gone to Sunday school have been well prepared for the entire span of life.

The Sunday school is a citadel of real spiritual influences. Religion to a boy or girl becomes a reality based on love and not on fear. Youngsters come to know that God asks more than mere lip service to His commandments; that He asks us to live under His guidance and love.

The Sunday school teaches the power of prayer and the need to make God an intrinsic part of our daily lives. The Sunday school teaches the child to "rule his spirit" and to place a reliance upon God which will not be shaken in later years. It stands as a strong bulwark against the angry waves of evil presently sweeping across our nation. It is a powerful medium in materially reducing the army of youthful offenders and delinquents.

I would like to pay tribute to the thousands of loyal men and women who are serving unselfishly as teachers in our Sunday schools. We in law enforcement look upon them as companions-in-arms in the fight against crime.

As true Crusaders for Christ, the Sunday school teachers want the nation's children to be honest, truthful and unselfish. They are convincing youngsters that right habits, attitudes and appreciations are necessary attributes for decent living. They are in the front ranks of the great army of Americans who are courageously fighting to free our national scene from dishonesty, selfishness, greed and moral instability. In recruiting for God, they are building for America.

More often than not, a child is first introduced to the Bible by a Sunday school teacher. It is quite impossible to believe that progress along the road to righteous living may be accomplished without the guidance of the Bible. It is the source of spiritual food, the solution of life's problems, and the inspiration for Christian living.

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" is a precept which must be followed by all if life is to have a meaning. Our forefathers believed in the inspired Word of God and their religious faith and simple devotion produced a strong

national character.

If we are to make progress in the fight against crime, make certain that the children of the nation attend Sunday school. It is difficult to understand why many mothers and fathers refuse to afford to their children the wholesome, healthful, character-building environment of the Sunday school.

As a law enforcement officer, I am certain that unless children are given the opportunity of participating in activities which have God as their fundamental objective, we cannot hope to materially reduce crime in our country.—(Reprinted from The Sunday School Times).

## U. S. Army Seeking No. 40,000th Recruit

Some young North Carolinian joining the Army Air Force within the next few weeks will receive an extraordinary reception from both military and civilian leaders if he happens to be "Number 40,000". Special plans are now being made to honor the 40,000th North Carolina volunteer since VJ Day. "Number 40,000" is expected to be enlisted in early February.

Recruiting officials are enthused over the response given to their volunteer recruiting program by North Carolinians. They stated that last year the "Tarheel" state ranked eight in the nation for the number of volunteers furnished the Army and Air Force although the last census places North Carolina thirty-second in population.

Master Sergeant C. B. Cayton in charge of the recruiting office in Elizabeth City says that he and his co-workers will make an extra recruiting effort these coming weeks in the hope that "Number 40,000" will be one they helped to procure from the Albemarle Area.

## Chowan Native Dies At Home In Bethel

John Calvin Hobbs, 68, brother of G. C. and Neal Hobbs of Edenton died at his home in Bethel Saturday morning after a short illness. He was a son of the late John C. and Absila Bunch Hobbs of Chowan County. Be-

sides his wife, Mrs. Lena Proctor Hobbs, deceased is survived by two sons, J. Walter and William F. Hobbs, both of Bethel; two daughters, Mrs. Freeman Long of Hertford, Route 1, and Mrs. Lucius Butts of Hertford, Route 3; four brothers, T. P. Hobbs of Washington, D. C., G. C. and N. M. Hobbs of Edenton and Linwood Hobbs of Hobbsville; and four sisters, Mrs. George Oglesby of Hamilton, Minnie Hobbs of Winston-Salem, Mrs. Roger Cullipher of Merry Hill and Mrs. S. L. Ferrell of Magnolia.

Funeral services were held at the home in Bethel Saturday afternoon and burial made in the Bethel cemetery.

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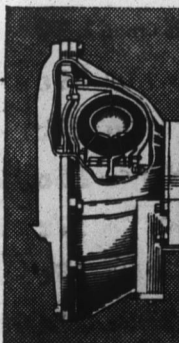
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