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SCHOO J30Y GANGS

The spiraling increase of violent crime among teenagers is not only a major reason why urban living has become progressively more terrifying. It is likewise a principal reason for the lack of learning in the b1j"city public schools.

A recent report made by Walter B. Miller of the Harvard Law School Center for Criminal Justice, on a grant from the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, bluntly states that the six worst cities have at least 2,700 gangs and 81,500 members who average 12 to 21 years of age. These cities were identified as New York, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Chicago, Detroit, and San Francisco.

The most frightening part of the report, however, is what it says about how these gangs terrorize the public schools: "Gang members have •territorialized' the school buildings and their environments -- gyms, cafeterias, sports facilities, and in some cases .•• the entire school." Students are shaken down and forced to pay for passing through a doorway, using gym facilities, protection from being assulted, or even the right to go to school.

The report **-e'oted** a Los Angeles official as saying that "gangs have completely taken over individual classrooms. ••• Once the number of gang members in a class reaches a certain level, the teacher is powerless to enforce discipline." Philadelphia closed several high school cafeterias because gangs took control over access and eating.

Before any liberals rush forward to tell us that the solution to the problem of teenage gangs is a big appropriation of Federal money, they should take a look at another report issued this spring

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the Mitre Corporation. 'l'his private research :firm made a \2 million evaluation of the mu.I tt-w1.n lion dollar an.ti-c1·ime pro.iram launched with so much publicity by the Nixon Administration. Atlanta, llaltimore, Cleveland, las, Denver, St. Louis, Newark, and Portland, Oregons, for special assistance from Federal funds to wage a so-called "war on crime." The gist of the Mitre report is thnt vi.oltmt r::-c:i.i:;1e has "cm.rnhiert1bly wo:rsened " in all eight cities.

I1he teenage ,rzangsters who prey on 1i.ttle childr&n i.n the sohools and on senior citizens in the streets are a problem for the local police, not the FederHl bureaucrats. But the bigger problem is, what about all the younger children who may follow in the footsteps of teenage-gangster rolo- o c G: Th young on s need a heavy daily dose of religious HDri 2Oral training — the kind that has been removed from the schools the anti-religious guidelines laid down by the U.S. Supreme Court, , and the progressive educators.

Reverend Jesse Jackson, the black leader who founded an antipoverty organization in Chicago, aimed at the right target in a recent speech when he said: "When I see ... students with their hats on in class, thfdr high heel ;-1. wi.t.h 1adios i.:n their pockl3ts, rolling dice on the plnyfround, th1:rt1 I know the moral authority i.s gone. The sc:i.1001 p1·incipal m.ust ••• E me:rge as a moral authority to enact discipline from parents teeuhers nud students.

It is too late for traditional school diecipline to save the 81,500 who have already joined criminal g;E,ngs, but we luuJ better aiet now to prevent that number from multiplying. As Reverend Jackson said: "Care and discipline end chastisement do not cost money, they cost new priorities."

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