

# Non-Working Younger Generation Ridiculing Protestant Work Ethic

**H**ONEST work is getting a bad name it doesn't deserve. It is being ridiculed by a lot of the non-working younger generation who have been educated by non-thinking professors.

A few days ago, one of these professors from Maryland got national attention by declaring: "The Protestant work ethic is dead!" Just how the idea of work became identified as an exclusive Protestant doctrine isn't clear, although one authority thinks it may have originated with a stern Calvinist directive, "Work or starve!"

However, a lot of Catholics and Jews have well-earned reputations as hard workers, not to mention a considerable number of people who worship only the almighty dollar. On the other hand, you could easily find a crowd of Protestants who have never been indoctrinated with the so-called "work ethic."

Nevertheless, work is a matter of religious history. In the first chapter of Genesis, God said to Adam: "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it." Any farm-

er will agree that is a big order of hard work.

Then, after the serpent had persuaded Adam and Eve to eat the forbidden fruit, God elaborated on the work idea by telling Adam (but not Eve): "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground." Work's been steady ever since.

The system doesn't suit everybody and some are protesting which may be what they really mean by the "Protestant work ethic." A recent survey by a social psychologist named Daniel Yankelovich showed that only 44 per cent of the college youth surveyed and 56 per cent of the non-college youth believe that hard work pays off. The survey didn't reveal whether any of them had tried to make it pay.

Poor attitudes toward work showed up as a factor in the sharp decline in output of goods and services reported by the Labor Department this year. Part of the reduction was due to cutbacks in auto production because of the gasoline shortage and management was faulted for delays in construction of new plants.

However, production was slowed by employee resistance to use of new technology and increasing restiveness among young workers was reflected in on-the-job drug use, alcoholism and absenteeism.

Today's children really don't have much opportunity to learn to work or to choose an enjoyable, profitable career. Until they are 16, about all most of them can do is carry out the garbage, mow the lawn and learn to ride buses around town to school. Few of the counsellors provided to advise students on careers have had much business experience and parents are not always much help, either.

Our system has become so complex that youngsters can be graduated from high school or college without ever learning to work or working to learn. Dropouts have an easier system, because the "work or starve" ethic has been supplanted by a combination of minimum wages, EEOC, unemployment benefits and welfare payments that make it possible for millions to get along without working or even wanting to.

Such people miss one of the greatest enjoyments in life. There are few pleasures that equal the satisfaction of completing a difficult task, knowing that the job is well done. It might pay, too.