**Wired But Disconnected**

A couple of weeks ago, I experienced the "Twilight Zone" in Sunday School. Even though the room was full of youth, there was this strange silence. At first, I couldn't tell what was happening. I knew Sunday School is early, but as I looked around at the group, I could tell it wasn't that everyone was tired or bored. Friends were sitting next to friends and everyone seemed fine, except for me. As I looked around the room again, I realized everyone had his or her phone out and was texting away, many of them texting each other! When I asked some of them about how many cell phone minutes they use, the overwhelming response was "hardly any."

Gone are the days of sitting on the phone and talking for hours, staying up late and talking with friends about anything and everything. Now everything is communicated is snippets, 140-180 characters at a time, disconnected from real face time or contact. The big question is, "What does this sort of disconnected contact and lack of conversation do to social development?"

The upside is that students can expand their friend base with many people as they have time to request. This allows potentially hundreds more in their lives than their predecessors had even a decade before.

The downside is that all of this communication is happening with very little connection. All of these interactions are done in isolation, separate from human contact. At the very moment adolescents need community and connection to work out their identities and help develop social cues, they are becoming increasingly isolated.

I don't want to be an alarmist, proclaiming the sky is falling. I know we never are going to get back to the days of handwritten letters. In fact, we might never get back to the days of email; but this continued evolution in communication and social networking brings with it some pitfalls of which those of us who love and work with students were created to be: avenues for connecting instead of replacements for true connection.

It is true that texting and Facebook are here to stay and for the foreseeable future will be the norm in communication. While we can't turn back the clock, we can use our influence to draw students out of isolation and a false sense of connection and into a warm community with true connection. Once you have experienced true connection with other humans - and even more with God - texting and Facebook will become just the tools they were created to be: avenues for connecting instead of replacements for true connection.

Benjamin Kerns is a consultant and mentor to youth ministers, and also a pastor to children & students at Marin Covenant Church, San Rafael California.

*Taken from www.youthworker.com*

**Uncertainty doesn't disqualify you from leadership - it qualifies you**

For many years I made the mistake of thinking that uncertainty about the future meant I was a bad leader. But I have spoken to many leaders who told me that the cloudiness of the future did not mean that I was a bad leader - it revealed the need for me to be a strong leader. Every leader and every ministry will face uncertain times. Don't let that scare you - let it encourage you. You are needed!

For a few years, our ministry faced so many challenges and uncertain times that I felt that the church made a big mistake by hiring me and that I needed to step aside and allow God to raise up someone else more qualified. After some great encouraging prayer partners, and many leadership lessons later, I am convinced that I am the person that God has called to lead this particular ministry and there are no accidents in God's economy.

Your leadership role is not an accident either. Take things one step at a time and trust God as you take each step. When you look back, you will see that you were the right person for the job. Have confidence in yourself, but more importantly have confidence in God's sovereignty.

*Taken from R. Zadeh. 90 Thoughts on Leading Well. pp. 2-3.*

**Leadership**

Every leader & every ministry will face uncertain times.

Our Mission: To lead young people into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ and help them embrace His call to discipleship.
**CULTURE WATCH**

**MUSIC**

iTunes Top 5 Songs - July

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Song</th>
<th>Artist</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Someone Like You</td>
<td>Adele</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jar of Hearts</td>
<td>Christina Perri</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rolling In the Deep</td>
<td>Adele</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Edge of Glory</td>
<td>Lady GaGa</td>
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<td>Party Rock Anthem</td>
<td>LMFAO</td>
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**MOVIES**

The current top three songs talk about heartbreak...

- Sometimes it lasts in love, and sometimes it hurts instead
  
  **Someone Like You - Adele**
  
  The scars of your love remind me of us, they keep me thinking that we almost had it all.
  
  **Rolling in the Deep - Adele**

And who do you think you are

- Running 'round leaving scars
  
  **Collecting your jar of hearts**
  
  **And tearing love apart**
  
  **Jar of Hearts - Christina Perri**

**Tips for breakups**

1. Encourage them to spend time with their friends. One of the hardest things is filling all the empty hours that used to go to their significant other.
2. Listen if they do talk. Give them space to say everything they need to say. Don’t invalidate their feelings by reminding them how young they are or being negative about their ex. They are grieving a loss.
3. Tell them it’s ok to be angry, sad, depressed. What is important is finding those things that make them happy and refocus on that when the time is right.

**REVIEW**

‘Very strong pagan, hedonistic worldview full of debauchery and homosexual characters, transvestites and a man committing fornication with a transsexual, and one man proudly embraces his dark side by saying he “has a demon inside”.’

Take from www.movieguide.org

Have you ever walked out of a movie where you were confronted by something that opposed your values? Was it hard to do? Do you regret it or would you do it again?

If you’ve seen this movie, were there any scenes that made you uncomfortable? Why/Why not?

**CHRISTIAN ETHICS VS. HOLLYWOOD**

From The Hangover Part II...

Stu: Ya see that? That’s orange juice with a napkin on top. Ya know why? So nobody roofies me.

Stu: I have a weakness for prostitutes apparently, all kinds.

Mr. Chow: Sometimes when you snort coke, your heart stops and starts up again. Read a book!

**WALK THE TALK**

Review... What do you think of this movie? Do you think it was a good example of Christian Ethics vs. Hollywood?

**SOCIAL**

Facebook

- Facebook has more than 750 million active users
- Average user has 130 friends
- More than 250 million active users access Facebook via their mobiles.
- People that use Facebook via their mobiles are twice as active as non-mobile users.

**We’re starting to resemble our avatars**

Given how much time we spend on texting, Tweeting, blogging and communicating through Facebook, most of us would agree that technology has radically changed the way we communicate with each other. Some experts say it’s changing us, as well. “What I see, more and more, we are starting to resemble our avatars,” says Dr. Elias Aboujaoude, a psychologist from Stanford University. Aboujaoude says our world is growing angrier largely because the Internet has undercut all the socialisation techniques we’ve developed through the centuries.

Taken from www.abccnews.go.com

What's that?

An **avatar** is the graphical representation of the user or the user's alter ego or character. It's an object representing the user. The term "avatar" can also refer to the personality connected with the screen name or handle, of an Internet user. (Wikipedia)

In Hinduism, an **avatar** is a deliberate descent of a deity from heaven to earth, or a descent of the Supreme Being, and is mostly translated into English as "incarnation", but more accurately as "appearance" or "manifestation". (Wikipedia)