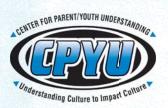




walt Mueller is founder and president of the Center for Parent/Youth Understanding.

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HOW MARKETING'S "MAKING" YOUR KIDS

By Walt Mueller

Take a look around and you'll quickly notice that advertising is everywhere. It's especially pervasive in the lives our teenagers—the most targeted market segment in the world. Consequently, marketing functions as a map that sits unfolded in the laps of vulnerable teens who are looking to find their way from childhood, through adolescence, and into adulthood. What's especially scary is that while the advertising map sits in their laps, our kids aren't even aware that it's there and that they're looking. Advertising's 24/7 presence takes advantage of the fact that more and more kids are growing up in broken families, thus making them more hungry for the guidance and direction that they aren't getting at home. Marketing doesn't just sell product. It also sells a worldview. Marketing is telling our kids what to think, what to value, what to believe, what to worship, and how to spend their money and lives. Here's another way to look at it: Marketing gives our kids a reason to get out of bed in the morning and defines how they should live their lives during the course of the day.

It's important for youth workers and parents to know how marketing's nonstop barrage is specifically shaping the teens they know and love. As I've studied teen marketing over the years, it's clear that there are short and long-term effects and results of advertising. We must think about how these results and effects square up to who our kids should be as followers of Christ. Do they lead our kids closer or further away from spiritual maturity?

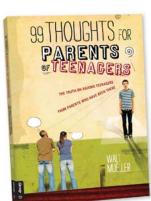
What follows is some of what I've discovered. Think about the implications of each for your parenting and/or youth ministry. And, consider ways you can become more proactive in addressing each of them with your kids.

First, materialism is becoming more deeply embedded in our teenagers' lives. Because they are being marketed to with increasing frequency and depth, vulnerable kids find it easier to believe advertising's messages and promises. As a result, they will increasingly define themselves by their possessions, seeking happiness, satisfaction, meaning, and redemption in the accumulation of things. More and more kids will buy into a live to consume rather than a consume to live mentality.

Second, there's a rise in impulse buying. As materialism takes root and grows, kids will become more impulsive, buying without evaluating or thinking about the difference between wants and needs. Kids will want to acquire products they really don't need, but they'll want them for the perceived emotional and quality of life benefits.

Third, kids are working more and more in order to have more and more. Over the course of the last two decades, more and more teenagers are taking on jobs. Those who have jobs are working longer and longer hours, making it difficult to stay involved in other activities including church youth groups, school activities, service projects, and family time. While some kids work to save money

continued p.2





Walt Mueller delivers the goods in 99 Thoughts for Parents of Teenagers, a no-holds-barred look at the good, bad, and ugly aspects of parenting teenagers. Drawing on his experience as a parent of four children who have passed through their teenage years, Walt shares wisdom, thoughts, insights, and suggestions for making the teenage years count. Available on simplyyouthministry.com

for future educational needs, a growing number are working long hours in order to fund and sustain large luxury items including cars, audio systems, cell phones, and so forth. They get themselves locked into the work to spend cycle.

Fourth, life is understood in primarily economic terms. Each and every one of us, including our kids, has been created by God, for God, and to be in a relationship with God, living his will and his way under his reign. It's not about us. But advertising consistently sends the message that "it's all about you." Consequently, advertising leads our kids to get it all wrong regarding who should reside at the center of their worldview and who should be in control of their lives.

Fifth, the virtue of compassion is being replaced by competition. Those who are followers of Christ are called to self-sacrificing lives of compassion. The message of today's market-driven world is the exact opposite. Instead of looking out for others, we are to look out for number one. In this kind of world, there is a decrease in generosity and an increase in selfishness. In this kind of world there is less concern for neighbor and more concern for self. In this kind of world we do anything and everything possible - including using people as means to our ends - to get ahead of anyone and everyone else (who are seen as our competitors).



Sixth, we've got a culture of kids locked into consumer debt. Not a day goes by when my kids don't receive one or more direct mail advertisements for preapproved credit cards. One credit card company is constantly telling them "It's your life." The message they get from these and other ads is that life is about consumption, and whether it's their money or a credit card company's money they are borrowing, they are entitled to spend whenever the urge hits them. Sadly, many of today's kids will be buried deep in consumer debt long before they marry and start a family.

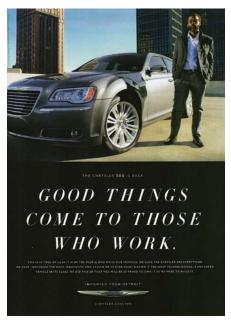
Finally, spiritual hunger continues to rise. Advertising and the materialism it fosters steers us away from the one true God and towards idols. They steer us away from Jesus Christ, the one and only source of redemption, to false promises of other "messiahs" and redeemers. Today's marketing blitz encourages our teens to create, pursue, and worship false idols, all the while leaving our kids more and more empty.

The good news is that when the emptiness grows, the hunger longs that much more to be fed. We must pray that they will see and embrace the only One who can fill their emptiness...and a great way to lead them down that life-giving road is to monitor and talk with them about the advertising that's become such a powerful force in their lives. That's why our words and example must remain consistent as we point them to the Way, the Truth, and the Life.



CULTURE IMAGE

SIMPLY YOUTH CULTURE



Download this and other images at cpyu.org

"Good things come to those who work," states this ad for the Chrysler 300. In the image, a man stands proudly beside his car in a setting that is perhaps the top floor of a downtown parking garage in a large city. The surrounding city skyscrapers, the car owner, and the car itself all command respect. The image and text suggest that both creating and owning this vehicle brings forth a sense of accomplishment. The subtext confirms this by saying "This is as true of us as it is of the people who drive our vehicles. We gave the Chrysler 300 everything we have, including the most innovative AWD system we've ever made, making it the most technologically advanced vehicle in its class. We did this so that you will be as proud to own it as we were to build it."

The Chrysler ad appears in the August 17, 2011 issue of Rolling Stone and lends itself well to use as a discussion starter with teens. Show students the ad and, as always, ask students to offer their opinions on what the ad is selling, both in terms of product and worldview. Ask them what values, attitudes, and behaviors are reflected in the ad, looking specifically at how Chrysler tries to connect with the audience and the results they desire from their ad. Then. use the ad to discuss the following topics:

Work Ethic: Is it true that good things come to those who work? If so, does this always hold true? The ad suggests that

the Chrysler 300 is the "good thing" that can come to those who have worked hard enough to earn it. What does it mean to work? What does it mean to work hard or give something "everything we have?" Does God care whether or not we do so? What does it mean to do everything to the glory of God? Should material gain be the goal of our hard work? Name some things that would be appropriate to work toward.

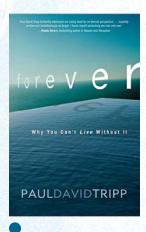
Entitlement: Do you know of any examples of people feeling entitled to something that they did not work for? Have you ever felt entitled to something you perhaps did not earn? God's wonderful gift of grace is given freely, but are we entitled to it? How do the Bible's messages compare to the messages being sent in the advertisement?

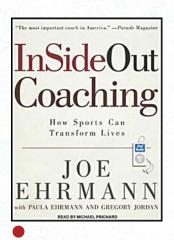
Pride: Is it appropriate to be proud of our hard work? What are proper ways to be proud of something we've worked hard for? List some differences between pride and humility. What does scripture have to say about pride? Have you ever boasted about a purchase you have made? Is it appropriate to do so? What does it mean to boast in the Lord? Ephesians tells us that we are saved by grace, not by our works. Why would being saved by our works possibly lead to us boasting?

Scripture verses to consider:

1 Corinthians 10:31 Colossians 3:23 **Matthew 25:21 James 4:6**

Proverbs 13:4 Ephesians 2:1-10 Jeremiah 9:23-34 Proverbs 11:2









BOOKS

FOREVER: WHY YOU CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT IT

By Paul Tripp

We all know that one of the unique features of adolescents is their impulsivity. They tend to live in the here and now moment. Decisions are made without the long view in mind. Add to that a culture that encourages them to live life with gusto in the present, and they find it extremely hard to live their lives with the necessary eternal perspective.

Paul Tripp has issued an engaging corrective to all of us in his brand new book, Forever: Why You Can't Live Without It. Tripp reminds readers that we were all made for eternity. Still, we forget this and try to pack everything in to the here and now with experiences and things that can only be fulfilled and realized in eternity. Readers learn how an eternal perspective equips us to better understand our relationships, vocation, suffering, and material lives during our time on earth.

In a world where most of us were never taught these things when we were teenagers, this is a book that will get you thinking about your own view of eternity, along with giving you loads of teaching and discussion points that will equip your kids to do the same.

INSIDEOUT COACHING: HOW SPORTS CAN TRANSFORM LIVES

By Joe Ehrmann

Parade Magazine called Joe Ehrmann "The most important coach in America." Here's why: Ehrmann cares deeply about his players and wants nothing more than to see them mature into responsible adults. His new book tells the story of how he began to see the transformational power of sports and how he intentionally integrates his faith with coaching. Everyone who cares about young athletes, including coaches, parents and pastors, should read this book. It is a reminder of how sports are meant to be played and why they can and should have a positive impact on young people.

YOU LOST ME: WHY YOUNG CHRISTIANS ARE LEAVING CHURCH... AND RETHINKING FAITH

By David Kinnaman

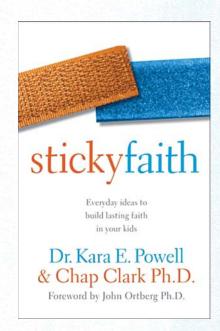
David Kinnaman, president of the Barna Group, and coauthor of the bestselling unChristian, reveals the long-awaited results of a new nationwide study of young adults with a Christian background. Discover why so many are disengaging from the faith community, renew your hope for how God is at work in the next generation—and find out how you can join in. The book also features contributions from CPYU's Walt Mueller and Derek Melleby.

INTERNET

WWW.STICKYFAITH.ORG



The main goal of Fuller Youth Institute's (FYI) "Sticky Faith" research was to "understand the dynamics of youth group graduates' transition to college and to identify the relationships and best practices in youth ministries, churches, and families that can help set students on a trajectory of lifelong faith and service." FYI has now launched a website that features many helpful resources for families and church leaders including videos, books, a DVD curriculum, a blog and much more.





SONG/VIDEO

"MOVES LIKE JAGGER" by Maroon 5



BACKGROUND/SUMMARY: This single from Maroon 5 was released as a digital download on June 21, 2011, the same day the band's lead singer, Adam Levine, performed the song live on the *The Voice* with fellow vocal coach Christina Aguilera. The catchy and upbeat pop dance tune quickly became a summer chart-topper, continuing to chart well after the August 8 release of the song's video. "Moves Like Jagger" continued to top the airplay charts at the beginning of October 2011. Levine and his musical crew hope that the song introduces young music fans to The Rolling Stones' frontman, Mick Jagger. . . who has remained a cultural icon for many of their parents.

DISCOVER: What is the message/worldview?

The video opens with a black and white shot of the front of LA's Palace 100 Theater and marquis advertising "Today Jagger Auditions." A stage crew sets up as a host of Jagger impersonators prepare to perform for judges. Archived footage of a mid-60s era interview with Jagger himself captures the young lead singer saying that his band's been at it for about two years and that looking back, he couldn't even imagine being able to do it for those two years.

A shirtless Levine sings and moves for the camera interspersed with shots of the Jagger impersonators doing their best "Mick moves," including some footage of Jagger moving in his trademark manner. A boasting Levine works to win the attention of his subject by showing off and singing: "You want the moves like Jagger?/I've got the moves like Jagger."

The singer pursues her lyrically: "You wanted control so we waited/I put on a show now I make it/You say I'm a kid/My ego is big/I don't give a s___." His big ego speaks as he tells her, "I don't need to try to control you/Look into my eyes and I'll own you."

He recognizes her brokenness and promises to serve as her savior, seeing a physical encounter as redemptive: "Maybe it's hard when you feel like you're broken and scarred/Nothing feels right/But when you're with me/I make you believe that I've got the key." He states his redemptive method simply: "Take me by the tongue and I'll know you/Kiss me till you're drunk and I'll show you."

Christina Aguilera appears on stage and begins to answer his overtures: "You wanna know how to make me smile?/Take control, own me just for the night/And if I share my secret/ You're gonna have to keep/Nobody else can see this/So watch and learn/I won't show you twice/Head to toe, ooh baby, roll me right."

The song ends with all the impersonators on stage together, dancing energetically as the band plays and confetti drops. The old black and white interview footage of Mick Jagger returns, with Jagger speculating about the length of his musical future: "I think we're sort of pretty well set up for at least another year." At least...!

DISCERN: How does it stand in light of the biblical message/worldview?

Deep and lasting relationships take great time, care, and effort. Because we are broken people, commitment is needed to carry those relationships through the inevitable difficulties life brings, especially the breakdowns between couples. The reality is that love is hard work. In the case of "Moves Like Jagger," relationships are portrayed as instant, feeling-based and driven, initiated through physical contact, and perhaps nothing more than sexual.

Healthy romantic relationships are marked by mutual submission—one to another—under the authority of God. The only types of control that should exist are living life in accordance with God's will (under God's control), and maintaining self-control. . . especially when our impulsive feeling-driven tendencies surface. The book of Proverbs is full

of wisdom on these matters. In the song, there is a tendency towards a type of sexual control that is not only beyond the bounds of God's will for His gift of sexuality, but a self-serving control that leads the other to give up whatever it is that you selfishly desire.

Lyrical references to being "broken and scarred" capture the reality of life in our sinful and fallen world. In fact, as one's life progresses, both the occurrence and awareness of one's breaks and scars deepens. While romance and sex are often pursued as redeemers, they can never work that way. While they may temporarily sedate, the reality is that they break and scar even deeper. Redemption only comes through Jesus Christ, the one who was wounded, broken and scarred in our place on the cross (Isaiah 53:5).

DECIDE: What do I do with it?

Children and teens—the primary listening audience for this song—are incredibly vulnerable to media influence as a result of where they're at in the developmental process. They want answers to their questions. Their beliefs and behaviors are shaped by catchy tunes like "Moves Like Jagger." They look up to talented singers like Levine and Aguilera as role models to emulate. As a result, this simple and relatively tame song/ video have a built in ethos that is extremely influential. For that reason, parents and youth workers must understand the music's message and be ready to answer even the most simple and subtle messages with biblical truth.

The video can be shown to students and used to spark discussion on a variety of topics including sexuality, love, commitment, brokenness, hurt, pain, male/female roles, respect, humility, pride, etc.

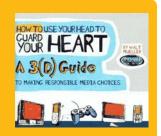
The "Moves Like Jagger" story offers a case study in how to effectively cross-market to children and adolescents in today's world. Consequently, we should take steps to make kids aware of how the use of two pop stars, performances on The Voice, and carefully selected release dates combine with other marketing tactics to draw them in. The song can be used to make kids savvy to marketing.

As with all media, a chart-topper like "Moves Like Jagger" must be carefully deconstructed and discussed by parents and youth workers. It offers a compelling window into the world of children and teens. The video should be shown and discussed at training events and parents meetings with an eye toward uncovering beliefs and behaviors. Discuss which can be celebrated and embraced because of their conformity to the Scriptures, and which must be challenged and corrected because they don't line up with God's Word.

"Moves Like Jagger" is an ideal song to use to teach students how to think Christianly and biblically about all music and media. Show it to your group and then take the time to break into groups to filter the song and video through CPYU's How to Use Your Head to Guard Your Heart 3(D) Media Evaluation guide (available online at www.cpyu.org).

For more information on how to evaluate music and media with your group using the 3D approach, visit cpyu.org and order How To Use Your Head To Guard Your Heart: A 3D Guide to Making Responsible Music

Choices by Walt Mueller.





Christina Aguilera from the video "Moves Like Jagger"

Smoking and Impulsivity

If you've studied adolescent development you know that teenagers are at a stage where they can be impulsive. Researchers are now saying that if a teenager chooses to smoke cigarettes, they might even become more impulsive and reckless, while becoming less adept at making decisions. Scientists at UCLA have discovered that teens who are most addicted to nicotine have the least active pre-frontal cortex regions of the brain. The pre-frontal cortex is the part of the brain responsible for decision-making. One of the studies authors, Dr. Edythe London, says, "such an effect can influence the ability of youth to make rational decisions regarding their well-being, and that includes the decision to stop smoking." Kids are already growing up in a world filled with overload. It is believed that coming of age in the digital world has already impeded the ability of today's emerging generations to concentrate, as compared to previous generations. For this generation, impulse and impulse control are already underdeveloped. Smoking only makes it worse.

Sexting Insight

When the New York Times interviewed teens about sexting, they got some eye-opening and insightful answers. When asked if sexting is ever ok, one teen said that sending sexually explicit texts is a way to express your feelings. Another said that sexting has a positive side as you can't get pregnant from it and you can't transmit sexually transmitted diseases. When asked why girls sext, one girl says that they want to be liked and they like to get attention from the older boys. Another teen differentiated between sexually explicit text messages and sending sexually explicit photos. Photo sexting, he says, is done more in middle school. And finally, when asked about how much parents are aware of sexting, one boy told interviewers, "I didn't tell my parents about this focus group because they don't know what sexting is, and it would be awkward to talk about." Even though it's awkward, talking about sexting with our children and teens is something that must happen.

High-Tech Cheating

Our kids have now been back in school for a few months and they're heavily immersed in their academic pursuits. And, like generations of students before them, some kids are looking for shortcuts to academic success, including getting away with cheating. A growing number of kids are using their cellphones and iPods to cheat. For example, cheat sheets can be loaded into iPods as word documents. Teachers report that kids are then putting their iPods on their desks, and scrolling down through the documents to find answers. With seventy-one percent of our high school kids admitting to cheating on an exam at least once in the last twelve months - and forty-five percent saying they did so at least two or more times - don't be surprised if the kids you know and love are going high-tech in their efforts to get away with cheating. Work to instill a love for God's truth and obedience to His commands in your kids. Proverbs tells us that God delights in those who are truthful.

TOP 20 GAMES HOLIDAY WISH LIST 2011

- 1. Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 3—360, PS3, Wii, PC
- 2. Gears of War 3—360
- 3. Madden NFL 12-360, PS3, Wii, PSP
- 4. Assassin's Creed: Revelations—360, PS3, PC
- 5. Batman: Arkham City—360, PS3, PC
- 6. The Legend of Zelda: Skyward Sword-Wii
- 7. Battlefield 3—360, PS3, PC
- 8. Just Dance 3—360, PS3, Wii
- 9. NBA 2K12—360, PS3, Wii, PC, PSP
- 10. Need for Speed: The Run—360, PS3, Wii, PC, 3DS
- 11. Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception—PS3
- 12. Mario & Sonic at the London 2012 Olympic Games—Wii, 3DS
- 13. LEGO Harry Potter: Years 5-7—360, PS3, Wii, PC, PSP, 3DS
- 14. FIFA Soccer 12—360, PS3, Wii, PC, PSP, DS, 3DS
- 15. The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim—360, PS3, PC
- 16. Dead Island—360, PS3, PC
- 17. Kinect Sports: Season 2-360
- 18. Resistance 3—PS3
- 19. Dance Central 2—360
- 20. Deus Ex: Human Revolution-360, PS3, PC

Source: Nielsen

The anticipated games list of the 2011 holiday season was developed by examining a variety of consumer measures from Nielsen's Video Game Tracking survey, including the top five titles active gamers are considering for purchase.

→ "QUOTE"



"I've been told I need to lose weight multiple times. There's definitely pressure. All the time. But you just can't let it get to you. So many teenagers go through a hard time because you're constantly being told you're not pretty enough, you're not skinny enough, you're not this, you're not that. That's why it's good to stay grounded, just to love yourself and to love your body, because you're beautiful the way you

Actress **Ashley Benson** (who plays Hanna Marin on *Pretty Little Liars*, *Seventeen* Magazine, September 2011.



NO PARENT LEFT BEHIND A SEMINAR FOR PARENTS

from WALT MUELLER and the Center for Parent/Youth Understanding

Your kids are changing fast and so is their world. Life as a teenager in today's world bears little resemblence to the teenage world you once inhabited. If you blink, you might be left behind, forfeiting your opportunity to effectively lead your kids through adolescence and into a healthy, God-honoring adulthood. The "No Parent Left Behind" seminar gets you started on the journey to understand your kids and their rapidly changing world.

"NO PARENT LEFT BEHIND" includes three fast-paced and practical sessions led by Dr. Walt Mueller, founder and President of the Center for Parent/Youth Understanding.

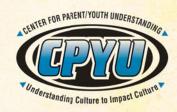
SESSION 1 - KNOW YOUR TEEN - you'll learn how kids grow, develop, and change, along with how the teenage years leave them especially vulnerable to cultural influences.

SESSION 2 - KNOW THEIR WORLD - you'll learn about some of the major cultural forces in today's world that are influencing children and teens.

SESSION 3 - KNOW YOUR ROLE - you'll get hope-filled and practical guidance on how to increase your parental influence and lead your kids to a spiritually, physically, and emotionally healthy adulthood.



The "No Parent Left Behind" seminar is led by Dr. Walt Mueller, the founder and President of the Center for Parent/Youth Understanding. Walt has been working with young people and their families for over 35 years, is the author of 9 books, and speaks regularly on contemporary youth culture.





TO FIND OUT HOW TO HOST THE

"NO PARENT LEFT BEHIND" seminar at your church or school, visit cpyu.org or call 1.800.807.CPYU



COLLEGE TRANSTON by DEREK MELLEBY

What Makes Faith Stick During College?



ew research reveals surprising insights into instilling lasting faith in young people. It is estimated that around 50% of students that grow up in the Christian faith walk away from the church after high school. Many church leaders have known about this growing trend but have not been sure what to do about it. The Fuller Youth Institute, under the direction of Dr. Kara Powell, recently conducted a ground-breaking, four-year study of this phenomenon. This "Sticky Faith" research followed teenagers from their senior year of high school until their senior year of college, hoping to discover what helped them to make their faith stick. Dr. Powell explains, "As many churches and denominations experience decline, and as anxious parents wonder about their children's futures, the Sticky Faith research has the power to spark a movement that not only changes youth, but also families and churches."

Here are three key findings to consider: First, while most U.S. churches focus on building strong youth groups, teenagers also need to build relationships with adults of all ages. *Teens need intergenerational community*. Second, churches and families overestimate youth group graduates' readiness for the struggles ahead with dire consequences for the faith. *Most teens are not ready for the challenges and temptations of life after high school*. Third, while teaching young people the "do's" and "don'ts" of Christian living is important, an overemphasis on behaviors can sabotage faith long-term. *Teens desperately need a Gospel of heart transformation, not just behavior modification*. Visit www.stickyfaith.org to learn more about the research and to discover helpful resources that equip parents and churches to nurture in young people a faith that lasts.

Derek Melleby is the director of the College Transition Initiative, a ministry of The Center for Parent/Youth Understanding and the Coalition for Christian Outreach. Learn more at www.cpyu.org/cti.



The mouth is a window to the soul. What a person says reveals much about who they are, what they believe, and what drives them to do what they do. Jesus said that it is out of the overflow of the heart that the mouth speaks (Luke 6:45). The things people say also tell us a lot about culture. Consequently, I've always liked to use the words of pop culture icons as a window into our world and a spark for talking about those issues with kids. Have you ever thought about taking some time in your youth group meetings, meals, and informal times spent with kids to throw out a quote and get their reaction to it?

Culture quotes are everywhere, and they're a handy ministry tool that we should be using on a regular basis. A few months ago I found this quote from Ke\$ha while scanning a copy of *Billboard* magazine. . . a quote about a boy she pulled onstage at one of her concerts: "He started crying and told me that the only reason he was alive was because of my music. He'd never felt accepted for who he was, and through my songs he realized that there are people out there who will love him for exactly who he is, and so he decided to come out of the closet." That's a perfect quote

to get kids thinking and talking about issues like sexuality, friendship, family, bullying, relationships, compassion, and the power of music in a young person's life.

The effective use of quotes begins by keeping your eyes and ears open to what people are saying. Keep a pen and some paper near you at all times. . . on the end table, in your car, etc. Or, just use your cell phone to snap a photo of a quote, send it to yourself in an email, or to leave yourself a voicemail. Magazines, television, ads, popular songs, websites, and billboards are all good sources for quotes. If the you catch the person on TV saying something worth quoting, see if you can find the clip on YouTube and grab that.

Once you have a quote, put it out there for your kids. Start a youth group or small group meeting with a quote and get their reactions. I know one school teacher who would start his classes every Monday with a quote to discuss. The students loved it, it got them talking, and it gave him an opportunity to respond with some seasoned wisdom to get them thinking more deeply about the issues. Post quotes on your Facebook page or blog, then invite responses.

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Here are some questions to use as you process quotes with your students:

- Why do you think the person said this?
- What does it mean?
- What do you think about what they said?
- Is what they said true? False? Right? Wrong?
- What do their words tell us about what they believe and the kind of person they are?
- From what you know about Jesus, what would He say in response to these words?

Distance does not decide who is your brother and who is not. The church is going to have to become the conscience of the free market if it's to have any meaning in this world - and stop being its apologist.



Nobody gets teenagers like a youth worker





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