



JAN/FEB 2010
issue 02



simply youth culture newsletter

Created in partnership with Simply Youth Ministry & cpyu.org



Walt Mueller
is Founder and President,
Center for Parent/Youth
Understanding.

INSIDE ∇

IT'S IN YOUR COMMUNITY, CHURCH, AND GROUP.....	1
CULTURE IMAGE.....	3
RESOURCE REVIEWS	4
3D REVIEW	5
TRENDS.....	7
INTERVIEW	8
COLLEGE TRANSITION.....	9
CULTURE TIPS	9
YOUTH WORKER Q&A	11
RELEASES COMING SOON	11

IT'S IN YOUR COMMUNITY, CHURCH, AND GROUP

by Walt Mueller

If you were to base your definition of the term “sexual predator” on the glut of ugly stories that have been featured on the front page of my local newspaper, your definition would include words like “pastor,” “youth pastor,” “school teacher,” “choir director,” and “band leader” among too many others. There are people entrusted to work with kids who are violating kids. While we can rejoice that this once-silent scourge is being brought out into the open, what we’re seeing in terms of the breadth and depth of the epidemic sexual abuse of children and teenagers should make us very, very sad.

Whether you know it or not, every one of us working in youth ministry knows victims and perpetrators of childhood sexual abuse. Child sexual abuse—defined as an act of assault or exploitation by a person who has authority over or the trust of a child—is at epidemic proportions. Because only 25 percent of cases are ever reported and only one victim in 10 will ever take the initiative on their own to tell, the estimates and statistics are extremely conservative. Some experts are now saying that by the time they reach the age of 16, one out of every three girls and one out of every five (or maybe even four) boys will have been sexually abused. It is estimated that there are now 60 million survivors of childhood sexual abuse living in America today. Ninety-three percent of victims know their attacker. Thirty-four percent of the abusers are family members.

Fifty-nine percent are family friends. Only seven percent of the perpetrators are strangers to the victims and their families. You were a child, once. You trusted older people, especially those you knew. You might not have known you were being abused. And if you did, you may have been among the 80 percent of victims who initially deny they were ever abused or are very hesitant to disclose what happened.

Think about these sobering facts next time you look over your youth group kids as they gather together in one room. Then, ask yourself this question: “What can I do to prevent this type of thing from happening in the lives of the kids I work with, so that they might experience a childhood void of victimization, and a sexually healthy adulthood void of victimizing others?” Here are some suggestions to get you started:

First, make sure that everyone in your church—young and old alike—understands the reality and pervasiveness of childhood sexual abuse. We need to do our part to destroy the culture of denial and encourage victims to speak up.

Second, recognize your responsibility to implement policies and training that will reduce the risk of making it easy to put kids into the hands of sexual predators. Screen, oversee, and hold accountable every single person who has access to your kids. And when in doubt, err on the side of caution.

continued p.8



HURT loneliness
GUILT
REGRET
SHAME
SAVIOR
ANGER



Fourteen years of abuse as a child did not determine Joe's future.

Joe brings his childhood experiences, his student ministry experience, and his passion for Jesus Christ together to help equip the church to reach out to today's hurting generation.

Go to Joe's website to hear his story and schedule him to speak to your student ministry today.



joe
donahue

An evangelist for
today's hurting generation

JoeSpeaker.com YouthEvangelist.com twitter.com/studentpastor



Third, get your response plan in place that includes steps to take and a list of referrals. Don't fall into the trap of believing that you have the knowledge and ability to intervene and do what needs to be done from start to finish. Involve professional counselors and law enforcement from the outset.

Fourth, help the child. Did you know that sexually abused kids are typically forgotten or blamed? Realize that young sexual abuse victims need you to walk with them every step of the way. . . and that journey begins the moment they reveal their abuse.

Fifth, know your sinful self. When I read the stories in the paper I have to remember that I am a fallen human being who is just one bad decision away from the people who do this kind of stuff. If we don't watch

it, each of us could easily cross the line into anything from inappropriate emotional enmeshment to sexual abuse.

Far too many heads are spinning because of childhood sexual abuse. As ambassadors for the kingdom, let's do all we can with God's help and by his grace to bring the kingdom to come in relation to sexual abuse on earth, as it is in Heaven. I believe that if we are faithful and obedient, fewer heads will spin and more and more of our kids can look forward to a life where things will be more like the way they're supposed to be.



ONLINE: For more stories about youth culture and how to impact a generation for Christ visit cpyu.org.

CULTURE IMAGE

SIMPLY YOUTH CULTURE



Every day, our children and teens are bombarded with images that shape how they perceive and live life. Because these images speak for them and to them, we must take the time to 1) deconstruct the images to learn what we can about the current values, attitudes, and behaviors embraced by our kids, and 2) speak to our kids by using these images to spark discussions about worldviews and assumptions about life, along with how to view God, others, and themselves.

This image appeared in a variety of publications, including the August 2009 edition of XXL magazine, which informs the teen and young adult reader on hip-hop and urban culture. The ad introduces Gianna's new wheel, the Envy, which is featured prominently on a Range Rover along with other rim offerings. The company's Web site—www.giannawheels.com—shows a flash intro featuring the Envy wheel, which touts the wheel's ability to "inspire desire." Before the wheel even appears, a busty, leather-clad seductress appears, using sexuality and objectification as a hook to grab male consumers and connect them with the brand.

After showing the print ad to students and soliciting their "readings" and opinions on what the image "says," use the image as a springboard to discuss the following topics.

Materialism: What does the image say about the things that are most valuable

in life? Does the image encourage viewers to seek fulfillment in the acquisition of things? How are camera angle, lighting, and composition used to promote desire? Where does the ad say happiness is to be found? Does the image send any messages on what we are to pursue in life? Does God care about how we spend our money? Is it really our money to spend? What does Scripture say about these matters?

Envy: It's been said, "He who dies with the most toys wins." Do you think this is a prominent message promoted in contemporary culture? Is it true? Why or why not? What role does envy and jealousy play in today's world? Do you feel that teenagers are locked into a world where they try to get ahead of others through the accumulation of things? Do things bring happiness and satisfaction? If not, where can true happiness and satisfaction be found? What does the Bible teach about jealousy, envy, and covetousness?

Scripture verses to consider:

Mark 8:36 – on what to seek in life

Matthew 6:19-34 – on treasures, worry, and God's provision

1 Timothy 6:9-10 – on the love of money

Mark 10:17-23 – on the Rich Young Man

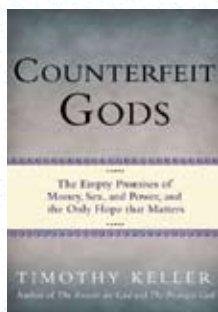
Exodus 20:3, 17 – on idolatry and covetousness



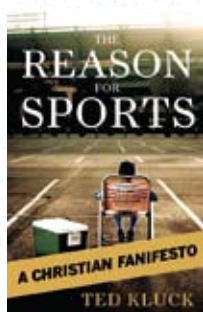
ONLINE: To download this image (and others) for use with your group, visit the image archive at cpyu.org.



1



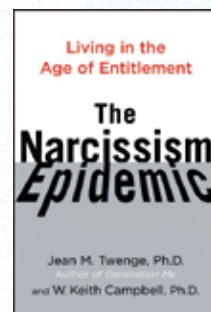
2



3



4



5

WEB SITE

MTV STICKY 1 mtvsticky.com

Since its inception in 1981, MTV has been about creating and dispensing youth culture. Remember how quickly the moniker “MTV Generation” was dumped onto the teenaged population back in the mid-80s? Now, MTV is getting into the business of offering information and analysis on the youth culture it helped create with its MTV Sticky site. The site is updated regularly and archived with a searchable database of youth culture trends and insight. Youth workers should bookmark this one as another source of youth culture awareness.

BOOKS

COUNTERFEIT GODS: THE EMPTY PROMISES OF MONEY, SEX, AND POWER AND THE ONLY HOPE THAT MATTERS 2
by Timothy J. Keller

Tim Keller is an unassuming and humble guy who pastors a church in Manhattan. He’s effectively bridged the gap between the Word and the world through his preaching, writing, and pastoring. He’s a great model for those of us who endeavor to know and answer cultural realities with the “but I tell you’s” of Scripture. That’s what Keller does in this, his latest book, as he takes on the idols we mistakenly believe bring redemption (money, sex, and power), while building a convincing case for the God who is the only One who brings redemption. Not only will this book rock your personal world, but it provides content

that will shape your ministry, conversations, and messages to the kids you minister to—who are, by the way, locked in on this unholy and idolatrous trinity.

THE REASON FOR SPORTS: A CHRISTIAN FANIFESTO 3
by Ted Kluck

Ted Kluck is an established writer whose writing has appeared in major media outlets such as *ESPN The Magazine*. In this new book, *The Reason for Sports: A Christian Fanifesto*, Kluck, a deeply committed Christian and former professional athlete, asks important questions about the place of sports within our culture and within the church. “How can fans enjoy sports today with its strutting players, must-win attitudes, and big-contract demands? And should Christians root, root, root for the home team when players strike, gripe, or are found using drugs to enhance performance?” Written in an engaging style and often hilarious prose, Kluck not only provides biblical support for sports, but also challenges followers of Christ to think more “Christianly” about athletics. This is a must-read for all parents, youth workers, and teenagers looking to make sense of sports from a biblical perspective.

COLUMBINE 4
by Dave Cullen

In the almost 11 years that have passed since the Columbine High School massacre, fact and fiction have been twisted together in ways that have left

many confused over the actual details of what really happened before, during, and after April 20, 1999. Journalist Dave Cullen spent 10 years working to investigate the killers and their families, the victims and their families, and the Colorado community that endured those long, dark days. What results is an insightful take on the tragedy that offers some helpful clarity. Youth workers might not like everything they read in Cullen’s book (particularly his take on the response of the Evangelical community), but this book’s worth a look if we want to learn from all aspects of the massacre’s history.

RESEARCH

THE NARCISSISM EPIDEMIC: LIVING IN AN AGE OF ENTITLEMENT 5
by Jean Twenge Ph.D. & W. Keith Campbell Ph.D.

The end of the 1980s—labeled appropriately as the Me Decade—didn’t bring an end to rampant materialism as many had predicted. Instead, it was the front-end of a growing sense of entitlement that has reached epidemic proportions, particularly among children, teenagers, and young adults. Researchers Jean Twenge and W. Keith Campbell provide a compelling look at how self-love is promoted and spread through contemporary culture. With narcissism as the defining issue in youth culture today, this book deserves an audience among youth workers who prayerfully endeavor to undo this modern-day idolatry, so that kids might get their eyes off themselves and onto God.

SONG AND VIDEO

TRAVIS McCOY

One At A Time



BACKGROUND/SUMMARY: Released in December of 2009, this catchy song from Travis McCoy (lead singer of Gym Class Heroes) was written to support and raise awareness of MTV's anti-AIDS initiative through the network's Staying Alive Foundation. All money generated from the sale of the song goes to support grassroots HIV and AIDS initiatives worldwide.

DISCOVER: What is the message/worldview?

The documentary style video follows McCoy as he travels to and through South Africa on a mission to promote AIDS and HIV initiatives through the Staying Alive Foundation. The visual collage is done in a positive and inspirational manner as McCoy meets nationals and serves as an ambassador for change.

The song issues a strong call to action by challenging listeners to realize that we “can’t change the world overnight,” but “we can start by saving a life, one at a time, one at a time.” A realistic “baby-step” approach is promoted. Those who would be hesitant to step out of the bondage and comfort of their 21st century American materialism are told “you’re not a square cause you care and have a good heart.”

McCoy comes straight at listeners and the selfishness so many young people embody—albeit in a gentle and loving way—by identifying with them and then challenging them to look around and get some perspective: “My generation’s complaining about things that we don’t have. But if you think about it, we ain’t got it so bad. . . it’s a simple concept we need to grasp quickly, before we end up wishing we did something differently.”

The song concludes with a strong challenge: “So let’s make history, and help out those in need. . . ”

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

Christians often forget that the Gospel is not just about personal salvation, but about following Jesus and being kingdom-bearing agents of redemption wherever brokenness and hurt are found in the world. Jesus cared for the poor, the sick, and the oppressed. He calls his followers in all times and all places to do the same, no matter what the cost to us. We are to “love our neighbor” (Mark 12:31). The familiar parable of the Good Samaritan teaches us that anyone in need is our neighbor (Luke 10:25-37).

While we might not think it’s true, we and our students are rich when compared to the rest of the global population. Jesus makes it clear that great responsibility to steward what we’ve been given goes along with the blessing of material abundance (Matthew 19:16-30). The song reflects and affirms this calling by encouraging “the haves” to care for “the have-nots.”

In a redemptive manner, Jesus calls us to care for those who are broken, even if that brokenness is a result of their own sinful decisions or irresponsibility. HIV/AIDS is sometimes the result of sexual immorality. While we must minister redemptively to all victims, we must also work prophetically and preventively to model and teach a biblical sexual ethic that proclaims true sexual freedom through joyously embracing God’s parameters for our sexuality.

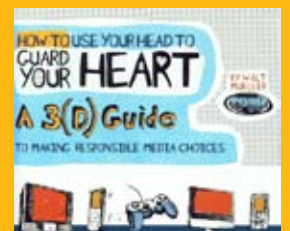
Our motivation for service should always be rooted in grateful obedience to God’s calling and our desire to bring honor and glory to him, rather than in self-serving ways.

DECIDE: What do I do with it?

“One At A Time” is a bright and shining light in the all-too-often dark world of popular music. The song and video serve as a great springboard for discussion on matters related to care for the poor and the oppressed, justice, sexuality, and discipleship. Watch the video with students. Then ask them to make connections between the song’s message and scriptural truth. Ask teenagers to consider McCoy’s challenge, then have them discuss where our motivation for service should come from, and how they can best serve—individually and corporately—to meet the world’s deep needs.



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**.



Connect to Jesus One Nail at a Time

See how God uses the experience of serving others to change lives—in both you and the people you serve. Your youth group will help people who are elderly, disadvantaged and disabled with meaningful home repair: fixing porches, painting a house, building wheelchair ramps, and more. Find out today how your youth can help people in real need by participating in a week of service next summer.

For more information, visit GroupWorkcamps.com or call 1.800.385.4545.

 GROUP
WORKCAMPS



Television Violence

The Parents' Television Council, a media watchdog group, has released its latest report on television violence. According to PTC, incidents of violence against women on mainstream U.S. television have increased by one hundred and twenty percent in the past five years, with the depictions of teenage girls as victims increasing by four hundred percent. The PTC was particularly concerned about the depiction of violence against women in television comedies. While there was an overall increase of two percent in violence between 2004 and 2009, it is the violence against women and female teens that has increased the most. In fact, every network except ABC showed a dramatic increase in stories that included beatings, shootings, rape, stabbing, torture, and violent threats. While there are some contexts where violence might be appropriate in the accurate depiction of a story, youth workers should pay special attention to TV content, and then address the fact that violence against women is immoral, sinful, and wrong.

F.M.L.

"Today I went to our school golf banquet after being with the team and practicing with them for a few months with them. When it came time to get the certificates, all the names were called out, except for mine. When I asked the coach where my certificate was, he said, 'Who are you?' F.M.L." The acronym F.M.L. stands for a three-word phrase that begins with profanity and ends with the words "my life." This post from a teenager is just one of thousands of messages posted every day on the F.M.L. Web site by people—many of them young—who are looking for a place to vent about their frustrating and broken lives. Where are the trusted adults and close Christian friends with whom kids can share their most intimate pain? Jesus calls his followers to "love one another." Perhaps we can start with the resolve to be there and to listen. To do so is to be the hands and feet of the one who gives life.

The Pregnant Teen Cover Girl

Last November, Teen Vogue magazine shook up the world through the editorial decision to feature a nineteen-year-old cover model who reveals in the magazine's pages that she is pregnant. While Jourdan Dunn is not visibly pregnant on the cover, the magazine did find out after the shoot that Dunn was going to be a mother. Regardless of what you think about Teen Vogue's decision to keep Dunn on the cover, you can and should use the story to create a teachable moment with your students. The story offers a springboard for discussions about sexuality, parenting, sexual ethics, decision-making, and morality. Begin by asking your kids what they think about Teen Vogue and their decision. Listen carefully to discern your teen's attitudes and values on these issues. Then, respond with gentleness as you talk about God's will and way for his gift of sexuality. Steer your kids in the direction of a biblical sexual ethic. They need to hear it from you, because they might not be hearing it anywhere else.



MOVIES 12/11/2009-12/13/2009

1. The Princess and the Frog, \$24.2 mil
2. The Blind Side, \$15.1 mil
3. Invictus, \$8.6 mil
4. The Twilight Saga: New Moon, \$8 mil
5. Disney's A Christmas Carol, \$6.8 mil
6. Brothers, \$5 mil
7. Old Dogs, \$4.4 mil
8. 2012, \$4.4 mil
9. Armored, \$3.5 mil
10. Ninja Assassin, \$2.7 mil

Source: Box Office Mojo

VIDEO GAMES 12/16/2009

1. New Super Mario Bros. Wii - Wii
2. Left 4 Dead 2 - Xbox 360
3. Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2 - Xbox 360
4. Star Trek Online Collector's Edition - PC
5. Cabela's Big Game Hunter w/ Gun - Wii
6. Mario Kart Wii - Wii
7. Wii Sports Resort w/ Wii MotionPlus - Wii
8. Assassin's Creed 2 - Xbox 360
9. Rock Band: LEGO - Xbox 360
10. Halo 3: ODST - Xbox 360

Source: gamestop.com

MYSPACE MUSIC ARTISTS 12/16/2009

1. Chris Brown
2. Lady Gaga
3. Gucci Mane
4. Rihanna
5. Owl City
6. KE\$HA
7. Justin Bieber
8. Snoop Dogg
9. Timbaland
10. Jay Sean

Source: mspace music top 10 "major" bands list

"Don't worry friends: I'm still gonna be me. Always. W/o apologies. Just gonna experiment differently with how I present myself...I'm learning...My goal was not to piss people off, it was to promote freedom of expression and artistic freedom...I think it's up to the parents to discern what their child is watching on television. Lady Gaga smashing whiskey bottles, Janet Jackson grabbing a male dancer's crotch, Eminem talking about how Slim Shady has 17 rapes under his belt — there was a lot of very adult material on the AMAs this year and I know I wasn't the only one."

—American Idol runner-up **Adam Lambert** in response to the outcry following his envelope-stretching performance on The American Music Awards Show (rollingstone.com (11/30/2009).



INTERVIEW

Q&A WITH **KELLI ELLISON**

Q: You're both a middle school principal and a volunteer youthworker. Why a middle school principal? Why a youthworker? Why both at the same time?

KELLI: You're not the first or the last to ask! I truly believe middle school years are the most impressionable years in a young person's life. Knowing I have an impact is powerful. We tell our students we help to build the house they will live in for the rest of their lives.

I'm a youth worker for similar reasons. Two spiritual gifts I've been given are teaching and leadership. They go hand-in-hand with serving kids. I'm a stronger principal because of my work with the youth and a stronger youth worker because of my job in education. One of our core values at Anderson Hills United Methodist Church is service. Every Christian is a minister who's been given gifts, talents, and resources to be discovered, developed, and deployed for service in the church and world (Ephesians 4:7-13). For me, both my vocation and avocation are a way to serve Christ and serve kids.

Q: What concerns you most in regards to kids and their families? And should the church be doing anything about that?

KELLI: The largest concern I have is FAMILY TIME! Finding time to spend as a family and sharing with each other daily. Our church has begun a faith five...it encourages families to spend time together in the evening!

Q: What do you do on a regular basis to keep up with what's going on in your students' world?

KELLI: The biggest thing I do is to listen to the youth! Observations are also a key to keeping up. You can learn a lot in a junior high cafeteria. Along with that, I read articles and watch shows the youth watch. For example, most recently I have been watching *Glee*! My small group and students from school talk about it constantly. I wanted to know why.

Q: Look into the future through your crystal ball. What cultural trends lie on the horizon that youth workers must be ready to monitor? From where you sit as a public school administrator, what would you say are the current cultural trends among middle school students that concern you the most?

KELLI: Depression and the effect it has on teenage suicide and attempts. Often, when students are depressed they threaten suicide for attention. When it comes to teenage suicide, the statistics make it clear that attempted suicide is a big deal as it relates to the youth. Social networking as it relates to sexting and cyber-bullying are cultural trends that throw up red flags! I encourage youth workers to discuss these two topics with their teenagers. Technology can be a powerful tool, for good and bad!

Q: As a school administrator, what advice can you give to youth workers regarding the best ways to connect with, support, and serve their local public schools?

KELLI: I just met with a local youth minister yesterday and he asked the same question. I encourage workers to attend school events, ranging from athletics to musicals. For the youth to know an adult is supportive is more than half the battle!

One of our local churches works with our school district to provide a program called Whiz Kids. Our students meet weekly. We pair kids with caring adult volunteers who tutor and mentor them in the spirit of Christ. Whiz Kids is instrumental in providing extra literacy and math help to struggling students. These relationships improve self-esteem and foster a sense of accomplishment among the students we serve. Whiz Kids has improved reading scores through the tutor/student relationship. Anderson Hills United Methodist Church is in the beginning stages of implementing the program. This is a program I encourage youth pastors and senior pastors to look into and learn more about.

Kelli Ellison has been serving as a youth ministry volunteer at Anderson Hills United Methodist Church (Cincinnati, Ohio) for three years. She's also a Sunday morning life group leader for senior high students. Professionally, she has been an educator for over 10 years, serving middle school students. Currently she's the principal at Milford Junior High School in a suburb of Cincinnati.

Finding Christian Community on Campus



One of my favorite questions to ask college students is this: What was the best advice you were given before going to college? Here's a response I received a few weeks ago at a picnic: "My youth pastor told me to be intentional about finding Christian community. He was so emphatic about it that I remember frantically walking around campus asking everyone I met if they knew about any Christian groups. One of the first people I talked to was a Christian and she's one of my best friends today. Together we were able to find a group and get connected to a church." This story reminds us of two things we all need to know about students transitioning to college.

First, the first two weeks of college are critical. Nationally, 25 percent of students do not return to the same school for their sophomore year. Many colleges and universities have discovered that they can significantly reduce this number by helping students find good, supportive community quickly.

Second, the opening story reminds us that Christians need to intentionally seek out Christian community on campus. During the

first few weeks of college, students are bombarded with different activities to fill their schedules. Everything is new: people, buildings, classes, meal times. Many students are navigating these daily activities on their own for the first time. It's easy to drop worship and Bible study from an already hectic schedule.

Youth workers can play a vital role in helping students get connected to Christian community before they head off to college. Consider using a youth group night to talk to college bound youth about the value and importance of community and church. Take time to visit college Web sites to find what Christian groups are available on campus. Encourage students to track down the college leaders and make contact with them before they reach campus. Helping students find a place to belong can make all the difference in the world as they transition to college.

Derek Melleby is the director of CPYU's College Transition Initiative, which helps students and parents transition more smoothly to college. Learn more at cpyu.org

TIPS

FOR USING CULTURE IN MINISTRY

All youth workers must be culture-watchers. While watching culture involves observation of visible culture, it also involves getting under the skin to understand the underlying realities of what you've seen and heard. Culture-watchers need to avoid the error of what Patty Lane calls "misattribution."

Misattribution is one of the fastest ways we can destroy lines of communication with kids when we attempt to talk with them about their world. Misattribution happens when we assume or attribute our meaning to an element of their culture based on our own opinions, cultural categories, worldviews, or personal preferences. When we engage in misattribution, our kids know we don't know what we're talking about.

Here's how it works. Let's say you find out your kids are into the latest Lady Gaga music video. You watch it and want to respond. . . which you eventually need to do. But that response should come only after 1) discovering Lady Gaga's meaning behind the music video, and 2) discovering what the music video means to your kids. It's the process of opening the lines of communication by doing your listening and watching homework first.

Here are some questions you can ask to help you dig deeply into cultural texts in order to know as much as you can as you work to avoid misattribution.

What is the main topic or theme?

What's the mood?

Does it manipulate viewer emotions in any way?

What does it say about the way the world is?

What does it say about the way the world ought to be?

Is there right and wrong? If so, what? And how is right and wrong determined?

Are there any heroes and villains? If so, what do they stand for?

What values and beliefs are portrayed as positive? negative?

Who or what is the source of authority? What is the attitude toward authority?

Who or what is God? How is God portrayed?

How are humans portrayed? Where is human worth and identity found?

How is beauty established, portrayed, and defined?

What is the source of satisfaction and happiness in life?

What makes a person successful?

What's the solution to life's problems?

Who or what is glorified?

What does it say about peace and hope? Where are they found?

What character traits are portrayed as negative? positive?



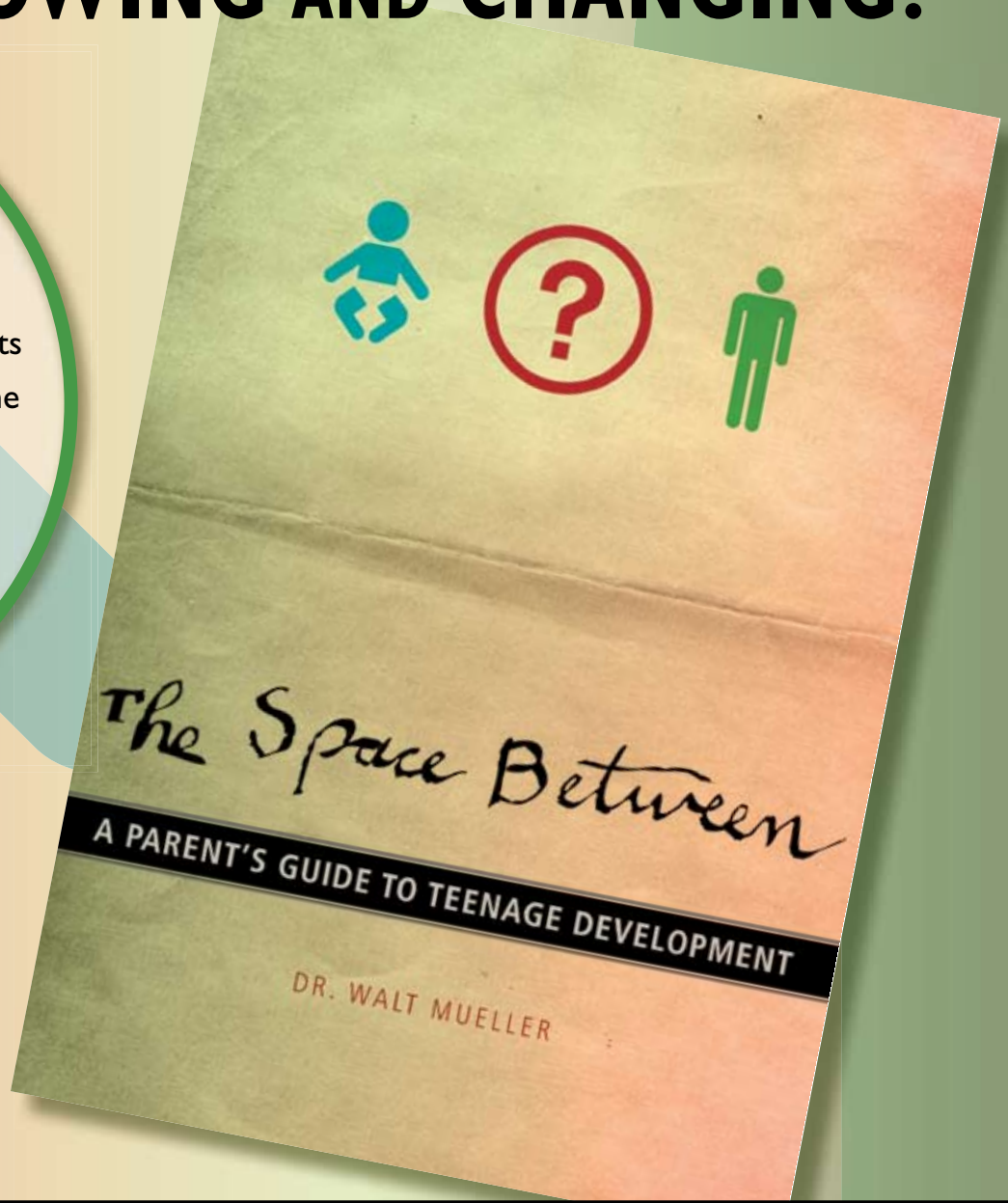
A NEW BOOK

FROM **WALT MUELLER** AND THE
CENTER FOR PARENT/YOUTH UNDERSTANDING

HELP PARENTS UNDERSTAND HOW THEIR TEENAGERS ARE GROWING AND CHANGING.

GREAT FOR:

- Individual use
- Small group study
- Helping confused parents
- Preparing parents for the adolescent years
- Helping your youth ministry team understand adolescent development



FREE DOWNLOADABLE DISCUSSION GUIDE AVAILABLE AT CPYU.ORG

TO ORDER YOUR COPIES OF *THE SPACE BETWEEN* AND TO DOWNLOAD
THE FREE DISCUSSION GUIDE, VISIT CPYU.ORG

USE THIS SPECIAL CODE
-GROUP22-
TO RECEIVE A 10% DISCOUNT.



CULTURE MAKER

Q&A



with **Denis Haack**

CPYU: Tell us about your ministry, Ransom Fellowship. How did it start?

DH: I was on staff with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship and friends we trusted had been encouraging us to begin something like Ransom. So we took the plunge, not knowing how long God would allow us to continue. That was in 1982, and today Ransom still exists to help Christians stop being defensive and fearful of our postmodern world, and instead learn to be discerning, winsomely engaging all of life and culture with the gospel.

CPYU: Over the course of your years in ministry, how have you seen the church change in its approach to culture?

DH: The church has long been haunted by the unbiblical notion that life is divided into two distinct spheres, the sacred and the secular. The first is spiritual and pleasing to God, the second is physical, earthly, and less pleasing to God. In that way of looking at things, culture is either ignored or dismissed as unimportant if not dangerous. Today, more of the church has adopted a more distinctly Christian understanding. Still, it would be a mistake to assume the sacred/secular error is not with us. Each of us needs to intentionally live as if we really truly believed that every aspect of our lives, work, rest, and culture comes under Christ's kingship.

CPYU: You often talk about the importance of hospitality in ministry. What should youth workers and parents know about why hospitality is vital to evangelism and discipleship?

DH: In a world where so many come from highly mobile and fragmented homes, the offer of hospitality is central to demonstrate the grace of the gospel. I suspect that the pilgrimage of faith into the church for many will come through living rooms, not through evangelistic campaigns or church programs. Opening our homes and lives in warm hospitality, giving the gifts of food, listening, and unhurried time might just be one of the most radical expressions of Christian obedience possible today.

CPYU: Many youth workers are challenged to be more "relevant" in ministry. What excites and concerns you about this new push toward relevancy?

DH: If relevant means listening, asking questions, and doing the hard work of learning to speak in categories that can be understood by those who don't share our faith, it's great. If it means trying to mirror our world in order to fit in, shedding beliefs people find discomforting, launching popular programs that attract increased numbers, or aligning ourselves with some political agenda to re-establish what's been lost, it's a mistake. Nothing is more relevant than the grand story of redemption in Scripture—being relevant means living and speaking in a way that makes it appear as attractive, authentic, plausible, and compelling as Christ was when he walked the earth.

Denis Haack is the founder and President of Ransom Fellowship and a great friend of CPYU. You can learn more about Ransom Fellowship and access loads of thoughtful free resources on popular culture at www.ransomfellowship.org

RELEASES COMING SOON

BOOKS

BOYS, GIRLS AND OTHER HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Rosalind Wiseman

Release Date: January 12, 2010

SWEET LITTLE LIES (L.A. CANDY SERIES)

Lauren Conrad

Release Date: February 2, 2010

LOCKDOWN

Walter Dean Myers

Release Date: February 2, 2010

MOVIES

PERCY JACKSON & THE OLYMPIANS: THE LIGHTNING THIEF

20th Century Fox

Release Date: February 12, 2010

ALICE IN WONDERLAND

Walt Disney Pictures

Release Date: March 5, 2010

MUSIC

MY DINOSAUR LIFE

Artist: Motion City Soundtrack

Label: Sony

Tentative Release Date: January 19, 2010

NEED YOU NOW

Artist: Lady Antebellum

Label: Capitol

Tentative Release Date: January 26, 2010

SMOKE & MIRRORS

Artist: Lifehouse

Label: Geffen Records

Tentative Release Date: February 2, 2010

RAYMOND VS. RAYMOND

Artist: Usher

Label: La Face

Tentative Release Date: March 1, 2010

GAMES

MASS EFFECT 2

Publisher: BioWare

Platform: Xbox 360, PC

Release Date: January 26, 2010

MAG

Publisher: Sony

Platform: PS3

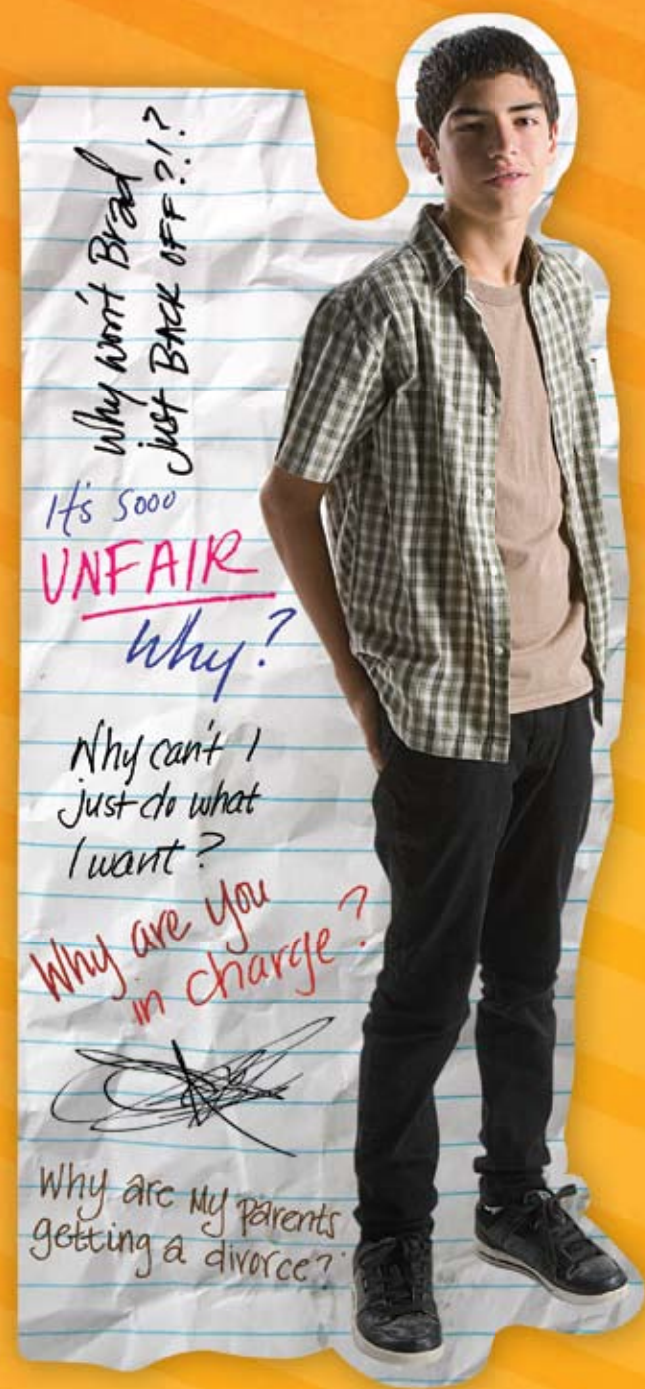
Release Date: January 26, 2010

BIOSHOCK 2

Publisher: Take 2

Platform: PS3, Xbox 360, PC

Release Date: February 9, 2010



One Good
Question
Changes
Everything.

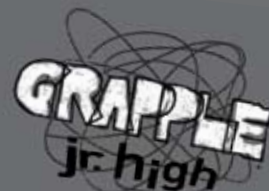
Junior High Curriculum

...and every good question deserves a good answer.

Grapple's relevant, on-target questions get junior-highers exploring tough topics...digging deep into God's Word... and finding answers that draw them closer to God.

It's more than curriculum. It's Grapple.

Check out Grapple®—FREE.
Visit group.com/jhgrapple or call 800-447-1070.



Group
Incredible things will happen™

group
magazine

YOUR SUBSCRIPTION INCLUDES
FREE DIGITAL NEWSLETTERS
SIMPLY YOUTH CULTURE &
SIMPLY JUNIOR HIGH

CONTRIBUTORS INCLUDE:
KURT JOHNSTON, DOUG FIELDS
RICK LAWRENCE, AND MANY MORE!

FRESH DESIGN & IT'S GOOD FOR YOU TOO!

THE MAGAZINE THAT SIMPLIFIES
YOUTH MINISTRY AND SAVES YOU TIME

SUBSCRIBE
TODAY!
ONLY \$29.95

FOR 6 VINE-RIPENED ISSUES.
groupmagazine.com



5 NUTRITIOUS REASONS TO SUBSCRIBE

- Exclusive research tied to practical application
- Unique analysis of trends in youth culture
- Provocative articles that tackle sacred cows
- Resource reviews
- Personal coaching and leadership tips

HOME GROWN IN
LOVELAND, COLORADO

800.447.1070 | groupmagazine.com



youth
culture, newsletter

Created in partnership with
Simply Youth Ministry & CPYU.org

Copyright © 2010 Group Publishing, Inc.

Group

Incredible things will happen™

Editorial Offices:
1515 Cascade Avenue
Loveland, CO 80539-8681
(970) 669-3836

Executive Editor
Rick Lawrence

Associate Editor
Scott Firestone IV

Art Director
Jeff A. Storm

Publisher
Andy Brazelton

Simply Youth Culture Newsletter is a Group Publishing, Simply Youth Ministry, and CPYU partnership resource. For even more resources please visit:
youthministry.com
cpyu.org
groupmagazine.com



To advertise in SYC Newsletter
Contact **Sophia Winter**
800-635-0404, ext. 4479 or
email swinter@group.com

She'll sell you just the right ad space
and also give you some great tips on
how to dress for success.

Group