

## Cross-Cultural Missionaries

WALT MUELLER, CPYU President



### YOUTH CULTURE HOT QUOTE

*“I was saying to a friend the other day ‘Remember, our kids are not us’ They’re not. Sometimes we’re trying to fix things that happened to us or projecting [onto them], and that’s a terrible, terrible trap.”*

Jada Pinkett Smith, on parenting, *Us Weekly*, August 18, 2014, p. 18.



Like a snowball picking up speed and mass on a trip down a never-ending mountain, youth culture is changing at warp speed. With children and teens back in school, you need to be aware that their campus youth culture is markedly different from the youth culture of your own teenage years. Everything is changing. To help you keep abreast of the world your kids live in as they head back to school, let me give you some homework.

As a parent, you have been given primary responsibility for the spiritual nurture of your children (Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Ephesians 6:4). Because you grew up in a world that’s different from the world of your teen, you must view this calling as a cross-cultural missionary venture. As a result, you must work to stay in touch – like foreign missionaries – with the language and culture of your mission field. Here are three assignments that aren’t meant to be burdensome, but helpful.

**First, take the advice of the theologian who once said that every Christian should start their day with the Bible in one hand, and the newspaper in the other.** In other words, you must begin your day spending time getting to know the One who has sent you, and the message that One has called you to communicate. Be sure that God’s truth is coursing through your veins. Then, take the time to use your newspaper to get to know today’s world so that you can communicate the timeless and life-giving truths of God’s Word to the needs of your teenager and his/her world.

**Second, read what they read, watch what they watch, and listen to what they listen to.** Because of its pervasiveness, media is now the most powerful shaper of the values, attitudes, and behaviors of teens. What media outlets are your teens engaging with, and what are they hearing/seeing/learning as they engage with those media outlets? You can only know by checking it out for yourself. By getting to know your teen’s media, you are getting to know your kids. Knowing their media will offer you great opportunities to discuss life in the light of God’s Word. You will be able to affirm what they are learning that conforms to God’s will and way, and challenge those things that don’t.

**Finally, spend time online perusing the growing number of resources that serve to open your eyes to the changing world of today’s teenagers.** Our Center for Parent/Youth Understanding website ([cpyu.org](http://cpyu.org)) is a valuable gateway into all things youth culture. The site is updated daily and is filled with helpful resources that deal with every conceivable type of youth culture pressure and reality.

Now that your kids are back to school, decide that you’re going to go back to school as well. If you become a serious student of your teen’s culture and you talk about that culture with your kids, your teens will find it easier to navigate the hallways of that culture in a manner that glorifies God. ✱

## Most Influential (Celebrity) Figures among Americans ages 13-18

A survey commissioned by  
**Variety**, July 2014  
\* note that the top 5 are all  
YouTube celebs!



1. **Smosh** (comedy duo consisting of Ian

Andrew Hecox and Anthony Padilla)

2. **The Fine Bros.** (comedy duo

consisting of Benny and Rafi Fine)

3. **PewDiePie** (YouTuber Felix Arvid Ulf

Kjellberg)

4. **KSI**

5. **Ryan Higa**

6. **Paul Walker**

7. **Jennifer Lawrence**

8. **Shane Dawson**

9. **Katy Perry**

10. **Steve Carell**



## QUICK STATS

Teenagers who get fewer than six hours of sleep a night are 20% more likely to be obese by the age of 21.

(Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health)

It will cost a middle-income couple an estimated \$245,000 to raise a child born in 2013 to the age of 18.

(U.S. Department of Agriculture)

## FROM THE NEWS:

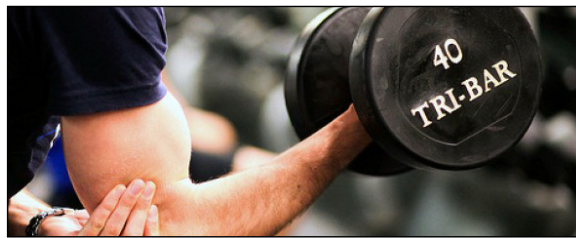
# COGNITIVE EFFECTS OF SMARTPHONES

The old cliché, time will tell, is one that we need to consider when we think about the possible dangers associated with our relatively new and growing use of technology.

Researchers are now working hard to discover if there are any health risks associated with the use of smartphones. A new study of teenagers is being launched to discover if smartphones can lead to long term cognitive effects that impact language development skills, memory capability, and the ability to maintain focus on the tasks at hand. Anecdotal evidence and simple observation points to the fact that people of all ages are being affected by smartphone use. The presence of what's now known as Continuous Partial Attention is due to the fact that we are so preoccupied with our phones that we never pay full attention to the things that are happening right around us! Parents, good and Godly stewardship of technology requires us to set borders, boundaries, and limits for ourselves and our kids!

TRENDS:  
TEENS AND HGH

New research from the Partnership for Drug-Free Kids (drugfree.org) has found that among teenagers in grades 9-12, there has been a doubling of the reported lifetime use of synthetic HGH, from five percent in 2012 to 11 percent in 2013. The research indicates that African-American and Hispanic teens are more likely to report the use of synthetic HGH, at rates of 15 percent and 13 percent respectively. The survey found that 9 percent of Caucasian teens have used synthetic HGH. Overall, 12 percent of the male teen population and 9 percent of the female teen population report use. In recent years a large, growing, and unregulated over-the-counter and through-the-Internet synthetic HGH business has been answering a growing demand among teenagers and adults looking to improve their athletic performance and/or outward appearance. This dramatic jump in use should serve as a wake-up call to parents, educators, and youth workers as we endeavor to provide a unified front to protect our vulnerable and impressionable kids from harm, while providing for their well-being.

LATEST RESEARCH:  
PORNOGRAPHY USE

One of the greatest threats to our spiritual, physical, and relational well-being is pornography. Researchers tell us that 70 percent of our boys and 23 percent of our girls have spent more than 30

consecutive minutes looking at online pornography on at least one occasion. 35 percent of our boys have done this on more than 10 occasions. And 14 percent of our girls have spent more than 30 consecutive

minutes looking at online pornography on more than one occasion. Parents, not only is pornography pervasive in today's culture, but your sexually developing and curious kids *will* one day encounter porn. And if they don't find it, it will find them. It's not a matter of *if*, but *when*. Take a proactive and preventive approach by sitting down and talking with your children about pornography, the way that it distorts God's good and wonderful gift of sexuality, and the harm that it causes.

Sex is no longer clearly defined. I was reminded of this truth this past summer as I read an article in *Vanity Fair* about Monica Lewinsky and the scandal that rocked a presidency. Ever since that moment when our president 'did not have sexual relations with that woman' we have been fumbling to give clear definition to the act.

According to a 2007 survey of undergraduate college students, fewer than one in five thought oral sex counted as having sex. This attitude toward oral sex represents a dramatic shift in thinking since 1991, when a similar survey found that nearly twice as many young adults (about 40%) would classify it as sex.

Sharing God's design for sex is challenging. Today's culture has all but forgotten the traditional values of yesterday. Culture is teaching our children and teens that sex is whatever they want to make it. That is why it is important to speak clearly to our children when we talk about sex. If not, then the world will do it for us.



**SEXUAL INTEGRITY  
INITIATIVE**  
A resource of CPYU and Project Six19

## Defining Sex

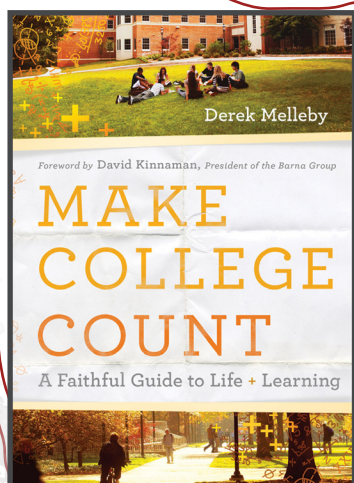
by Jason Soucinek



Want more information about your kids and their world? Visit us on the web at [WWW.CPYU.ORG](http://WWW.CPYU.ORG) or scan the code below with a smartphone to subscribe to our free weekly e-Update!



Available in the  
CPYU Resource Center at  
[www.cpyuresourcecenter.org](http://www.cpyuresourcecenter.org).



## FROM THE WORD

We all struggle with sin. It is a fact of life in a broken and fallen world. We may know what is right and try with all our effort to do what is right, but still find ourselves giving in.

The apostle Paul admitted his personal struggle with sinful inclinations: “I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. . . . I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. . . . What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?” (Romans 7:15, 18, 24). No doubt Paul would include in this struggle the moral dilemma between deciding to do what everyone else is doing and deciding to do what God says is right and true.

In Matthew 7:13-14, Jesus describes the spiritual struggle of choosing who or what we will follow in life. He calls us to make the right choice as we stand at a fork in the road. On one side sits a wide gate that opens onto a broad road. Those who look through the gate will see that the path beyond is wide and well-worn from the number of people who have gone down it. In fact, many can be seen walking that way. But this is the path that leads to death. On the other side is a narrow gate that opens onto a small trail. Maybe we see nobody going down that path, but Jesus commands his listeners to take this latter path. Even though fewer travel it, he says it is the path that leads to life.

While we need to recognize that both we and our children will make many mistakes and poor choices, we must at the same time pursue and point to the direction of Paul’s answer to this universal tendency to give in to our sinful nature. Paul ends the description of his personal struggle with sin on a victorious note about the way out: “Thanks be to God - through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 7:25).

**“WHAT A WRETCHED MAN I AM!  
WHO WILL RESCUE ME FROM  
THIS BODY OF DEATH? THANKS  
BE TO GOD – THROUGH JESUS  
CHRIST OUR LORD!”  
ROMANS 7:24-25**

## HELPFUL RESOURCE ←

Help your college-bound teenager discover the way to true success at college—and beyond. There’s more to college than classes, credits, and a nonstop social life. It’s more than getting a degree to improve your job prospects. College is a time where you develop into the person you will be for the rest of your life. Written by Derek Melleby, CPYU’s Associate Staff for College Transition, *Make College Count: A Faithful Guide to Life and Learning* will help your teen make the most of their time in college. It encourages them to ask the big questions, like “Why am I going to college?”, “What kind of person do I want to be?”, “How do I want my life to influence others?”, “With whom will I surround myself?”, and “What do I believe?”

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PHONE: (717) 361-8429 FAX: (717) 361-8964 EMAIL: [CPYU@CPYU.ORG](mailto:CPYU@CPYU.ORG)  
PO BOX 414, ELIZABETHTOWN, PA 17022 | [WWW.CPYU.ORG](http://WWW.CPYU.ORG)