

UPCOMING EVENTS

North America

[Winter Conference 08](#)
4-6 January, Columbus, OH.

Europe

[Kairos Weekend](#)
28-30 March, Szczyrk, Poland

South Pacific

[Summer Oasis Extreme](#)
January 6-10,
Christchurch, New Zealand

Ibero-America

[Verano en Mission](#)
Jan 3 – Feb 12
San Jose, Costa Rica

Asia

[CYA National Youth Festival](#)
April 3-6, 2008
Malaybalay, Bukidnon

WHEN YOU'RE HOT YOU'RE HOT!

Youth culture is hot. It is very attractive, highly seductive, extremely compelling and often — false. Much of Christianity is lukewarm. It is unenthusiastic, bland, boring, but true. Which is winning the battle for youth?

I decided I wanted to do youth work when I was seventeen. I was part of a youth group led by excellent staff. I wanted to be like them. I was attracted to their commitment to excellence.

EXCELLENCE

Excellence means "something of heaven's very essence." The word has three parts: *ex* = out

of, *cel or ciel* = heaven, and *ence* = essence. In Greek, the word means inexpressible. When you run into real excellence you say: WOW! Or nothing at all.

The call to excellence in working with youth exists for three good reasons: for our sake, for their sake and for God's sake.

FOR OUR SAKE

Excellence is its own reward. No one is proud of sloppy, ineffective, half-hearted work. We are made in the likeness of God. Look at his work. He was humble in calling it good. He has put the desire for excellence in our nature as well.

FOR THEIR SAKE

Our goal must be to bring youth to lead a more excellent Christian life than we do. Our commitment to that makes a difference! Here, "good enough" just isn't *good* enough! We must not run just a good, but an excellent program.

- ✦ Talks that make it seem as if the Lord himself were there
- ✦ Worship that opens to doors to heaven
- ✦ Games and activities that are fun, compelling and educational.

FOR GOD'S SAKE

In Matthew 25:14-21 Jesus gives us a goal: use your talents so that when you enter judgment you will hear: "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your master." What makes your heavenly master rejoice – the excellent use of your talents.

The challenge of passing on the faith to the next generation has never been more difficult, nor more important.

We, as parents or youth workers, are in critical roles particularly in this age of the church. Dedication to excellence is a necessary starting point for us.

BIGTEN

1963

1. Talking in class
2. Boys fighting on the school grounds
3. Wearing skirts "above the knee"
4. Chewing gum in class
5. Throwing food in the lunchroom
6. Tardiness
7. Lying about the status of an assignment
8. Cheating on tests
9. Smoking on the school's campus
10. Teen-age pregnancy

2008

1. Text messaging during class
2. Students carrying weapons
3. Electronic pornography on school computers
4. Drug dealing on the school's campus
5. Cutting, anorexia and bulimia
6. Suicide
7. Physical threats toward teachers by parents
8. School Massacre Anxiety: are we next?
9. Arson
10. Teacher/student sex

CHANGES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS CHALLENGES

Lies & more lies & statistics

Second Life

- ✚ SecondLife has over 11 million "citizens." That's larger (virtually) than London.
- ✚ Reuters News Agency has assigned a Bureau Chief to cover SecondLife.
- ✚ The average age on SecondLife is 32.
- ✚ The number of Americans who have *no one* they can talk with about serious matters doubled from 11% in 1985 to 24% in 2005. One of every four people!

ONE SHOULD NOT
WORRY ABOUT THE FUTURE,
PARTICULARLY IF IT HASN'T
HAPPENED YET.

- MEL GIBSON

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TO THE POINT!

Last month a woman sued her husband for divorce due to adultery. He had been married for the last two years to someone else – someone he had never met. His second wife was on SecondLife! He was spending 10 hours per day "with" her. Welcome to the world of virtual reality.

WHAT IS SECONDLIFE?

Think of MySpace cubed. MySpace allows me to profile myself on-line for the world to see. In SecondLife I create a new identity through which I lead a second life. I create my name and choose my body. I then buy my skin color, physique enhancers and clothes. Then I get myself a voice... and some dance moves. Now I can walk, talk and order a

virtual beer sitting at a virtual bar talking to my virtual friends. I am living my life "in-world."

I spend real money buying fake flowers for a virtual girlfriend who is actually a 35 year-old, twice-divorced man in real life.

My virtual community is set up by me. It's exciting, convenient, self-affirming, narcissistic, fast-paced. I have it *my way* – my songs, my friends, my shows, my values. It's a Burger King heaven as sung by Frank Sinatra. I can leave it when I want and change it how I want.

Imagine a church where you pick the leaders, the songs, the preacher and the topic. That's also already available to Christians in-world. Now all you need is a push-button God to answer your prayers.



"IT'S LIFE, JIM, BUT
NOT AS WE KNOW IT!"
- DR. MCCOY (STAR TREK)

VOCABULARY

In-world: living in a virtual community on line
The Matrix: a film that portrayed life in the future where the only reality for most people was virtual.

SecondLife, due to its complexity, appeals to the twenty-plus age group, but everything just said about SecondLife exists *for six- to fourteen-year-olds* at Club Penguin in a simplified form. Club Penguin looks cute. It averages 500,000 children on-line per day. Many are future SecondLifers.

E-marketer predicts that *53% of children* will be in-world by 2011 – in three years. Why? Barbie, Nickelodeon, the Cartoon Network and Bratz have all just launched virtual worlds for children. Lego and Ty Girls are about to and McDonalds can't be far behind. Think of their combined impact on the world of six to eleven year olds and shudder!

Youth face increasing pressure to live in-world at an ever younger age. Slowly, the real world is left behind: the world of church and chores, pimples and parents, siblings and sinners, to be replaced with the iPod, cell phone, X-box, and MySpace. Life is lived more and more "inside the Matrix." Young people today are handling technological dynamite at the age their parents played with matches.

TO THE POINT

Parents, keep your kids in the real world. Delay their connecting to the virtual world and its portals until you know they can handle it. Give them a great experience of FirstLife instead.

Oh, and who owns Club Penguin? Disney!
"It's Disney, Jim, but not as we knew it."