



## Facing Facebook

Facebook is a popular internet site where users create their own web pages (their profile) with their personal information: pictures, favorite things, videos, e-mail addresses and lists of facebook friends. Friends can view each other's pages.

Facebook also notifies you if one of your friends does anything on Facebook, like uploading a video, tagging a photograph in which you appear, inviting you to an event or to join an online club. You can find old classmates, post a note to your friend in Belfast, watch your brother's funny video, or see the pictures from last summer's party.

### The Down Side of Facebook

Most technology de-humanizes us. Time that used to be spent face to face is now often spent on Facebook. Improvements



in its friend notification system, ease of use, games, and web utilities results in more face-time spent in Facebook.

The study, *Never Ending Friending*, says 37% of users spent seven or more hours per week on Myspace.

### Facebook vs Myspace

Click the above title for a video that compares them. Myspace is more about brands, bands and glitter with more videos, music, games and links. Facebook is more about my news and friends.

### The Up Side of Facebook

But technology does collapse geography and facilitates communication. Using Facebook, Kairos youth from all over North America maintain regional friendships, invite classmates to retreats and share about their faith. Many of our university groups use Facebook as the main means of keeping people informed and in touch. [Eighty-two percent](#) of college students use Facebook.

### Using Facebook

As cell phones, text messaging and social web sites become the primary modes of maintaining friendships among youth, we need to know how to use them well. Few of us want to drop all technology. (Are you reading this on-screen?)

Youth workers can make use of Facebook. They can see the profiles of those in their youth group. They can keep informed about the challenges and temptations youth are facing, what music they are listening to and whom they admire. Facebook can give a surprisingly honest picture of someone's life. If parents help their children get on Facebook at just the right time, they will start as Facebook friends. That will help parents stay in touch with their children's world.

Mastering new communications media has become a basic parenting skill.

~ James Munk



### GANGSTERS ONLINE

The hottest Facebook application among Hong Kong teens, with more than 200,000 downloads, is the new game, *Gangsters Online*. In the game you save up money to buy weapons to commit robberies. You save money by selling pirated DVDs, laundering money or engaging in other criminal activities. You gain bargaining power by recruiting your friends to become new *Gangsters Online* members.

"My money will be robbed if I am not online. That is why I rush home after class. I need to protect my properties. It's great! In this virtual world I can buy beer and an AK-47!" Sam, a 19-year-old student said.

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### THIRTY TERMS YOU DIDN'T SEE IN 1999

- Google
- Facebook
- Carbon footprint
- Beer pong
- Islamophobia
- Skype
- Wii
- 411
- i-Pod, i-Tunes
- Bailout
- Youtube
- MySpace
- Bling bling
- Ringtone
- Spyware
- Blackberry thumb
- Blog
- Podcast
- Wikipedia
- Phishing
- Terabyte
- Sexting
- Hybrid car
- Anime
- Emoticon
- Ginormous
- Mall rats
- Snailmail
- Smackdown
- Wi-fi

## The Hope That Does Not Disappoint

Faced by today's unceasing new challenges in raising children parents can hardly be blamed for responding with fear or collapsing in despair. Unfortunately, fear and despair are the wrong responses. Faith and hope are needed instead. The KYCN recently interviewed Dave Touhill, the leader of the People of Hope Community, on the subject of hope.

### ***KYCN: How does hope differ from optimism?***

**Dave T:** Hope is based on a sure thing, on the pledge of someone we can rely on, who always has our best in mind. It's based on Jesus Christ. Optimism is just a pleasant disposition. It may not even reflect reality. I can be optimistic about Michigan beating Ohio State.

### ***KYCN: Why is hope important as a parent?***

All parents, even the worst ones, want the best for their children. Unfortunately, in spite of our best efforts, our children can make bad choices. If a child decides not to follow the Lord or to live an immoral life, it can be devastating to a parent. It can seem hopeless. Yet, it's at exactly these moments that we need hope. Real hope! Hope that the Lord has not forgotten our kids or our prayers. Hope reminds us that the Lord's love for our children far exceeds our own,

that He has not abandoned them, that he will do everything to win them back and that he will never dismiss our prayers for them. This hope doesn't fail.

### ***KYCN: What most undermines a parent's hope?***

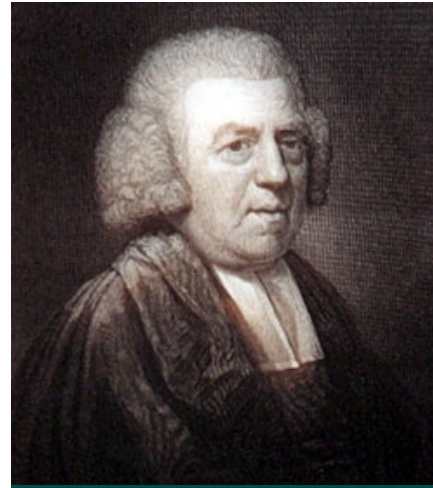
Unrealistic expectations can douse our hope. Things like, "My kids are going to be perfect and never fail!" Even some seemingly realistic dreams like, "They will do better than I did," can disappoint. False, high expectations can easily lead us to discouragement, to not praying, to becoming critical and thus to losing hope. It's a downward spiral.

Low expectations are also a problem. Setting the standards too low is often a sign that hope has already been abandoned. Our standards should be where the Lord wants them and that means challenging our kids to achieving their full potential in Christ.

And we must never underestimate the power of the spiritual battle our children face. It certainly isn't easier now than thirty years ago. Still, we mustn't fear. Fear is just as crippling. The battle can be won. Just don't underestimate it.

### ***KYCN: How can parents guard their hope?***

All Christians, sinners and saints, have some good and bad chapters



John Newton was a wayward son and a slave ship captain. He got converted, became an Anglican Priest and wrote the hymn *Amazing Grace*

in their lives. Look at Peter, Paul, Francis or John Newton. If we caught them at the wrong time in their life, we would have written them off as cowards, murderers, cheats or liars. But the Lord rescued them. Also, remember your own life. Look how merciful Christ has been to you, how he never abandoned you. Shouldn't we hope for as much for our kids?

Let's not pronounce any final grades on our kids when they're 16 or 18 or 25. Thank God I didn't get my final grade at that age.

### Famous later life Hollywood converts

John Wayne	Susan Hayward
W.C. Fields	Loretta Young
Bob Hope	Jane Fonda
Gary Cooper	Jane Wyman
Vincent Price	Faye Dunaway

## Lies & more lies & statistics

The [Josephson Institute](#) found that among 30,000 high school students surveyed in the USA 98% said it is important to them to be a person of high character. And 93% said they were. Of those, in the last year:

- 83% lied to their parents in a significant matter
- 37% lied to a teacher
- 64% cheated on a test
- 62% copied homework
- 30% stole from a store
- One in four said they lied at least once in this survey
- Overall, character values had worsened by 4% in the two years since the last survey.

- Facebook has tripled its mobile users [in the past year](#).
- A [third](#) of young adults 20-26 and 20% of teens say they've sent or posted naked or semi-naked photos or videos of themselves, mostly to be "fun or flirtatious".

I expected times like this, but I never thought they'd be so bad, so long and so frequent.

- Ashleigh Brilliant

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