

On Friday night at our recent retreat for 235 high schoolers our staff were told that with a group as big as ours, it is statistically determinate that some of those present will be dealing with drug addiction, unwanted pregnancy, self-abuse or worse. Our youth are not immune to the sins of this world. This left me a bit uncomfortable.

I had just dismissed the youth to their small groups after leading them using skits, goofy football cheers, singing and icebreakers. How is *that* supposed to help a kid who's contemplating suicide? I know our worship, small groups and cheesy antics can help the average Christian kid; looking back, it certainly helped me, but what about a kid struggling with homosexual temptation or whose parents are getting divorced? Can Bible stories, games and jokes really help them?

Later that night, I felt the Lord convicting me. The reason we do what we do is because it works... period. The Lord uses what we are doing in Kairos to redeem lives. We don't need to look for something different; rather, we need to persevere in what we do... and do it better. We need even better worship; more creative media, more compassionate small groups, and more compelling presentation of the gospel of the Lord. He is changing lives, and using our humble offerings to do so.

~ James Munk

PASSING ON THE FAITH

Oxford University Press has updated its children's dictionary. Among others, the following words have been removed:

abbey
aisle
altar
bishop
chapel
christen
devil
disciple
manger
minister
monastery
monk
monarch
nun
parish
pew
psalm
pulpit
saint
sin
vicar



Westminster Abbey was a Benedictine monastery. The British monarch is crowned by a bishop on a stone kept in the Chapel of Saint Edward. (Unfortunately, children won't be able to understand this by looking up words in the *Oxford Junior Dictionary* anymore.)

What words have been added to replace them? Most of the new words are from the world of technology:

analogue
attachment
biodegradable
blog
broadband
bullet point
Celebrity
chatroom
classify
conflict
creep
cut and paste
database
endangered
export
interdependent
MP3 player
negotiate
tolerant
vandalism
voicemail

In 1950 fully [67.2%](#) of English children were christened as infants in the Church of England alone. By 1970 this figure had dropped to 47.5%. In 2005 only [15%](#) of infants were christened. When it comes to faith, most of the western world is not passing it on. It is passing on it.

YES, WE BELIEVE!

Do you believe:

- ✓ Absolute moral truth exists
- ✓ The Bible is true in the principles it teaches
- ✓ Satan really exists, he is not just symbolic
- ✓ "Doing good to others" will not be enough to get you to heaven
- ✓ Jesus Christ lived a sinless life on earth
- ✓ God is the all-knowing, all-powerful being who rules the universe.

What percent of American adults believe *all* the above statements are true?

1% 9% 27% 40%

How about among youth aged 18-23? What percent believe all six of these statements of faith?

1% 9% 27% 40%

Americans overwhelmingly believe in God. Most polls put the number of believers at 85% or more. Less than half of the believers believe enough to show up in church on Sunday. (40% of Americans go to church weekly, this has been the case for nearly 200 years.)



The Cyrus family leaving church

The change that is happening is not in church attendance. It is in what the churchgoers believe and how they behave.

BELIEVE WHAT?

If you believe the six statements above are true, you are among the 9% of Americans who do, at least according to a study done by the [Barna Group](#). Among American youth the results are far worse. Less than 1% believe them all.

BEHAVE HOW?

On moral issues there is a similar decline among the young. Particularly noteworthy is what is going on among young, committed Christians. Regular church-goers under 30 are twice as likely as those over 40 to approve of

abortion, the use of illegal drugs, pornography, sexual fantasy, same-sex marriage and adultery. They are also twice as likely to lie, to use profanity in public, to seek revenge, to steal, to abuse someone physically or to fight. Their views closely resemble those of their peer group, not those of their elder Christians.

NOW WHAT?

We live in a post-Christian world. Many of those who would say they are Christian do not believe even basic Christian doctrine nor do they accept the basic morality of the Christian faith. And the situation is getting worse among youth.

One temptation is to surrender, to throw up our hands and say it is hopeless. There is another option and that is to recognize that we have been put here by the Lord at exactly this time because he intends for us to make a difference. Our call and the call on our youth is for exactly this age and exactly these times. We are here for a purpose, and part of that purpose is to believe the truth and stand for it in an age of unbelief and apostasy. Like Esther, we were born "for such a time as this!"



YES, WE BELIEVE!

The high school youth who attended the Y.E.S. retreat in March took part in a poll where they were asked about the same six issues the Barna Group raised in its study.

What percent of our youth gave the correct answers to all six questions?

1% 9% 27% 40%

It would appear that Kairos parents and youth workers are doing something right. Among the youth at the Y.E.S. retreat 86% gave the correct answers to *all six* questions.

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