

GOAL – HELPING OUR YOUTH NAVIGATE TODAY’S CULTURE

Important dates in popular culture:

1939 – TV introduced at the World’s Fair in New York – by 1960 there were 54 million sets in America – by 1995, 99% of American homes had at least 1 TV, almost 7 of 10 teenagers have a TV in their bedrooms

September, 1972 – The video game Pong first introduced by developers in a local bar – in 2005 the video game industry was a \$25 billion a year industry – perhaps more relevant is the release of Angry Birds in December of 2009 – somewhere around 300 million downloads since then

February 2004 – Facebook website was launched – 1983 only 7% of American households had a computer, in 2005 86% of 8-18 year olds lived in a home with at least 1 computer, 98% of young people have used a computer with 96% going online

August 1, 1981 – 12:01am – MTV came on the air with the music video “video killed the radio star” by the Buggles – early on MTV reached 1.5 million homes, now they reach somewhere around 500 million homes

June 29, 2007 – first generation iPhone released – 5th generation is expected to be released later this year – in 2010 91% of Americans were using cell phones

June 30, 1997 – “Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone” was published in London – released in the US in 1998 as “Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone” – Somewhere around 450 million copies of the book series have been sold – 73% of youth 8-18 report reading for pleasure on an average day

October 1927 – The first ‘talkie’ (feature film with words) *The Jazz Singer* was released – in 2010 some 891 feature films were released worldwide grossing well over \$10 billion – moviegoers ages 12-29 make up 57% of all ticket sales – Netflix has over 25 million subscribers in North America – Redbox has 27000 locations and are within a 5 minute drive of 60% of US population

August 29, 2004 – My son Sam was born – he turns 7 this year – he knows how to start a DVD, call something up on Netflix, get online, play Angry Birds on a iPod or cell phone...what will life be like culture wise in 10 years when Sam turns 17?

Here’s the trick – youth culture influences every student differently, it is interpreted differently, it affects them differently, and generalizations don’t work!

Biblical guidelines – these are some important guiding texts for our relationship with culture and the world around us. Study them and become familiar with them and what they can teach us.

- John 17

- Matthew 5

- Acts 17

Our goal is to help our youth navigate today's culture. In order for us to do that there are 2 important things for us to know:

- 1 – It is important for us to know God's word
- 2 – It is important for us to know today's youth culture

6 important guidelines as we begin to understand youth and their culture (adapted from Walt Mueller *Youth Culture 101*):

Guideline #1 – Focus on the Message, not the Delivery System

The delivery system for popular culture is neutral, it is the message that the delivery system carries that needs to be evaluated.

Guideline #2 – Teach Teenagers to Evaluate Through a Biblical Worldview

Evaluation from a Biblical world and life view is very important

- DISCOVER
Learn everything there is to know about the piece of culture you are trying to understand
- DISCERN
Evaluate its message from a biblical worldview
- DECIDE
Does it have value and should it be 'partaken of'

Guideline #3 – Generalizations and Extremes are Never Helpful

They usually lead to abuse, ignorance or avoidance and they don't help the communication process that is so important between teens and adults.

Guideline #4 – Examine Yourself

Know your own spiritual maturity and your own cultural habits.

Guideline #5 – Take the Initiative and Educate Yourself

Listen and watch with your students and initiate conversations about popular culture

Guideline #6 – Have Patience and Commit

This is not an overnight process and mistakes will be made. Keep at it and become a student of youth culture.