

The Christian Attack Culture Is Alive and Not So Well

There's no question that the Internet has brought Christianity many wonderful things. Today we have online education available to virtually everyone, social media that encourages people to support great causes, and online communication tools that allow us to connect from the four corners of the earth. But it's also created something I believe is tearing at the very fabric of our faith. It's created *a culture of attack*.

Rarely does a day go by that Christian news sites, social media streams and other web platforms feature some Christian "correcting" another Christian—and calling them out by name. It can range from arguments over worship music, to theological squabbles, to disagreements over ministry styles, to charges of outright heresy, and the barrage of criticism has grown exponentially. While there are qualified theologians, pastors and other leaders we should respect and listen to, there's also a tsunami of armchair theologians, angry ex-church members and wannabes who are convinced their criticism du jour needs to be shared.

Aside from feeling comfortable "correcting" a brother or sister publicly when we've never met the person, or know little about the background of what we're criticizing, a significant culprit is the technology itself. With 24/7 news, and a constant barrage of blogs and social media, the Internet is bombarding us with information overload, and what may be worse is the ease of responding. As soon as we read something we don't like, all it takes is a click to send an angry reply, post a heated comment or write an op-ed piece.

I'm as guilty as anyone, and it's taken me a long time to learn to not react immediately just because I can.

The Internet has given us the illusion of intimacy. We read someone's books, articles or sermons, or we watch their videos online, and we feel we know them, so why not share what we think is wrong? But that illusion of intimacy is just that—an illusion. It distracts us from the important principle of reaching out to them personally first, and making the sometimes difficult effort of keeping it private and saving the relationship.

But then again, it's just too easy to rip them open online in front of everyone and be done with it.

The Internet is a powerful tool, and if we use it wisely, it can have a dramatic impact on helping us inspire and motivate this generation of believers to share the message of the cross with this culture. But the choice is ours. We can use it to build up, or use it to tear down.

Writer Jason Morehead put it this way: "The same questions should be considered by us all: Are we using the powerful, disruptive technology at our own fingertips to encourage, to think critically and compassionately, to spread shalom and create a 'meaningful society'? Or are we using it to sow seeds of discord and hatred, spread vitriol and thoughtlessness, and give license to our own pride and avarice?"

That's a pretty good question...

Phil Cooke is a media consultant focused mainly on the Christian market, as well as a vocal critic of contemporary American and American-influenced Christian culture. [Click here to visit his website.](#)

Unless otherwise specified, the opinions expressed are solely the author's and do not necessarily reflect the views of Charisma Media.