

Campaign Calls on Dads to Digitally Disconnect

✖ Christian media maven Phil Cooke is making a bold directive this Father's Day: unplug, disconnect and otherwise shut off all of your digital devices.

Cooke wants dads to disconnect mobile phones, iPads and computers on Father's Day for a good reason—to reconnect with their families eyeball to eyeball.

The Spirit-inspired campaign is gaining traction even in the secular media, with spots on Fox News, *The Huffington Post*, *Wired* magazine and a variety of parenting blogs and websites, picking up the story.

“As Christians, we should be taking the lead when it comes to understanding how we intersect with our digital devices,” says Cooke, co-founder with his wife, Kathleen, of Cooke Pictures in Burbank, Calif. He's also a founding partner in the commercial production company TWC Films.

“Community is about face-to-face contact. Certainly, using the phone and email to keep in touch with family and friends is good,” Cooke told Charisma News. “But when it comes to the spiritual world, nothing takes the place of looking someone in the eye and having an intimate conversation.”

Cooke was inspired to launch the campaign at a dinner with five megachurch pastors last summer. Each one of these pastors have churches with 5,000-plus members. Each one is a best-selling Christian author. Each one is an innovative thinker.

“We decided to go to a really nice restaurant. As we are eating, I noticed one of the pastors could not put his BlackBerry down,” Cooke recalls. “He literally had a fork in one hand and his BlackBerry in the other hand the entire

evening. He was ignoring real life face-to-face contact with some brilliant guys.”

Although Cooke loves his iPhone, iPad and Mac, he says there is a dark side to the digital revolution. Cooke points to study after study that proves the point, including research out of South Korea that links teenage cellphone use to depression, and a report that reveals the average American professional spends 40 percent of their day dealing with email.

“We need to take a real serious look at how much technology is impacting our lives,” Cooke urges. “We should take a Sabbath from our digital devices every once in a while.”