

# How to Save a Teen

You've read the reports about teenagers leaving the faith in droves. Despite the blood, sweat and tears of many youth pastors, a study from Britt Beemer, a former senior research analyst for the Heritage Foundation, reveals a disturbing trend: As many as two-thirds of young people in evangelical churches will leave when they enter their 20s.

These and other studies sounded an alarm in the body of Christ—and a new breed of youth ministries is rising to the occasion to stop the enemy from stealing, killing and destroying not only church kids but also unchurched kids in need of a Savior.

Randal Lee is among those setting out to ignite a passion for Jesus in American youth. The 20-year-old minister has been on the "Stand Up and Stand Out" tour with music artist Leah Faith since January. Lee is known for using visuals—such as a Pizza Hut delivery car light or a can of Coke—to get Christians thinking about what they are proclaiming to the world with their lifestyle.

"My vision is to encourage other teens to be world changers in their communities and wherever they go in life to always be a light for Christ in this darkened world," says Lee, who first sensed a call into ministry at age 12. "It's OK to be excited about God. It's OK to be different. It's OK to be all that God has called you to be."

While Lee is preaching the gospel on tour, Ron Hutchcraft Ministries is taking a different tack. Hutchcraft uses comedic shorts and video blogs to connect with young adults. He reports bringing 11,000 youth from 48 countries to Christ through the multimedia effort.

Hutchcraft's latest effort is *The Doug & Jon Show*, a Web-based show that offers teens a place to laugh, connect, share and go

deeper. The site features light-hearted, quirky videos and cartoon shorts based on the latest pop-culture trends, as well as a Life Video Blog section that touches on serious issues young people face, such as popularity, loneliness, bullying and sex.

“It is amazing at how young an age people can throw their lives away. These days they face so many heartbreaking problems tied in to family, school and peer expectations,” says Doug Hutchcraft, site personality and co-founder of the show. “Our goal with is to provide a refuge for them, a place where they can laugh and be entertained or discuss tough issues—or even choose to hear the hope only Jesus can offer.”

*The Doug & Jon Show* aims to fill a void of “clean” teen-oriented comedy websites. Visitors may not immediately recognize the Christian aspect of the site personalities. Doug, Jon and Kara Taylor, who offers a female perspective, focus on connecting with teens in a real way—creating relationship and trust—before discussing Christ.

After a relationship is established, the trio encourages teens to check out the “God” section of the site, under which each personality shares honestly about their Christian faith in a straightforward but nonreligious-sounding way, offering teens the opportunity to make a salvation decision.

## **Quotable**

“God, can you just raise us all up? Make us a whole new generation that sees the foolishness of a consumer-driven church. This is about us suffering for the sake of Christ and making disciples ourselves, not just hoping that our pastor would lead them to the Lord and our pastor would disciple them.”

—**FRANCIS CHAN**, speaking to students at a Passion conference last month after meeting with persecuted believers in India and China. The founding pastor of Cornerstone Church in Simi

Valley, California, recently left his megachurch and traveled throughout Asia to “disappear for a while. ...

I heard these stories all my life and I got to meet some of these people. I just wanted to see if this is for real.”