

Saving Our Teens

How much time and energy are we willing to spend to evangelize our youth?

In several weeks, “Back to School” sales will pop up nearly everywhere indicating the start of a new school year. Teachers and coaches will be gearing up for classes, and local youth pastors will be busy preparing innovative activities. But they won’t be the only ones getting ready for the upcoming season.

The rock ‘n’ roll and hip-hop music industries have been thinking about our kids 24/7. Teens are already memorizing popular lyrics that teach them to belittle women and solve their problems with violence, drugs and sex. MTV will be working to increase its market share of our young people by squeezing as much alluring, provocative content into its shows as possible.

The movie industry is hard at work, too, constantly pumping out new films that will educate teenagers in what is right and wrong, true and untrue. This year, just like last year, the entertainment industry is seeking to shape the value systems of our children.

The creators of pop culture are trying to make as much money as possible while stealing our young people’s innocence. It’s time for the church to focus on protecting teenagers from these destructive influences and for pastors, lay people and youth pastors to work together to spotlight our kids.

There are more teenagers now than ever before in the history of America. At the current rate of evangelism, only 4 percent will be Bible-believing Christians—compared with 65 percent of

the World War II generation. Think about that for a moment: In one lifetime, we have gone from 65 percent believers to 4 percent. What does that say about America's future?

The secular media devotes a great deal of energy into making money off our kids. How much time and energy are we willing to spend on dramatically increasing the 4 percent?

In The Battle Cry column, you will receive information on the state of this generation, including practical tips to help you reach the young people in your community. To kick things off, I am pleased to announce a monumental opportunity in the fight for our youth.

Denominational leaders from all over the country agree that teen issues deserve our utmost attention. That is why the National Association of Evangelicals has chosen September as the first ever National Youth Awareness Month. They have provided numerous resources to help you plan next month's activities, including sermon outlines, PowerPoint presentations, video clips and more (log on at).

Use every Sunday next month to show your young people how special they are. The third Sunday of September is National Youth Sunday, a perfect opportunity to invite every family and teen in your community to a creative and interactive service. Join the movement as churches across America come together during this historic time.

This battle is too important to fight alone or unprepared. That is why the BattleCry movement is also proud to present Wake Up Call, a leadership summit for senior pastors. Jack Hayford, Tommy

Barnett, Ted Haggard and other national leaders fully committed to reaching young people are coming together for this unprecedented tour.

More than 20,000 pastors and church leaders are expected to gather in 43 cities across the country to explore current teen issues and learn how to work together to change them. Tell the leaders in your church that they can't miss this high-level briefing on the state of this generation and what we must do to save it.

As we begin the new school year, let's strive to focus all our attention on the beliefs our young people will carry with them for the rest of their lives. Are we going to let the media and secular culture dominate their values for another year? Get your church involved in the National Youth Awareness Month. It's time to take this generation back!

Ron Luce founded Teen Mania in 1986. He and his wife, Katie, have seen more than 2 million youth attend events they host called Acquire the Fire, and they have sent more than 50,000 teens across the globe on mission trips. Ron and Katie live in Garden Valley, Texas, with their three children Hannah, Charity and Cameron.