

## A GLASS HALF FULL

Last month the KYCN asked its readers whether we are doing better or worse than we were in the past at reaching youth in America. When asked what you *see*, 39% said we are doing better, 42% said worse and 19% said about the same.

You only have to look at the top ten songs to see what most people see and are concerned about – the fact that the world is becoming more and more toxic.

### This week's Billboard top ten

- A song promoting alternative lifestyles
- A song about sex with an alien
- A song titled F\*\*k You
- Another entitled F\*\*kin Perfect
- A song about sadomasochism
- Another describing sodomy
- One song that uses the b, d, f, m, n, p and s words 29 times
- A song about getting revenge
- Oh, and two love songs

You are rightly concerned about the world's impact on youth. Oddly, toxicity has its up side.

When parents see how toxic the world has become, they are often

motivated to do a better job of raising their children. DANGER is written large.



Just as important, more youth are seeing the toxicity of the world and are dealing with it better as well (even though most don't).

One sign that more youth see the toxicity is the reduction of sexual activity before marriage. A recent study from the [Centers for Disease Control](#) notes that among 15 to 24 year olds, 28% had never had sexual contact with another person. In 2002, when the previous survey was conducted, only 22% had practiced such abstinence.

At least some people are waking up. **Chastity is increasing**, despite what most people would think, and despite the ridicule it receives in the media.

## OR FULLER!

As the Kairos Director in North America I see a glass that is more than half full and getting fuller. Even as the world is getting more toxic, I see youth workers who are convinced that today's youth can be won to lives of discipleship and who are going out of their way to make it happen. The recently held Kairos Y.E.S. Retreat (a.k.a. Youth Equipped to Stand) brought together 76 of those youth workers to serve 240 youth.



Molly Annala, a youth worker from St. Paul, Minnesota, and the new



John Karagoulis (Y.E.S. Director, 3<sup>rd</sup> from right) and some youth workers

women's director for the Y.E.S. Retreat, is one of those people. She notes: "During their adolescent years, youth do better when they connect to quality youth workers. Part of my job is training those youth workers.

"Another reason I think we are doing well is because we believe there are solutions to the problems youth face, such as pornography, video game addiction and the pervasive, post-modern view of morality. We just aren't giving up. There is an aggressive battle for the souls of youth, but I see no reason not to think it possible to help our youth face those challenges and win."

## Signs of Hope

Some of the most significant signs of hope can be seen among the youth who attended last weekend's 16<sup>th</sup> Kairos Youth Equipped to Stand (Y.E.S.) Retreat.

The youth who attended were surveyed on a number of markers to determine how well they know and live their faith. The markers were related to the three foundations of Christianity as reported in the KYCN May 2010 edition: right belief (orthodoxy), right behavior (orthopraxis), and being in a living relationship with God. All three are necessary for the full Christian life. How did they do? Remarkably well!



### Right Belief

Y.E.S. youth hold the Bible to be the inspired Word of God (88%).

They also believe (97%) the devil exists and described sin (90%) as thinking or doing what you know is wrong (rather than feeling guilty or getting caught).

Two-thirds of American youth think all religions are pretty much the same. Only 3% of Y.E.S. youth believe they are.

When asked to describe the Incarnation 83% of Y.E.S. youth wrote a reasonably accurate description. (That's not easy for many Christian adults to do!)



Only 45% of Americans can correctly identify the four Gospels as Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

### Right Behavior

The battle to uphold chastity among youth can be won far more consistently than is happening at large – 93% of Y.E.S. youth (vs. 28% of American youth) said they had not had serious sexual contact (oral sex, intercourse, touching another's sexual parts) with another person. There are probably many reasons for that, but one certainly is teaching youth to wait to date.

A recent survey showed that 67% of youth begin serious sexual activity within three months of their first date.

When asked about lying and handling difficult moral situations 70% chose objective/traditional bases. The rest cited relativist/post modern bases for determining what they would do.

## Relationship with God

When Y.E.S. youth were asked about prayer, 96% claimed to do personal prayer (not including family prayer) every day. If you want a better marker – 61% said they averaged ten minutes or more per day.



Y.E.S. Retreat Worship

These signs of hope are just a few among many. It is possible to raise a new generation of disciples who know their faith, believe it, act according to it, and have a living relationship with the Lord Almighty. If ever the church needed such disciples it is now.

In the U.S. 25% of girls and 14% of boys have low self esteem. Among Y.E.S. participants low self esteem is far lower. Only 7% of the girls and 3% of the boys have low self esteem.

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