

CPYU PARENT PAGE

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"He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake."

- Psalm 23:3 (NIV)

SIGNPOSTS

BY WALT MUELLER, PRESIDENT, CPYU

TOP 10 ONLINE RETAIL BUSINESSES, 2008 (SOURCE: *Internet Retailer*)

1. Amazon.com Inc.
2. Staples Inc.
3. Dell Inc.
4. Office Depot Inc.
5. Apple Inc.
6. Office Max Inc.
7. Sears Holding Corp.
8. CDW Corp.
9. Newegg.com
10. Best Buy

YOUTH CULTURE HOT QUOTE

"I've always been enamored with language and words and having fun with them. Instead of teaching 25 kids in a classroom, you're doing it on a broader scale."

- Rapper Asher Roth talking about whether he regrets abandoning his goal to be an educator, *USAToday*, May 6, 2009

Adolescence is a period of life spent at the crossroads. It's a time marked by overwhelming change, numerous questions, and a search for answers. But the crossroads where they stand are anything but quiet and desolate. Not sure which direction to take, our children and teens are presented with an abundance of confusing options. The noise can be deafening. Perhaps the signposts they choose to follow are the ones that are most attractive, loud and convincing in response to their unspoken teenage cry of "Show me the way!" No matter where our kids position themselves at the crossroads, these signposts fill their field of vision and overload their senses with pointed and powerful persuasion, saying "This is the way!"

So what do we do? Do we just sit back and complain? Do we try to silence the signposts we don't like by taking an axe to their base? Perhaps the best approach is illustrated by something else I saw one afternoon in New York's Times Square. As I walked down the sidewalk I noticed a group of people - mostly young, but some old - set apart from the rest of the crowd by the jackets they wore. It looked like there were around 30 of them, all wearing bright yellow windbreakers. They stood out like sore thumbs. The logo and text printed on the back of their matching jackets identified them as a high school group from New Mexico. They were spending the afternoon visiting the crossroads of the world. The barrage of sights, sounds, and "signposts" was peppering them from every direction. As we got closer it was obvious that the group's adult chaperones had strategically placed themselves at the front, rear, and sides of the group. Like a group of border collies, they kept the teens herded together and moving on to their

intended destination. As I passed, I asked the chaperone bringing up the rear about his group and their trip. Then, before I walked on, I remarked, "I think the yellow jackets are a brilliant idea." His response was this: "They sure are! This way we can keep our eyes on them and they can keep their eyes on us. We know right where they are and they can see us. We don't want to lose any kids in a place like this." Perhaps our role is to serve as border collies and signposts.

It's easy for kids to get lost in the negative aspects of today's culture. They're standing at the crossroads deciding which way to go. As their parents, we've got to keep our eyes on them. We need to know right where they are. We must be aware of the signposts they are following. And, we should serve as signposts to show them the *right* way.

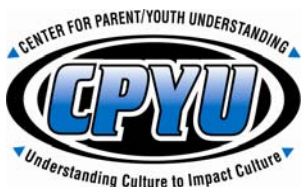
In his classic book on discipleship, *The Fight*, Dr. John White reminds us of our need to be more than just border collies. Instead, we should become signposts. White writes, "A signpost points to a destination. It matters little whether the signpost is pretty or ugly, old or new. It helps if the lettering is bold and clear. But the essential features are that it must point in the right direction and be clear about what it is pointing to."

The kids you and I know are standing confused at the crossroads. What signs do they see? Which direction are we pointing them to? Is it to the wide and well-traveled road that leads to destruction? Or is it down the narrow road that leads to life? Will we serve as signposts for truth - signposts so big and convincing - that we eclipse the signposts already there?

CPYU TREND ALERT: AXE BOMBS

Teenagers - particularly our boys - are prone to risk-taking behavior in today's world. The advent of the online video site YouTube has upped the ante by giving kids a place to share videos of their risk-taking behavior. Recently, a growing number of these videos show kids lighting up highly flammable bottles of Axe aerosol deodorant and body spray. Dozens of clips show kids

throwing cans of axe in burn buckets, thereby creating what they call "Axe bombs." Other videos show kids igniting the spray to produce foot-long flame-throwers. Not surprisingly, the popularity of these dangerous practices has led to several high profile cases of serious burns and destructive fires. Parents, be sure to warn your kids about the dangers.



LATEST RESEARCH: DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY

Do you remember your junior high years? Many of us have tried to forget them. While the normal developmental changes and pressures of teenage life combined in a mix that was difficult, most of us were able to weather those years with some resilience.

The teenage years are still difficult, but it seems that the level of difficulty has increased to the point where fewer and fewer kids get through adolescence without some deep and damaging hurt. New research from Columbia University reports that almost fifty percent of our teens

suffer from some form of depression, anxiety, or any number of other psychiatric disorders. The breakdown of the family, outrageous academic expectations, athletic pressures, and our society's emphasis on outward appearance have combined with other new pressures in a potent mix.

Are you contributing to your teen's difficulty through your unrealistic and ungodly expectations? Take stock and make changes where change is needed.



FROM THE WORD

If you grew up attending Sunday School as a child, you most likely memorized two of the most well-known Scripture passages. Every Sunday School child was able to recite John 3:16 from memory. Most also learned the comforting words of David in Psalm 23. The danger with these verses becoming so familiar is that we might forget just how edgy and earth-shattering they are.

Think for a minute about Psalm 23 and its imagery of shepherds and sheep. Unless you've traveled overseas, you might never have laid eyes on a shepherd. Shepherds lead, care for, and protect their sheep. They take them to pleasant places that sustain life. Shepherds lead their sheep into lush green pastures and to the banks of flowing streams where water for drinking is plentiful.

The Scriptures and this Psalm teach us that the

Lord is our shepherd. His guidance should be trusted as he takes us along "paths of righteousness." These paths are the places that lead to a journey full of life as it is intended to be lived and experienced. They are the right paths that get us where we need to be as redeemed followers of Christ who live the way and the will of the Good Shepherd. Thank God that he has not left us to our own devices to find our way through life. We must be grateful that the God of the universe shows us the way.

Likewise, we have a parental responsibility to serve as "under shepherds" who exert great time and energy in leading our kids onto these right paths. With so many other voices calling them to "come and follow," the example of our words and our footsteps are vital to our kids' spiritual growth. As we walk in paths of righteousness ourselves, we serve to encourage our kids to do the same.

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IN THE NEWS: ETHNIC HAZING ON CAMPUS

Those of you who have kids heading off to college need to go out of your way to help your kids experience their years of higher education in positive and God-honoring ways. The trials and temptations of college life are very real. Those kids who choose to pledge fraternities or sororities will face a unique set of challenges related to Greek life on campus. Traditionally, pledges have had to submit to a period of hazing. Much of that hazing is alcohol-based, with pledges consuming sometimes dangerous and even

deadly amounts of alcohol. Now, there are reports that the hazing is becoming increasingly physical, especially in the growing number of ethnic fraternities. Reports are surfacing of extreme and sometimes deadly physical hazing among Asian, Black, and Latino fraternities. Some experts believe that this trend is rooted in a desire to teach pledges to stick together, overcome racial barriers, and get stronger as a racial group. Parents, prepare your kids for a safe and God-glorifying college experience.

