



THE STATE — OF THE — YOUTH

SEPTEMBER 2023

412 LATELY

This summer has been an absolute blast in the 412 Student Ministry. We kicked off the summer with a grill-out, outdoor movie night, and many of the teenagers helped with our VBS. It makes me so happy to see teenagers giving their time and talents to serve the Lord. In July, we went to Camp Siloam for Church Camp where God moved in BIG ways among our group. We saw 2 teenagers make a commitment to give their life to Christ, and for that we praise God! Later in July, seven of our teenagers went on our mission trip to Eleuthera. What a blessing it is to see, not only our church family, but the future of our church on the mission field serving God and spreading the Gospel. We truly are a church that wants to take the Gospel from the Neighborhood to the Nations.

GEN Z LINGO

“Cringe”; adj. – a feeling of awkwardness, embarrassment, or discomfort. Cringe and cringy can be used interchangeably, but “cring-y” is not used much anymore.

Example: 1. “His singing on stage was super *cringe*.” (His singing was not good) 2. “Mom stop being so *cringe*.” (You’re embarrassing her) 3. “I was *cringing* so hard while he was talking” (He is very awkward or is saying something very awkward)





GEN Z LINGO

“Cheugy”; adj. – a description of something or someone that is officially out of style. The opposite of trendy. Can pertain to your clothes, social media posts/captions, and overall, out of style vibes (see below for “vibes”). This does not pertain as much to Gen X or Boomers as they are already deemed hopeless in the style area. *Cheugy* is for younger Millennials to older Gen Z who still use trends that are officially over done and out of style. Don’t be afraid to ask a Gen Z if something is *cheugy*, they will respect your effort.

Example: 1. “Is she wearing UGG boots? That’s so *cheugy*.” 2. The whole “Girl Boss” vibe is *cheugy*. 3. Certain photo filters. 4. Chevron patterns. 5. Anything before 2019 is in the *cheugy* domain.

Finally, we rounded off the summer with our annual MYBS Trip! If you don’t know what MYBS is, it stands for Mid-Year Bible Study. (Yes I know it’s cringe, but hey it’s a youth ministry and I pride myself on being as little cringy as possible!) With that said, each summer we take a break from our regular worship service, AXIS, which actually started back up on August 23rd! During that time, we still meet every Wednesday at 6:30, but instead of a full-on worship service, MYBS is a little more laid back. We fellowship, we have snacks, and we talk about the Bible Study. This Summer we went through David Platt’s “Follow Me” and let me be the first to tell you that this is a must read. It has been out for a few years now, but even if you are not interested in the Bible Study, I would highly recommend the book for any Christian! In August at the end of the Bible Study we go on a trip for a weekend, usually decided on by the teenagers themselves. If they meet a certain number of requirements during the Mid-Year Bible Study then they get the opportunity to go on the trip FOR FREE. Our trip this year was to Branson, MO and we had a blast soaking in the last bit of summer freedom.

Everyone is back to school now, and AXIS is in full swing! We have begun studying the lives and ministry of Elijah and Elisha, and I am so excited because I love these two amazing biblical Characters! So please be in prayer for us as we dive into God’s Word this semester and that He teaches us how to be more like Jesus.

*building fund.
With your help, we
were able to raise
the funds.*

GEN Z LINGO

“Vibe(s), Vibe” [noun, verb] – an energy that surrounds every person, place, thing, or situation. Every person gives off a certain *vibe*, yet you can have a specific vibe with someone else who has their own *vibe*. A gathering of people has its own *vibe* depending on the *vibes* of the people involved. Think “read the room” or “it gives off a certain feeling”. If something “is a *vibe*”, it’s fun, you want to be a *vibe*. Don’t have *bad vibes* or *kill the vibe*. Cheugy is its own *vibe*. don’t be cheugy.

Example: 1. “This song is not the *vibe*.” (The song doesn’t fit the taste or situation of the people involved)
2. “I really think me and this girl *vibe*.” (We have a good connection)
3. “*Vibe Check*” – Subtly, or not so subtly, testing someone to see if they are cool or get the context. 4. “She is a total *vibe*.” (She’s fun to be around)



IT'S TAYLOR'S WORLD, WE'RE ALL JUST LIVING IN IT

A lot has happened in 2023 that has changed the cultural climate for all of us, especially young people. I won’t dive into everything this month, but there is one topic I think is worth your consideration as your preteen heads back to school this fall... Taylor Swift. Now I know what you’re thinking, “Stephen, what in the world does Taylor Swift have to do with my child’s spiritual development?” Well, nothing... But also everything. Let me give you some background.

In 2021, I married the biggest Swiftie that I have, still to this day, ever personally known. I have pretty much always been indifferent to Ms. Swift’s music. I never had anything against it, but I was far from a “Swiftie”. Yet the Spring I began dating my now wife, Sarah, Taylor Swift dropped her seventh, and best album, *Lover*. Since then, her music has been the soundtrack of our car rides and road trips. However, Ms. Swift has become a vicious presence in my life since the announcement of her Eras Tour this year. Now as of September 2023, no one is safe from the influence of Taylor’s music.

So where am I going with this? What Taylor Swift represents in our culture right now is something that has been around for the last century: The influence of music, movies, and stardom on young people. Now there is no bone that I have to pick with Taylor today, I actually enjoy most of her music. However, just because I enjoy it, does not mean that all of her music is God-honoring. Actually, none of it is. And this is exactly the bug I wish to put in your ear today.

As followers of Jesus there is a very thin line that we walk between being in the world, but not of it. Well, what does it really mean to be in the world but not of it as described by Jesus in John 15 and 17? How do we teach our young people to understand the difference between enjoying art and entertainment, while not being affirming of sinful lifestyles that are not honoring to God and His Word? Let's just say it's not easy. Every follower of Jesus has their own unique interactions with the world. We want to be faithful to God's Word and live a life that glorifies him, but it's also not realistic to live under a rock like monk.



We are all surrounded by so many forms of entertainment and art that are vying for our attention and money. Streaming platforms, television networks, music artists, professional athletes, they all want your money, and they all want to influence you. But what they want to influence even more than you is your children. They know that if they can influence the children then they are future proofing their own industry and assuring that their wealth remains for years to come. Teenagers are the primary targets for this agenda. Teenagers have malleable minds, they are easily influenced, and they are at the mercy of the mob mentality. Let's call it what it is, peer pressure. Let's be honest, it works on us adults, and it works tenfold on young people.

This is why I think it is important to have an awareness of what your child is consuming. That does not mean you have to smother them (that usually does more harm than good), but there are absolutely things a Christian parent should shield their child from consuming. However, do not be naïve enough to think you are fully aware of everything; you cannot completely control what they consume, that is a battle I promise you will lose. What you CAN control is what they know and have learned about right and wrong according to God's Word. Smokey the Bear illustrates this perfectly, "Only you can prevent wildfires". A classic phrase we've all heard for decades, but what is Smokey really saying? He's saying, "I can't prevent wildfires all on my own, but I CAN give you everything you need to know when handling a fire." That is precisely my message for you today.

**"What you can control is what they know
and have learned about right and wrong
according to God's word"**

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Perhaps it would be worth your time this week or month to sit down with your preteen and ask them about the kind of music they like or what shows they enjoy. Often you'll find that they are watching things and listening to things you didn't even know they consumed. However they answer, be sure to follow up with the question, "Why?". This simple question is going to give you so much insight into what magnet your child is being attracted to. Be sure that your preteen is aware of what things in those songs, shows, or videos is God honoring and what is not. Explain to them why and use examples from the Bible. You don't need to have all the answers, and telling them "Because the Bible says so" is never the wrong answer.

Your preteen is quickly becoming their own person, you've already begun to see it in the way they talk and act. They are also your brother or sister in Christ. Have you ever thought of them in that way? As brothers and sister in Christ we have a biblical responsibility to guard each other's heart and keep each other accountable. Even more so when they are your own child. My prayer for you this month is that you are bold and proactive in steering the influences in your child's life. There is a balance between being in the world and not of it; if you do not show them the difference, the world will tell them there isn't one.

Following His Lead,

Stephen Yates
Associate Pastor of Student and Young Adults



THEOLOGY 101

Atonement – The essential act that brings about our Salvation and Redemption from sin. It is the very thing necessary to reconcile sinful humans back to a Holy God.

Leviticus 16:6-10; Romans 5:19; Hebrews 7:26-28

Memory Verse: He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for those of the whole world. - 1 John 2:2