



Monthly Reflection, May 2016

Teenage Kicks? by Joey Knock

Ten years ago, when I was a teenager, my world exploded. What started with dial-up internet on one desktop computer I shared with my brothers, quickly evolved into super-fast broadband on pocket-sized screens. Growing up MSN Messenger was the only place to chat with friends. Now it's been replaced by a plethora of social media platforms – Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, WhatsApp – constantly buzzing in my pocket.

How I chat with friends today is radically different from that mid-noughties teenager. How I'll talk with them in another ten years' time is unimaginable.

This is hugely empowering for young people. They can instantly connect with friends across the world, whether it's a classmate who's moved away or another One Direction fan club member. There's an expanding world of creativity through making and sharing web blogs, songs or videos. But this also opens up a dangerous world of cyber-bullying, sexting and online grooming.

Amidst these technological changes, new celebrities, trends and websites will come and go. But there are some unchanging truths. Adolescence will always be a tricky time. Teenagers will say their parents don't 'understand'. What we need to do is be there for them and to understand and react to an ever-changing world.

That's why The Children's Society has launched a [new Church youth group resource, called Seriously Awkward](#). To make today's world and its challenges more manageable. It features six adaptable sessions for groups to talk about [mental health, online safety and healthy relationships](#). They're tough issues for sure, but less tough when young people can talk about them together, constantly being linked back to those truths of love and affirmation.

Sadly, they're truths not every young person sees in their lives. Vulnerable 16 and 17 year olds are being let down by a legal system that can't decide if they're a child or an adult. They aren't receiving the same protection from sexual exploitation or access to mental health support services as younger children.

The Children's Society exists because of your support. We hope your [youth group and church can join with us](#) to change the law and help 16 and 17 year olds at risk.

There's one final truth I've held onto during this decade from a confused teenager to a confused twenty-something. You've probably heard it before. God loves you. There's nothing too big or too bad to take to him, in our personal lives or in our world. He's there, He's changing things and wants you to [join in](#).