

The Demise of 21st Century Christianity – Article 13

Laodicean Networking

“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor.6:9-10).

Just in passing, the above verses have nothing to do with anyone losing salvation. They are rather about losing inheritance (rewards) in the Lord’s Kingdom. After cataloging all that wickedness, the next verse says “And such WERE some of you.” Thank God, through salvation, we Christians are no longer associated with those listed (at least, we should not be). However, when we sin, it is because we want to. The devil can’t make you do it, nor can your peers. Sin is an act of our own wills.

“Let not (act of the will) sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof” (Rom. 6:12).

“...these things write I unto you, that ye sin not...” (1 Jn. 2:1).

“...Shall we continue in sin...God forbid...” (Rom. 6:1-2).

Alright, with that out of the way, let’s get down to the business at hand, and that is how social networking has affected modern Christianity. Social networking is described as “the practice of expanding the number of one’s business and/or social contacts by making connections through individuals.”

Some 74% of American adults (including Christians) regularly use social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, MySpace, Kik, LinkedIn, and Pinterest. On such sites, users post biographical, and often, personal, information. They communicate with friends and strangers, who sometimes unwittingly as “friends” pass on the information to their “friends.” They commonly share thoughts, photos, music, links, etc. Social networking also includes chat rooms, email, texting, playing online games, or any other form of electronic communication.

Facebook has over 1.4 billion users, with 100,000 new users added daily. They claim 936 million people log in every day, 91% of whom are 15-34 year olds, and 28% are 12-17 year olds.

It behooves Christians to know who they are dealing with or associating with. Who operates social networking sites? Facebook’s founders are Mark Zuckerberg, a Jew who turned atheist but says “religion is very important”¹ and who is anti-American over some of America’s policies.² He is also very pro-gay.³ His co-founder is Chris Hughes, a gay married to a gay.⁴ Hughes ran Obama’s Facebook page which generated \$500 million for Obama’s presidential campaign in 2008.⁵ No wonder Obama became the first president to support same-sex marriage.

Facebook listed Planned Parenthood as the #1 top-trending topic. (“Trending” means what is currently popular in society.) Facebook posted a video disclosing how fetal brains are harvested at a Planned Parenthood clinic while a baby’s heart is still beating, and he said that “U.S. State inquiries...show no criminal evidence.”⁶ In other words, it’s OK to de-brain babies while they’re still alive. May God have mercy on this untoward generation (Acts 2:40)!

Let’s briefly discuss some of social networking dangers.

- (1) online bullying. (affects 19% of teenagers using social networking, and girls affected more than boys)
- (2) temptation to lie about age. (44% of teens lie to access websites or sign up for online accounts)
- (3) “disconnect anxiety” - meaning negative feelings when unable to make their usual online connections. (can lead to tension, disorientation, feeling a loss of freedom or feeling disconnected from society)
- (4) having multiple “friends” you don’t even know. (leads to comparing oneself with others; see 2 Cor. 10:12; can destroy self-confidence and self-esteem) (“friends” can go to “friends” pages and read personal information about you)
Young people are very susceptible to peer pressure and influence (so are a lot of adults). Some people boast of having hundreds of “friends” on Facebook – people they don’t even know and know nothing about them. Remember what vexed Lot? – seeing and hearing what wicked people do, and dwelling among them (2 Pet. 2:7-8). And so it can be with social networking.
- (5) social media addiction. (can’t stay off the phone or computer; trying to find out what everybody they know is doing) (leads to lower GPA for students)
- (6) identify theft. (comes in many forms, like the following romance scam as recorded in a newspaper article)

“FORT PIERCE, Fla. — On a Monday afternoon in June 2017, Renee Holland was draped in an American flag at Philadelphia International Airport, waiting for a soldier she had befriended on Facebook.

“The married 56-year-old had driven two hours from Delaware to pick him up. Their blossoming online friendship had prompted her to send him a care package and thousands of dollars in gift cards. She also wired him \$5,000 for plane tickets to return home.

“Now she was looking for a buff, tattooed man in uniform, just like in his Facebook photos. But his flight was not on the airport arrivals board. Then a ticket agent told her the flight didn’t exist.

“From there, Ms. Holland said, it was a daze. She walked to her car, with ‘welcome Home’ written on the windows, and sobbed. She had spent much of her family’s savings on the phantom soldier. ‘There’s no way I can go home and tell my husband,’ she remembered telling herself. She drove to a strip mall, bought sleeping pills and vodka, and downed them.

“The man in the Facebook pictures had no idea who Ms. Holland was. His real identity was Sgt. Daniel Anonsen of the Marine Corps, and he had joined the social network a decade earlier to keep in touch with friends and family in Maryland. Now he was contending with dozens of Facebook impostor accounts using stolen photos of him at the gym, at his brother’s wedding and in Afghanistan.

“‘For every one that I deleted, there were 10 more that were popping up,’ he said.

“Ms. Holland and Mr. Anonsen represent two sides of a fraud that has flourished on Facebook and Instagram, where scammers impersonate real American service members to cheat vulnerable and lonely women out of their money. The deception has entangled the United States military, defrauded thousands of victims and smeared the reputations of soldiers, airmen, sailors and Marines. It has also sometimes led to tragedy.”

I personally know of a woman in a friend’s church who left her husband and children for another woman she met through social networking. There are many, many such examples.

(7) backlash. Repercussions generated by questionable activities that were made public online, often involving photos, posts, and/or personal profiles. Students have been suspended or expelled from schools and universities for threats of crime and for racial remarks posted on Facebook. Students have also been reported or disciplined for alcohol and drug violations that were discovered through Facebook postings. Facebook has been used to investigate campus brawls. It has been used to identify students who did something illegally. Students have been expelled from class, and even investigated by the Secret Service, all because of stupid postings on Facebook.

A MySpace personal photo cost a student her degree and her teaching certificate because the picture was considered “unprofessional.” A university president received a lot of criticism over a Halloween party picture that a student posted on Facebook.

Students have also experienced invasion into their personal privacy and experienced safety problems because of their online postings. Some have been harassed and stalked and even had uninvited strangers show up at their homes. These things happened in part because of the availability of personal information on Facebook.

A new kind of “identity” information has grown out of these online social network sites. Now, it’s not just a person’s name, address, and phone number that can be found in any telephone book. Today, huge amounts of photographs, political views, sexual orientation, etc., are regularly posted, which all but renders identity information protection non-existent. All user data can be accessed, and is used to influence political elections, as well as other underhanded uses.

Daily, Facebook users watch over one billion videos and upload 300 million photos; that is around nine billion photos per month. Facebook stores 300 petabytes of user data. That is equivalent to 223,000 DVDs of information on their users. It would take paper from 50 million trees to print out that much data, requiring one million pick-up trucks to haul it.

(8) fired from jobs. (career interference) “One in five bosses have rejected an applicant because of their profiles on social networking sites.” For example, a high school teacher was forced to resign after her principle saw pictures of her drinking on Facebook. The principle said her photos promoted alcohol use and her page contained profanity. One man was demoted and given a salary cut after his boss saw his comments on Facebook about gay marriage.

A survey showed that almost 40% of companies look at potential employees’ profiles on social media sites. The Network Director at Eurocom Worldwide said that “every action (online) leaves an indelible digital trail.” He went on to say, “In the years ahead, many of us will be challenged by what we are making public in various social forums today.”

One lady was fired after three weeks on the job for writing on Facebook about how boring her new job was. A young man was fired when he referred to his boss’s relative as “a stupid stuck-up cow” in a Facebook post. Another woman was fired when she posted a negative comment that her boss earned more money than she. A prison guard was fired when it was learned that some of his Facebook “friends” were previous inmates. Thirteen airline crew members were fired after posting comments on Facebook about how stupid their passengers were. A travel agent clerk was fired after posting that she would like to slap one of her colleagues.

In other words, whatever you post on social networks can be used against you. It can come back to haunt you even

years later. Whatever is posted is no longer private information and is available for the whole world to see and read.

Studies show that 1 in 10 people between 16 and 34 years old are rejected by companies because of something the person put on social media. Turning down young applicants because of their social media postings has become commonplace.

An associate sociology professor was suspended from her university for making wisecracks on her Facebook account, such as, "Where can I find a very discreet hit man?" and "I didn't even want to kill one student today." A policeman was terminated for posting information about his job on Facebook, even though his account was *private*. A prison guard was fired after bragging on Facebook about smashing an inmate's face, and two of his co-workers were fired when they showed their support of their buddy.

An emergency medical technician lost his job when he posted Facebook photos of a murder victim. A stadium worker was fired for making negative comments on Facebook about an NFL team's decision. Thirteen ER nurses were fired after a racist-group chat on Facebook. One bright young lady made some immoral remarks about her boss to her Facebook friends. Her boss happened to be on her friends list. He replied to her post, "Don't bother coming in tomorrow."

The moral of these examples: Facebook posts can cause a person to not get a job, or be fired after he has the job.

(9) online predators. The Internet Safety Technical Task Force said that young people in their online activities open themselves up to such dangers as "sexual solicitation, online harassment and bullying, and exposure to problematic and legal content." They said that 43% of online sexual predators were identified as minors lying about their ages, 30% were adults between the ages of 18 and 21, and 9% were adults over the age of 21.

According to the FBI, 50% of victims of online sexual exploitation are 12-15 years old. 89% of all sexual advances toward children take place in chat rooms and instant messaging. In 27% of exploitation incidents, predators asked kids for sexual photographs of themselves (and many send them.) Sending nude or indecent pictures online is called sexting. As a pastor, I was confronted twice with teenagers sexting each other. (Yes, they were Christian young people active in church.)

Some 4% of these online predators attempt to contact the kids offline. Dateline NBC said it takes an average of 12 hours of online solicitation to lure a boy and 7 days to lure a girl into making a physical contact with a predator. A 15 year old girl met a 27 year old married man over the internet. She is now under psychiatric care from the results of meeting the man. Another girl met a man over the internet, and when she met him in person, he abused her and now her life is ruined. (Did I hear, "That can't happen in my family"?)

The U.S. Dept. of Justice says posting personal information "can lead to abductions and sexual exploitation of children." (White slave traffic is very much alive in the U.S. today.) The U.S. State Dept. estimates as many as 50,000 women and girls are trafficked each year in the U.S. Many social network sites contribute to human trafficking, "particularly Facebook and MocoSpace." Even Craigslist has been used by predators and traffickers. Pimps use social networking, giving them "an unlimited access to a potential pool of victims."

Chat rooms can be a place of predators, too. One 13 year old girl got involved with a 45 year old man through a chat room. MySpace, with 8.5 million users, admitted that "50,000+ convicted sex offenders" use their site.

One teen survey says that "95% of American teenagers are online, and 3 out of 4 access the internet on cell phones, tablets, and other mobile devices."

(10) pornography. (On a personal note, I was asked to visit a Christian friend's MySpace page. While looking it over, I thought I would see who his friends were. I clicked on one friend and was not impressed. However, after clicking on his friend's friend - two clicks from his page - I was confronted with nudity and foul language. That destroyed any inkling of ever wanting a social network account.)

(11) information disclosure. (involves personal and intimate information gleaned from "private" posts)

(12) big brother snooping. Law enforcement is now using social networking sites to catch and prosecute criminals, who tend to brag online about their activities.

A December, 2019 World News article headline was "One Billion surveillance cameras will be watching around the world in 2021." There were already 770 million of said cameras worldwide when the article was written. The article stated the cameras will give governments access to people's movements, etc. The cameras are powered by facial recognition software that can recognize and identify individual faces. The U.S. has 18% of currently installed cameras, with China leading with over 50%. The technology came from China, who supplies 63 countries with artificial intelligence surveillance technology.

(13) gossip. Facebook is a gigantic gossip machine. And most of what is posted is a waste of anybody's time to read it.

(14) destruction of families. Facebook is now showing up in a third of divorce cases dealing with infidelity, old flames, and new relationships. Posts provide information that can be used in a court case. Social media is “like having a massive public noticeboard.” A CNN article said, “Facebook leads to infidelity and Facebook friends can be more powerful than pornography.” A lady I know caught her husband with adultery information on his Facebook account.

(15) photo stealing and misuse. For those who may not know, Instagram is owned by Facebook. Conversations and photos can be taken from private accounts even when they have it in privacy mode. Facebook keeps transcribed records of calls through Facebook Messenger.

One study revealed that about half of the pictures on pedophile sites are “innocent” pictures stolen from social media, and many have been “doctored up” with programs like Photoshop and MS Picture It. No matter what you post, once posted, you have lost control of it.

Technology reporter Jasper Hamill reported that one study revealed that about half of the images on pedophile websites are “innocent” pictures stolen from social media. He urged parents to protect themselves against “obsessive perverts who comb Facebook and Instagram for photos of young kids.” These pervert pedophiles steal those “innocent” pictures from social networks and then post them on sex-oriented websites.

Hamill warned parents against “oversharing” on such sites as Facebook and Instagram. He said the harmless and inoffensive photos they upload “could end up in the hands of depraved monsters.”

Australia’s Office of Children’s Safety, in investigating worldwide pedophile activity, found literally millions of innocent images posted along with shocking sexual comments. They warned parents that “innocent pictures of their kids are ending up on child porn sites.”

They said that “about half the material appeared to be sourced directly from social media.” One explicit site was discovered that contained about one hundred images of children in various activities. Within ten days of being uploaded, the photos had been viewed 1.7 million times. They said that comments posted on the site “explicitly sexualized the material.”

Evil is always present on the internet. Parents need to be aware of the dangers. Cyber-security expert Susan McLean said, “When you post anything online, does not matter where it is, you have lost control of it. Over-sharing parents are a concern because they have no idea about where these [images] go. It does not matter how innocent the photo is, if your child has got what a predator is looking for, they will take that photo.”

(16) scamming. For example, a link from a “friend” directing you to watch a funny video, could lead to a virus that can access your “friends” list and spread the virus to other computers. One woman was scammed out of \$750 by a Facebook “friend.”

(17) addiction. One woman “hooked” on Facebook spent 4-5 hours a day on it. It eventually cost her her husband and her two children. She had the ridiculous number of “5,000 friends” and a thousand followers. When her husband divorced her, she said she should have been cooking dinner or reading to her kids or watching a movie with her husband. Even after she lost everything, she was still addicted to Facebook. Many social networkers use their social networking many times every day. The average is four times a day.

How severe can these addictions become? Consider these true events –

(a) A 20 year old newly-wed hung herself after her husband took her mobile phone away from her because she was obsessed with WhatsApp (owned by Facebook) and Facebook, and spent most of her time on them.

(b) A girl who was being disciplined for sassing her mom, by taking the girl’s phone away, tried to kill herself by jumping from the car at 70mph.

(c) A 19 year old boy cut off his left hand with a kitchen knife trying to break his addiction to social networking.

(d) One Christian girl was so addicted that she was seriously praying to die.

(e) One teenager killed his parents because they took his iPad and phone away.

Anybody can get addicted to social networking, but the main ages for Facebook addiction are 18-35 years old.

(18) control of one’s life. For example, 47% of Americans claim Facebook has a great influence on their buying habits.

(19) developing a philosophy of life from social media. Thinking is easily swayed through social media. So, when gay marriage became law and Facebook acknowledged their approval by putting their home page in rainbow colors, over 26 million Facebookers followed suit by changing their profile pictures to rainbows, using a tool (Celebrate Pride) made by Facebook that allowed users to add a rainbow filter to their profile picture.

(20) being deceived by false information. Many reporters go to social networks to get their news items. One man tweeted

that hurricane Sandy (Oct. 2012) had flooded the NY Stock Exchange and the power company was going to shut off power to Manhattan. It wasn't true, but CNN and the Weather Channel picked up on it and broadcast it as real news. (Fake news?!)

(21) time waster and thought robber. 20% of kids send as many as 200 texts a day. One researcher said that online socializing is "creating a uniquely shallow and trivial culture."

Two times the Bible tells us to redeem the time, not waste it (Eph. 5:16; Col. 4:5).

One researcher said social networking kids are being turned into "emoticon-addled zombies, unable to connect, unable to think, (or) form a coherent thought or even make eye contact." (emoticon = emotion icon – smiley faces, etc.; addled = confused, unable to think)

Stats show people are happier after taking a break from Facebook. A study of 2,500 Facebook users who spend at least a n hour a day on it who deactivate their account for one month are happier, not wasting so much time on social media. They actually spent more face-to-face time interacting with family and friends.

A USA Today survey reported that "81% of people would rather travel with their mobile device than with a loved one."

(22) pedophiles. (already discussed under #15 above) For example, Facebook promotes Nambla (North American Man/Boy Love Association). In short, Facebook promotes sodomites who prey on children, as well as gay marriage!

(23) no personal relationships. Look around in restaurants and you will probably see people playing with their phones instead of engaging in conversation with whoever is at the table with them.

(24) depression. "Mental Health" magazine said depression in girls is linked to higher use of social media (due to time spent on it, online bullying, poor sleep, etc.).

According to a Facebook data scientist, online activity is *never* inconsequential. It has an effect on everybody involved, and that effect can be very bad, even deadly.

So, should Christians be involved in social networking? Read Ephesians 5:1-12 and 2 Timothy 3:1-7, and you will find the correct answer to that question, though you may not accept God's answer.

Today's generation is "all about me." (Review Article #2.) This is the "Y" generation, the millennial children, the "lovers of their own selves" crowd (2 Tim. 3:2).

Why would a Christian want to be involved in something God obviously hates, because of who runs it and what it is used for? Before excusing yourself by saying, "But I only use it for..." you may find yourself guilty before God by association! (Yes, we realize a lot of Christians, pastors, and churches use social media for whatever reason. Their first priority should be to be sure what they are doing is approved by the Lord. See 1 Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:17.)

Facebook (and other social media sites) supports and promotes the LGBT agenda, Gay Pride, Planned Parenthood (murdering millions of babies every year), globalism, and the leftist political agenda. Facebook's owners hate God and love homosexuality.

Albert Einstein said, "I fear the day that technology will surpass our human interaction. The world will have a generation of idiots." Oh, if he could only see the fulfillment of his prophecy!

Is that what we're becoming, a nation of idiots?! Or worse yet, a church of idiots?! Guard yourself concerning social networking, and by all means, guard your children against its dangers. And Christian, don't do anything that will grieve the One who lives inside of you (Eph. 4:30).

For further information on social networking, and proofs of its dangers, see my book,
The Dangers of Social Networking.

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