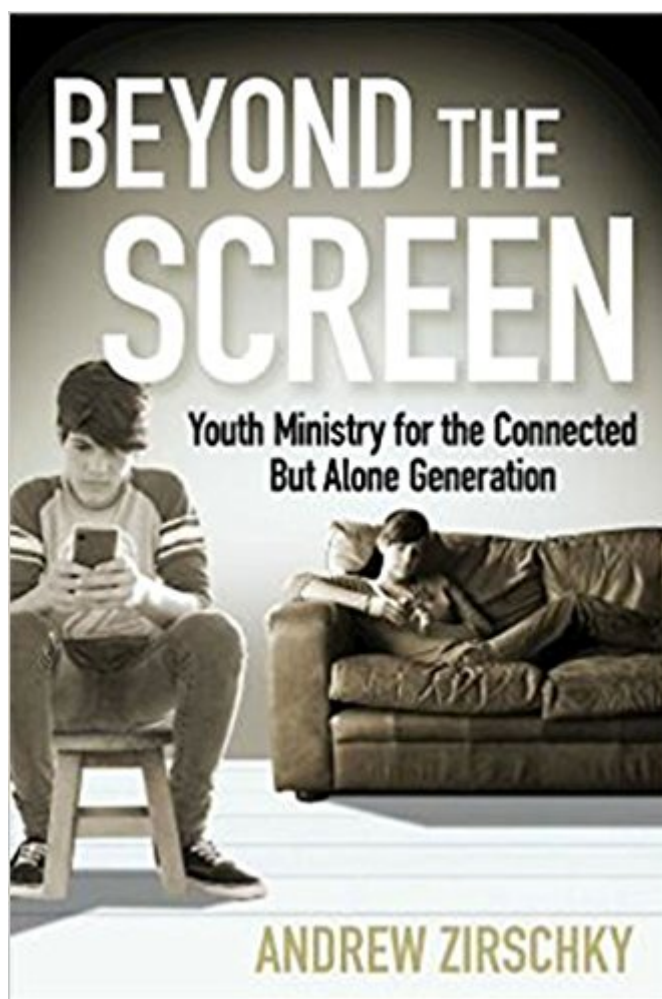


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# Beyond The Screen: Youth Ministry For The Connected But Alone Generation



## Synopsis

It's no secret that teenagers are perpetually connected via social media and mobile devices, but while we've analyzed as a culture how youth are connecting we've done less well at understanding why teenagers are drawn to the glow of the screen. *Beyond the Screen* explores the reality that teenagers use these technologies in desperate bid for an intimacy and depth of relationship largely absent from face-to-face society and the church. Employing the latest ethnographic research on youth and digital media in tandem with theological reflection and interviews with teens themselves, author Andrew Zirschky provides a deeper glimpse into the world of teens and social media and gives new direction and directives for ministering to Millennials.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Buckle up for a breathtaking read: *Beyond the Screen* lays down the gauntlet in the first sentence, and doesn't let up until our conventional wisdom about tech, teenagers and faith has been turned inside out. Andrew Zirschky is the master of the memorable tidbit, with an uncanny knack for noticing interdisciplinary connections that the rest of us mere mortals miss. The result is a refreshingly intelligent treatise that artfully frames research in stories only a youth pastor can tell. What you hold in your hands is a manifesto, a call to worship--and far and away one of the best youth ministry books of the last twenty years." --KENDA CREASY DEAN, Mary D. Synnott Professor of Youth, Church and Culture, Princeton Theological Seminary and author, *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers Is Telling the American Church*. "If you've grown weary of simplistic demonizing of social media's impact on youth, if you're tired of widely accepted

misinformation about the digital world of teenagers in our churches, if you're ready to move beyond the glitter of the slickest new youth ministry technology, *Beyond the Screen* charts a sane, faithful way forward. From his unmasking of the 'moth myth' on the very first page to his compelling call to *koinonia* on the last, Andrew Zirschky has clearly established himself as the digital cartographer for the church's ministry to the next

generation. [Read This Book](#) - MARK

DEVRIES, author of *Sustainable Youth Ministry*, founder of *Ministry Architects*, and co-founder of *Ministry Incubators*. "Andrew Zirschky has done us all a great favor is his book *Beyond the Screen*. No parent, youth worker, or pastor can ignore the impact of our digital landscape, and Zirschky paints just the picture that can help you think theologically about its terrain of promise and peril. This is a book I'll reference and read over and over again for both its theory construction and its practical help. This is a must read!" - ANDREW ROOT, Carrie Olson Baalson Professor of Youth and Family Ministry, Luther Seminary and author of *Bonhoeffer as Youth Worker*.

Andrew Zirschky (Ph.D. Princeton Theological Seminary) is Assistant Professor of Practical Theology and Youth Ministry at Memphis Theological Seminary and serves as academic director at the Center for Youth Ministry Training in Brentwood, Tennessee. He has 20 years of youth ministry experience at churches in Idaho, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Tennessee.

I must admit that the title initially caused apprehension as often times authors who tackle this topic can take an overly negative stance on the use of social media. But Zirschky offers a very balanced view that looks beyond the surface down to what is the underlying need that is driving the usage and dominance of social media in not just youth culture, but society overall. He also offers a way for the Church to respond to that relational need that is grounded in the theology and practice of communion. Given that aspect of the book, even though the target audience is youth ministers, I think there is wisdom to be gleaned by anyone interested in building and deepening relationships within the Church not just with youth, but across the spectrum in ways that don't necessarily require you starting an account on every social media platform.

This is an important book to read for anyone who interacts with teens or young adults. Zirschky helps us understand how to interact with the world as Christians in a digital age. He argues that instead of using technology to escape from building connections with others, teens are really using

technology in the hope of building meaningful connections with others in their lives. This book will change how you think about and use technology in your church and in your life.

A book I have been looking for that didn't exist til now. Andrew engages with the teens perspective of technology and doesn't just write it off. In doing so Beyond the Screen addressees the bigger question: How can we truly be a faith community in the technology age? I highly recommend this to anyone who is working with children, teens, young adults, parents of kids, parents of teens...ok EVERYONE! Everyone should read this book.

Well researched, but not academic. Useful concrete suggestions. Calls the reader to take action, instead of judging.

The premise is good but text is redundant. To much overstating

Andrew Zirschky is one of the top minds in youth ministry. You really need to listen to what he's got to say.

Great book that is backed with research. Well thought out and super helpful in my context.

I must confess . . . I have been weary of those who continue to bash social media for what it is doing to relationships and society in general. The rattling of their sabres and the threatening posture does nothing to endear me to their cause. I understand their concerns, but social media, in one form or another is here to stay so complaining, at best, is a waste of time. In BEYOND THE SCREEN we finally receive a balanced treatment of the challenge with a solid response. How often have we heard when attending a meeting, "If you are going to come with a problem then come with some solutions." Andrew Zirschky has come with the problem and the solution. This solution is one of eternal value and offers the reader a pro-active and pre-emptive strategy. This quote, toward the end of the book, summarizes the thrust of the book, "Discussions of social media with youth shouldn't begin with the media, but instead with an exploration of what it means to be the koinonia of Christ and how that forms our relationships in all domains, whether those relationships are played out online or offline." (p. 148) What Zirschky proposes was as important for the first church as it is for today. These principles still hold true whether one was experiencing oppression from the

Romans or is spending too much time "liking" comments on Facebook. Add this book to your priority reading list and "be communion!"

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