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The Inevitable Church

Min Choi

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GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY

PROJECT PORTFOLIO

THE INEVITABLE CHURCH



IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF
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BY:

MIN CHOI

PROJECT FACULTY:

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This certifies that the doctoral Project Portfolio of

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DEDICATION

This project dissertation is dedicated to my wife, Sarah,
who lovingly entertains my unbridled and eccentric endeavors,
and to my kiddos, Isaac, Norah, and Theophilus,
who offer me daily reminders to not take life too seriously.

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GLOSSARY

Blockchain – a digital ledger system in which a record of transactions made through cryptocurrency (e.g. Bitcoin) are maintained across a network of participating computers that are linked in a peer-to-peer configuration, creating a “decentralized” system.

Decentralization (blockchain) – in contrast to centralized entities like modern banks, decentralization is a unique characteristic of blockchain technology and refers to the endeavor of creating a network that relies less on governing authorities that have disproportionate control over the entire network and spreads that authority and control over the total number of participants. This reduces the level of trust that participants must place in one another and deters the ability of one entity to exert control in ways that degrade the functionality or validity of the network.

Network Revolution – A sociological phenomenon where a society or culture changes its primary medium of communication from one technological form to another. A digital network revolution has come about through shifting from a primarily print-based culture to a culture that is adopting digital mediums.

Web3 or Web 3.0 – an iteration of the World Wide Web primarily based on blockchain technology. The key characteristics of this iteration are decentralization, data security, and privacy.

RESEARCH METHOD

Editorial or research method: This Project utilized a blended methodology that draws upon bibliographic resources, data derived from stakeholder collaboration, and human-centered design and iteration processes to create a heuristic-based, application-oriented Project.

ABSTRACT

The Inevitable Church is a YouTube channel about the semiotics of digital technological forces and how they are shaping the future of church and culture. Its aim is to be a repository of resources and videos that models and teaches the unique principles and strategies required to navigate our modern mediums of communication and connection.

The NPO statement for this project is: The modern network revolution is shifting our primary medium for social interdependence from print to digital, which is reforming our social and cultural structures and creating a critical need for innovation in ministry strategies, recontextualization of orthodox Biblical principles, and the integration of digital-based skill sets in church design and practices.

Three key insights emerged from my overall research: First, the sociological effects of our modern network revolution driven by digital technological forces is shifting our society out of a “print orientation” and into a “virtual-augmented orientation” that is affecting how societies communicate, learn, work, and create communities. Second, these sociological shifts are outdating contemporary ministry principles and strategies to evangelize, disciple, and build communities in an increasingly digital world, and the church has resisted change, in large part, due to historical and theological bases (grounded in a print world). Third, for this generation of churches to fulfill the Great Commission in their time, she requires humbly adopting new paradigms in cultural engagement, a new aptitude for digital technologies and social networks, and a recontextualization of Biblical and theological principles that guide the proclamation of the gospel in our time.

INTRODUCTION

The Inevitable Church is a culmination of experiences from a journey that started all the way back in the early 2010's when I started my seminary program. Alongside exploring the foundation of the Bible, I was also witnessing the world go through a rapid digital metamorphosis. For example, I remember when YouTube was created, and its original purpose was to be an online dating service. But it quickly turned into a platform for individuals to create and express themselves in the form of a channel. The reason this stood out to me back then was because it seemed so powerful; you no longer needed a network television show contract or a million-dollar studio to create and distribute your content. Watching the growth of social network platforms like YouTube, I realized that digital technology was going to create a new level of individual and community empowerment that would undermine and circumvent all the established structures and orders. The culture, as well as the church, was about to enter a period of upheaval, disorientation, and reinvention through the democratization and individualization of digital communication.

Fast forward to 2019, I enroll into Portland Seminary's Doctor of Ministry Semiotics program because I was convinced that a semiotic ministry would be quite valuable in such a disruptive and divisive time. At the outset, during my NPO charter, I wanted to dive into the opportunity of digital technological forces properly utilized by the church because I had seen how dramatically our culture was shifting and revolving around it. But there was a great challenge as well--I had noticed over the decade that the church, and many of her most prominent thinkers and writers, had a deep fear and resentment towards expressions of digital

technology like social networks and smartphones. Furthermore, many ministers and leaders had the perspective that the internet was merely a distraction and a fad than a permanent fixture in our civilization, and this was reflected in many books and sermons that offered the prudence of abstaining or moderating. The negativity of social media would show up in almost every illustration about idolatry or self-indulgence or consumerism. In contrast, it was difficult to come across any books or sermons that painted a hopeful vision of what redeeming these technological tools could look like for a disciple or church in our modern times. There was no reimagination and there was no alternative narrative. My conclusion was that the church along the way had lost its creativity, wonder, and the directive to pioneer renewing images and languages for the gospel to, once again, take root.

During the discovery phase, I set out to talk to stakeholders who represented the body of Christ: parents, ministers, lay leaders, educators, and those in technological fields. I created a Discovery workshop that was about identifying trends within the life of the church—what does the future church look like in terms of evangelism, discipleship, and community building? What are we experiencing as individuals and families in faith communities in an age of social media and digital technology? The first insight gleaned from these conversations was that there were significant gaps between the life of the church and an increasingly digital culture. What was talked about was faith compartmentalized from the internet, from our social media feeds, and from the digital dimensions of our lives. Many of my stakeholders had little to no commentary on how faith can integrate and inform our digital habits. What does it mean to be faithful? What does it mean to be salt and light in these new spaces? No principles, no strategies, and no vision about how faith converges with a digital reality were offered.

Many of the stakeholders could only offer a negative or pessimistic view of digital technology, that it was both harmful and a distraction to faith. They mentioned oversaturation of sources and voices, political divisiveness, addiction, idolatry, and lack of community. Perhaps, the most significant insight from my stakeholders was a collective observation that there was little to no encounter with any teaching or resource that gave both a positive, hopeful view of how technology supports and aids the life and faith of the Christian and the opportunities that are afforded using these tools to ultimately proclaim the Gospel of Jesus. And so, through the discovery phase, I decided that I wanted to create a resource that does paint a beautiful vision of how we as followers of Jesus can faithfully utilize digital tools and strategies, something that I believe God has ordained, in our ministries and communities.

During the design phase, I knew that I wanted to create a repository for faith and digital technology integration, and my three pitches were essentially three different mediums. Was I going to do a podcast, a video channel, or write a book? The key discovery that informed what prototype to build was a dive into the sociological phenomenon called a “network revolution,” a period of history where civilization utterly changes due to a shift in the primary medium of communication—this was exactly what we were going through, and the last time a network revolution happened at this level was in the 1500s with the invention of the printing press. Our world was shifting from a print culture to a virtual augmented one and much of our disorientation and fragmenting of society made sense if indeed we were going through this sociological transformation. For me, this meant print was old news. The basis of my project was going to be non-print. That meant no book, no manuscript. And so, I began prototyping a strategy for videos on YouTube and podcasting.

Starting a YouTube channel or a podcast is simple but to build one and grow it over time is incredibly difficult. In my research of professional YouTubers and podcasters, they must be able to not only be creative and entertaining, but they must be competent at videography, audio engineering, editing, graphic design, marketing, and so much more. Learning how to produce a video from start to finish was the primary challenge with these prototypes. What I realized is that to create a legitimate, thriving channel, I would need to learn how to create a production schedule and a workflow that allows me to create videos and content at a consistent rate. The MVP eventually became the YouTube channel. I wanted to create a visual resource, one that utilized a social media network as a platform and learn the language of filmmaking to create something that looked professional and cinematic. I wanted to learn how to storyboard, color-grade, write scripts, and manage a channel properly with graphics and marketing. But most of all, I wanted to do video because so many churches have no idea how to create videos that are not livestreams or sermons, and there is so much more to the art of filmmaking than those two mediums.

For the delivery phase, the scope of the project was difficult to determine. I wasn't sure how long certain steps would take overall and some videos might vary greatly in terms of hours needed to execute. You couldn't base the scope off a simple formula. Considering that part of the project was to navigate managing the channel, I decided that 10-20 videos would sufficiently fulfill the scope of the project for launch. The benchmarks focused on guiding the content in three primary categories: education, edification, and entertainment. I wanted each video to offer one or more of these three values. Additionally, I wanted the content to center around the insights I discovered in the discovery phase. I wanted to make content that helps Christians navigate a digital environment and integrate their faith into their digital habits. The benefit of

hosting all my videos on YouTube was the accessibility the platform offers to viewers and stakeholders. The ability to subscribe and comment on videos helped with community engagement as well as designed interviews. Furthermore, YouTube also offers analytics for their channels and so, I had immediate access to view counts, subscriber numbers, demographics, and more.

The long-term objective for the Inevitable Church is to become a key expert and valued community member of innovators and leaders within the digital space, to engage in conversation, to publish resources, and to create content to support the church. The Inevitable Church will eventually become a non-profit organization that offers services to ministries who are navigating digital technologies, strategies, and processes for the purpose of discipleship, evangelism, and community outreach. And lastly, I hope the Inevitable Church channel becomes a prominent brand and resource on YouTube by continuing to grow organically as a digital community.

The two major challenges for the project involved writing good content and producing professional looking videos on YouTube as a solo creative. On writing, the challenge is writing for video. I've come to realize that video has its own language and to write scripts and to think about content visually, requires several important skillsets that are unique to this medium. The great challenge was thinking about concepts beyond the content: transitions, segments, anchoring points, titles, choreography, and just how to be aware of what my body is communicating on-camera. Being an on-camera talent also creates a level of discomfort if you're not used to it and I think over the past two years working in videography and on this project has forced me to become more aware of how I present myself. Having those peripheral experiences comes full circle back to how I write, how I want to communicate, and ultimately, how comfortable I am in the medium.

One of the principles that I've been developing throughout this project is a discipleship model that equips individuals like me, a working parent, to pursue creative projects in our free time and create a space where faith and creativity can converge. To slowly grow a channel or a media account requires not only discipline and a knowledge of various skills, but it requires individuals to confront themselves, their insecurities, their passions, and their motivations. The profound insight that I have been learning through all of this is that I have experienced growth and breakthrough personally and spiritually. In creating the Inevitable Church, I experienced many cycles of doubt, insecurity, quitting, and many other difficult emotions and thoughts. I am grateful that I had the support of my family as well as my peer advisor who helped keep me on pace throughout the program, but I learned that this is hard, way harder than people give credit to. But I think in that vulnerable and uncomfortable space is where we can actively respond through prayer and reflection. It truly is a metaphorical furnace that has the potential to refine how we see ourselves, the world, and ultimately, God.

My vision is to help faith-minded creators, like myself, experience the beauty and meaningfulness of tapping into their own passions and accomplishing the goals that they are determined to reach. Therefore, I think the Inevitable Church represents more than a knowledge resource. It represents a model or path for a 21st century disciple. We have so much access, we can tap into so many useful tools just from our smartphones—I want to integrate that reality into how we think about truth and faith. But this is the great obstacle, even now in 2022 for a lot of churches. Out of their desire to preserve “tradition” or to fight a hostile culture, they are failing to fulfill the Great Commission in our time. They are failing to spend time and energy discovering a way to evangelize a post-Christian, secular, digitized culture. We are responsible

for creating a bridge to the church that is coming but what does it look like to be faithful witnesses today?

In assessing the launch state of the project, two key gaps or shortcomings have emerged that I am hopeful to address soon. First, I want to prioritize reaching out to like-minded organizations and ministries, exchanging ideas, and building relationships. I want to be an active community voice regarding ministry in digital mediums and that requires more exposure. I want to connect with churches, innovators, leaders, and thinkers who are already creating spaces to discuss these matters and learning the dynamics of the digital tools to enhance their ministries. Secondly, I want to refine my production process to consistently produce content once a week. I think it's been great to focus on fulfilling all the requirements of the program, but I look forward to being able to focus on content creation this year. Shorter, less ambitious content needs to be made to create consistent uploads and that means, I must find a routine that can be accomplished in 2 hours. Content is king, and I need to be able to produce more content per month to grow the channel.

In assessing viable alternatives to the NPO, I have designed the project to be able to quickly integrate alternative mediums and strategies. The basic question is how do we communicate the message of the Inevitable Church? That's through exposure, community, creating dialogue, creating spaces, and just connecting with a broad audience. That means, there are many alternative strategies that need to be explored to reach widely. In my research, I considered audio and podcasting as a extremely effective strategy in addressing the NPO. Voice and audio are integral to a significant demographic of consumers. It offers a more conversational medium. The Inevitable Church is a resource that seeks to expand into audiobooks, podcasts, publishing, live-streaming, and more. Each require different workflows and needs. Another

viable path that I am exploring is through my local church, designing ministry strategies and projects to incorporate digital resources to help the community. Another strategy is to interview the key voices found here in this project and elsewhere. Creating spaces for dialogue with prominent voices jump starts exposure and connections.

I'll highlight two key discoveries that emerged from the research journey. First, the key quality that leaders of this generation will require to successfully navigate the challenges of ministry is a growth mindset. We are entering into an era, both culturally and technologically, where innovation and change is iterative and frequent. This means, we'll need strategies that are both scalable and nimble; churches will have to reengage with cultural issues, learn from non-Christian sources, and begin cultivating dialogue and collaboration in a culture that is increasingly hostile. Secondly, the more successful you have been both individually or as an organization, the more difficult it will be for you to understand and adapt to the coming sociological changes that digital technology is ushering in. In other words, past performance does not indicate future results; in fact, the opposite seems to be truer—what hasn't worked or have been tried in the past must be reexamined and tested to see if it is now a viable strategy. The power dynamics are shifting and the ones that have been in traditional positions of power will quickly need to adapt to the new cultural ecosystem that is developing. The internet has become the great equalizer, allowing for individuals to have a broad voice and influence. And if individuals can now create change, that means change can happen at all levels of society. That's an incredible notion for the church as well!

Looking ahead, there is still much to research about how technological forces like AI, blockchain, internet of things, and big data are going to reshape our lives. These forces will rebuild our world in significant ways. I am excited about what virtual reality will do once it

becomes ubiquitous in the household. I am excited about our ability to see beyond the “Hubble Bubble,” and all that we are learning about climate change and how we can continue to preserve our planet. I am excited about education, the arts, and what work will look like for the average American in the next 20-30 years.

As for the future of the Inevitable Church, I have plans to create a non-profit organization that consults and supports ministries who need digital strategies and resources to reach their communities, both local and globally. I am excited to continue to create content that might become a published work one day. I am excited to reach out to important voices within the faith community to talk about the growing need for digital ministries of all kinds.

Finally, as I reflect on my entire experience, I am full of gratitude for my teacher, Dr. Len Sweet, my administrators, especially Dr. Loren Kerns, my peer advisor, Dr. Aaron Friesen, and, of course, my cohort who has journeyed with me these past three years, most of which have been in a pandemic. I rest with joy in the grace of God for providing me space and health to complete what I set out to accomplish. I’ve been transformed by my studies and by my peers. I have a greater awareness of my own calling in ministry. Lastly, I am hopeful about how this project will grow and evolve with me—it is a project of deep love and passion, and no matter what I am called to, this project will always be a key part of how I think and how I see the gospel work of transformation in this age. I deeply love people and my dream for this project is that individuals may encounter the love and beauty of Christ in a world where we are tempted to separate from each other. May the Gospel be proclaimed to the world.

MILESTONE 5 – PROJECT

INTRODUCTION

The Inevitable Church is a project that seeks to create a growing resource for today's churches who desire to fulfill the Great Commission and to build a generational bridge to the church in the future. I am excited about how the Inevitable Church will progress beyond this year and I am grateful for everyone who has supported the project these past three years.

NPO STATEMENT

The modern network revolution is shifting our primary medium for social interdependence from print to digital, which is reforming our social and cultural structures and creating a critical need for innovation in ministry strategies, recontextualization of orthodox Biblical principles, and the integration of digital-based skill sets in church design and practices.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Inevitable Church is a digital, social media-based channel primarily on YouTube and Instagram that produces semiotic-driven content intended to evaluate, educate, and edify the upcoming generation of churches on the digital network revolution and its effects on modern church design and practices.

The Inevitable Church name is inspired by Kevin Kelly's concept of inevitability in understanding the foundational technological forces in his book *The Inevitable*. In the beginning chapters, he talks about how the the rapid advancement of our digital reality shouldn't have come

as a surprise to most of us, but it invariably has. He argues that if we were paying attention, the direction that these forces are taking human civilization are obvious because they have been developing for decades, and not out of sight, but right in front of us. He identifies twelve forces in that book as well as the twelve consequences of those forces. These consequences are happening and will continue to happen and now, are reaching a threshold where each of these technological “blooms” will fundamentally shift the way we structure and orient ourselves to each other in our societies.

This project is dedicated to address how we navigate to these technological milestones, through them, and how we pioneer and explore the new world that will form afterwards.

PROJECT SCOPE

The scope of the initial launch of the Inevitable Church is to partially establish the core content that lays out foundational principles of the channel, design and implement the aesthetic language of the brand, and to vlog and document key moments of progress.

Video Type	Description	Length Range	#
Foundations Series	Videos that outline the foundational concepts of the research and project.	5-15 minutes	3
Channel Vlog	Weekly Video vlogs documenting the project process, brainstorming ideas, addressing challenges, connecting with community.	5-10 minutes	9
Short Videos - Concepts	Videos that explain foundational concepts of Semiotics	3-5 minutes	1
Short Videos – Culture reviews, Op-Eds, and Reactions	Videos that identify and unpack cultural moments, artifacts, and movements.	3-5 minutes	3

BENCHMARKS

In collaboration with my peer advisor, these benchmarks reflect the production process of creating an entire new resource that offers videos, podcasts, interviews, and other types of content underneath a single brand, the Inevitable Church. The priority was to create engaging, foundational content that sets the level of quality that viewers can expect.

1. Do the scripts and videos of the channel address primary critical objectives?
 1. To write and produce content that explores the concept of a network revolution, and the various effects technological forces impose on the culture and the church.
 2. To write and produce content utilizing semiotic principles and skills.
 3. To write and produce content that churches can utilize as a reliable resource for ministry strategy and innovation in digital technology implementation.
2. Is the content of the Inevitable Church professional, aesthetically cohesive, utilizing proper filmmaking techniques and principles, audio engineering, and editing?
3. Does the Inevitable Church have an identifiable and distinct image and brand that is consistently present across its content?
 1. Does the Inevitable Church channel have a complete set of logos and branding on YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter?
 2. Does the content of the Inevitable Church have professional titles, logos, intros, and outros in the content?
4. Does the Inevitable Church draw an audience and provide engagement and interaction with pastors, ministers, and lay leaders?

PRESENTATION OF THE PROJECT

Welcome to the Inevitable Church and thank you for engaging with my project. The background of this endeavor comes from my deep love for the church and a fascination with how the contemporary emergence of digital technology is changing our culture and consequently, changing how the church engages culture. While there will always be discussion about the cost and benefits of human advancement, what this project desires to focus on, instead, is how to share the substance of the gospel of Christ to culture in the form that the culture is becoming acclimated to: digital media. And if the context (or culture) is undergoing rapid disruption, then it follows that the inevitable church will be required to assess current methodologies and designs of ministry and recontextualize the message of Christ for the sake of herself and her audience.

There are technological forces that are transforming the foundations of communication, learning, community, and work globally, and these processes have been in motion for decades. Sociologists identify our contemporary period of technological advancement as a “network revolution,” a period of history where the primary medium is shifting into a new form, the last major occurrence being the discovery of the printing press in Europe. This event sparked the transition from an oral European culture to one built on the foundations of print, the medium we have been utilizing for the last 500 years.

The aim of this project is to serve the church in navigating this tumultuous period of history and to help them not only identify the challenges and opportunities that will be encountered in these next decades but also to position this generation of churches to pioneer this new medium and create new paradigms and strategies necessary to embrace and employ the gospel in an increasingly digitized reality.

To serve this aim of edifying churches, the core content of the Inevitable Church is accessible purely through YouTube and other digital-social networks as visual media. The objective is to research and integrate digital medium principles, employ them in content that is both rich in educational value as well as visually stunning, and to create a community where churches, ministry leaders, and individuals can come and share their questions and insights.

The scope of the launch was to produce the first set of content for the channel that will help define the direction of the channel. A significant amount of time was poured into designing the branding, the style, and the language of the entire project. In terms of the content, half the videos would lay part of the foundational principles and the other half would be creative and experimental content to explore the potential of different ideas for various series. The benchmarks of the project acted as sort of guiding principles for the content and the writing—I wanted to create pieces that had educational, entertaining, and edifying elements for my viewers, that each video would have something for an individual to take away with them. The other benchmarks involve the level of quality in the overall production. Investments were made in production gear and set design, as well as licenses for music, sound effects, and clips so that the production, even though it is a solo operation, would reflect a high level of quality for viewers.

DOCUMENTATION OF PROJECT

In documenting the project, I wanted to give insight into the pre-production, production, and post-production process along with the final videos presented in this project. A significant amount of time goes into the planning and conceptualizing stages of YouTubing. You're not just a storyteller but you're a project manager, social media manager, set designer, script writer,

editor, designer, producer, sound engineer, colorist, and so much more. The documentation of this project reflects the many roles an individual will encounter as they create their own content.

BRAND DEVELOPMENT

One of the early goals was to create branding around the project to be utilized in social media marketing. The main concept was to be minimalistic but bold and iconic and allow for space to evolve in the future. Early on, the Inevitable Church felt like a provocative project name. Within the name, there is a major signifier about future-oriented content, hence “inevitable.”

The name of the Inevitable Church is inspired by a theological concept of the sustaining grace given to the church until the return of Christ. It’s the idea that no matter how bleak or disobedient a generation of God’s people might be, God’s favor and grace is upon the remnant people and the church will ultimately be thrust into the future. This requires that faithful remnant to be obedient, bold, and perceiving the radical nature of God’s revelation.

Logo



Figure 1.1. Main logo utilizing Bebas Neue font with bold red background and white lettering

Some formats require a square logo and so, a secondary logo was created to accommodate platforms such as Instagram. Additionally, some other color palettes were explored to give the branding a more retro feel. This logo is softer and appeals in a different way. The circular pattern is meant to convey the eclectic nature of the project, that we pool our content ecumenically as well as look towards culture to see God's truth.



Figure 1.2. Retro square logo utilizing pastel brown, navy blue, off yellow, and white lettering

See figures E.1 in Project Documentation for additional variations and E.2 for examples of color palettes that align with the aesthetic concepts of the project.

Social Media

Social media is a critical part in communicating an idea, an initiative, and a message. The church has often undervalued the importance of the role of social media in storytelling and community building, and by not participating and investing in these digital platforms, the church has only risked becoming more obscure in our digital age. The fact is most people connect on social media now, and if the church desires to reach this generation with the message of the

Gospel and invite dialogue and community engagement, then they must go where people already are. Therefore, the Inevitable Church desires to create content specifically for these networks and platforms to engage in the vast digital community.

Social media is also a necessary way to create attention and awareness today, particularly for new initiatives that start with zero following. Growing channels and gaining subscriptions is a dynamic of social media, and in general, is a critical metric to pay attention to. The tools offered on these platforms help guide content creation and digital strategy.

Resource and attention were given to filling out these social media accounts to generate viewership and engagement with people who are seeking resources that the Inevitable Church offers. The results have been quite encouraging with several churches and church leaders reaching out and desiring for consultancy services.

YouTube

The YouTube channel is the focus of the launch of this project. Completing the setup of the YouTube channel requires several distinct assets. The goal was to make the channel look professional, aesthetically cohesive, and to reinforce the channel's content.

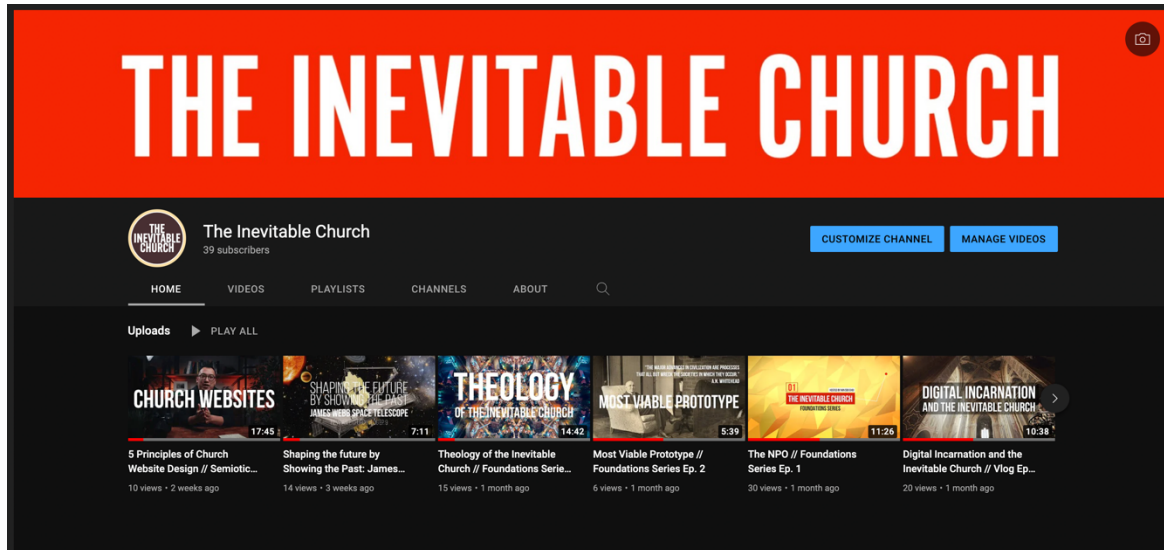


Figure 1.3. Screenshot of the YouTube Channel page for the Inevitable Church <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCsXaWtyLJV-FquTkUcEKjOw>

The channel page is simple and incorporates minimalistic branding and a clean aesthetic. It displays the main logo in the banner, the square secondary logo as the profile picture, and the watermark is the circular logo that is displayed in the lower right corner of the video. See Figures E.3 in Project Documentation Appendix for more screenshots of the YouTube channel.

Instagram

Instagram is one of the most popular social media platforms and is tailored towards visual media, both photos and videos. The main purpose for the Inevitable Church Instagram account is to highlight frames from uploaded episodes and curate relevant media and news around semiotics, technology, and faith.

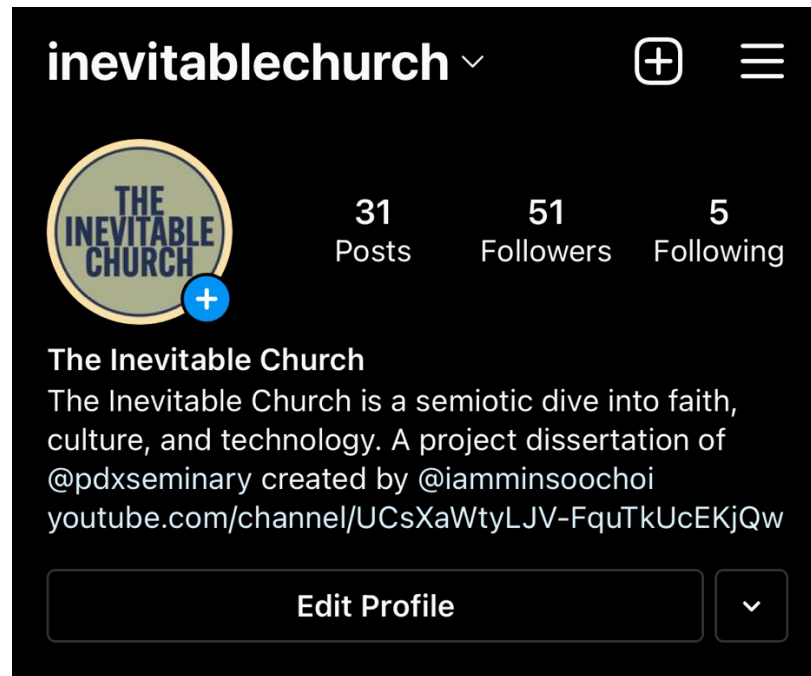


Figure 1.4. Screenshot of the Inevitable Church Instagram account profile. The account handle is @inevitablechurch and can be found at www.instagram.com/inevitablechurch

The content of the account is curated to provoke thoughtfulness around the intersectionality of faith, culture, and tech. There is a mixture of images, quotes, screenshots from YouTube content, news headlines, and theological ideas.

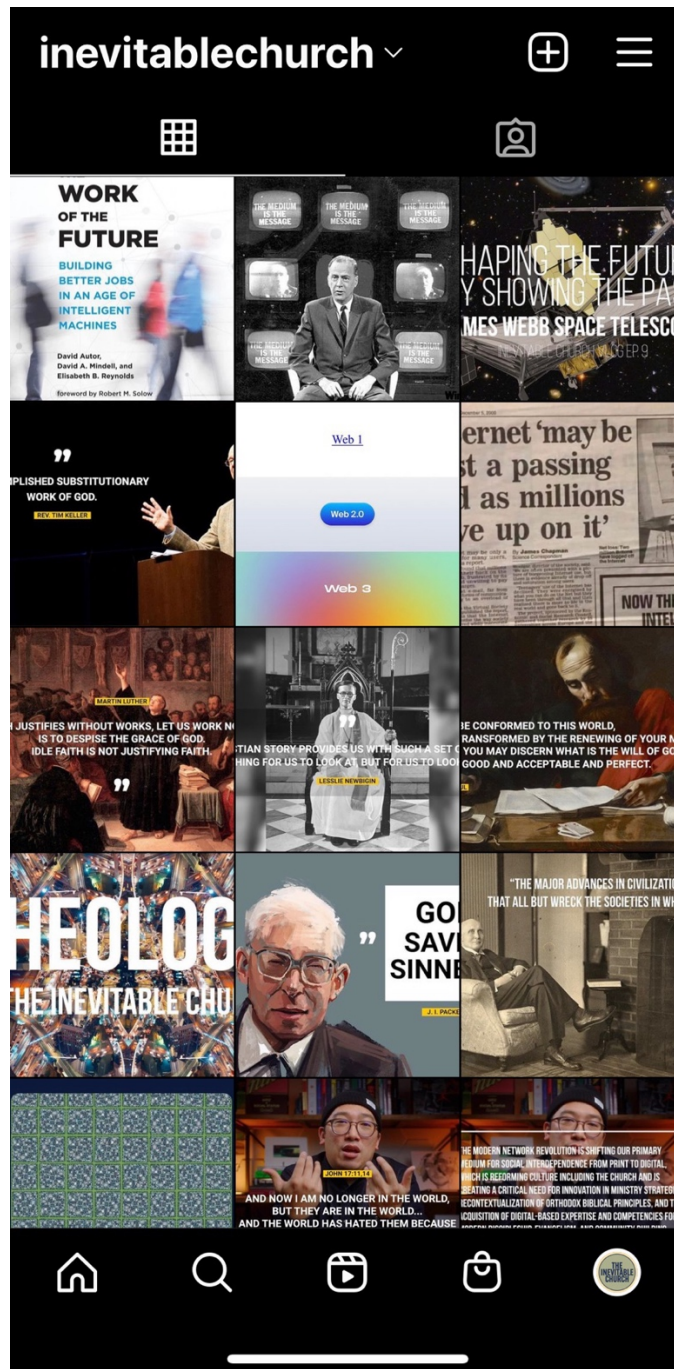


Figure 1.5. Instagram feed of @Inevitablechurch

Podcast (Branding)

Another critical medium is podcasts. This avenue was initially explored as an alternative prototype but was ultimately set aside to focus on video content. Podcasts create an uncanny ability to create connection and authenticity with a community audience. The Inevitable Church podcast is meant to be a primary branch of content for the overall project in the future.

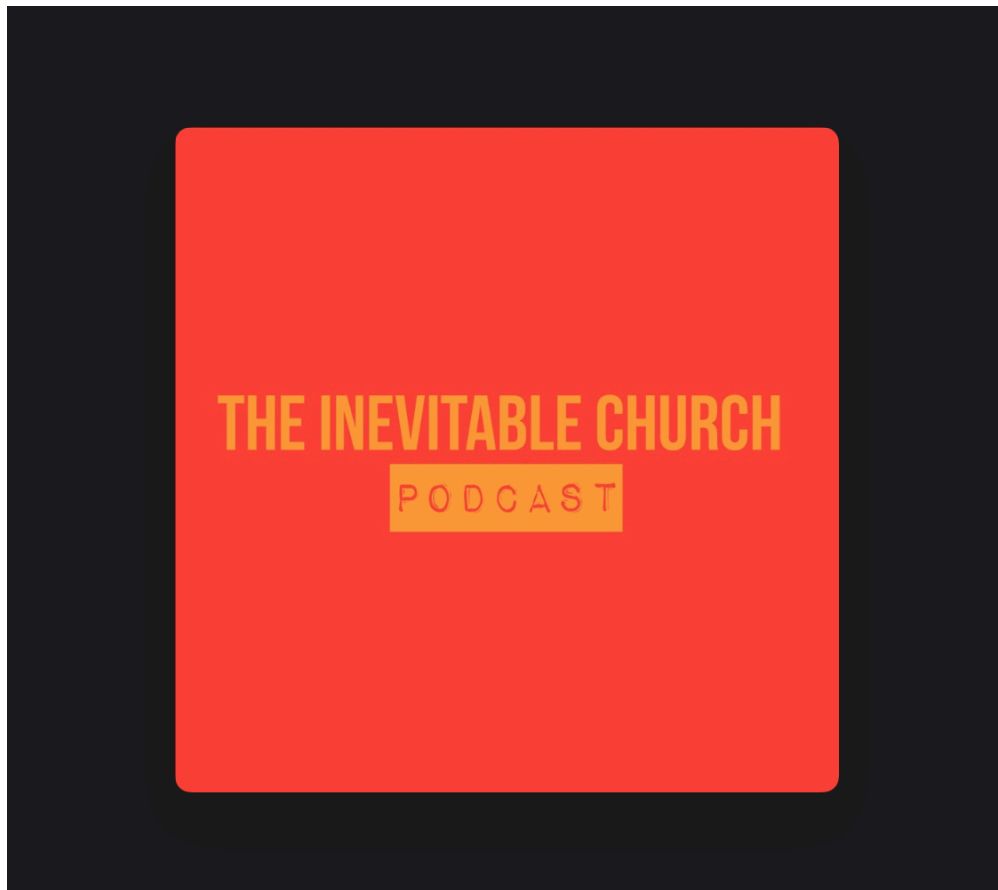


Figure 1.6. Cover art for the Inevitable Church podcast.

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-inevitable-church/id1492169492>

CONTENT

Content creation is at the heart of the Inevitable Church project. The vast possibilities of what information to research and share and the creativity of how to share that information is the powerful driving force of a YouTube channel. Unlike a book or a series, a YouTube channel has no end to what it can share about and ultimately, it is the journey of the creator that people get to view as much as any content.

Episode Playlist

Foundations Series

The NPO // Foundations Series Episode 1

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hPc5NrdTWj4&list=PLkBAimf7gHH1JK0gpCC2Jh17Gl9BXzux_&index=1&t=327s

Most Viable Prototype // Foundations Series Episode 2

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WSYgjT2mRUA&list=PLkBAimf7gHH1JK0gpCC2Jh17Gl9BXzux_&index=2&t=42s

Theology of the Inevitable Church // Foundations Series Episode 3

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=noOshYQIjhY&list=PLkBAimf7gHH1JK0gpCC2Jh17Gl9BXzux_&index=3

Vlog Series

Day one of the last year of my doctoral program and what this channel is all about // Vlog Ep. 1

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GSXGH9dmARM&list=PlkBAimf7gHH3jRNuzvWupaADUxclzxQw_&index=1&t=37s

What is my NPO Statement? The “WHY” Behind the Channel // Vlog Ep. 02

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YMC4Hy2jOc0&list=PlkBAimf7gHH3jRNuzvWupaADUxclzxQw_&index=2&t=3s

Journey into the Creative Process, video literacy, and turning libraries into studios // Vlog Ep. 3

<https://youtu.be/RK3dPQJkuaQ>

Sep. Overview, the three M’s of the creative process, and creative transformation // Vlog Ep. 4

<https://youtu.be/j7R8VQVVJsU>

From Consumption to creation: building resiliency, clarity, and patience // Vlog Ep. 5

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eB21XD38lOM&list=PlkBAimf7gHH3jRNuzvWupaADUxclzxQw_&index=5

The 3 G’s of future church design // Vlog Ep. 6

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ffw8nd5br0&list=PlkBAimf7gHH3jRNuzvWupaADUxclzxQw_&index=7

The Metaverse and the Inevitable Church // Vlog Ep. 7

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XZILsipvfTo&list=PlkBAimf7gHH3jRNuzvWupaADUxclzxQw_&index=8&t=4s

Digital Incarnation and the Inevitable Church // Vlog Ep. 8

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wGmcjCKoQjA&list=PLkBAimf7gHH3jRNuzvWupaADUxclzxQw_&index=9&t=4s

Shaping the future by showing the past: James Webb Space Telescope // Vlog Ep. 9

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RU31lgrZMBA&list=PLkBAimf7gHH3jRNuzvWupaADUxclzxQw_&index=10&t=49s

Semiotic Spelunk

Introduction // Semiotic Spelunk Ep. 1

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MhS9gohaw2U&list=PLkBAimf7gHH0la9RGepo7J9epNzG-8aHT&index=1&t=1s>

5 Principles of Church Website Design // Semiotic Spelunk Ep. 2

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VsIYjQ8GQlg&list=PLkBAimf7gHH0la9RGepo7J9epNzG-8aHT&index=2&t=173s>

Shorts

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9F6-xjWUoe8&list=PLkBAimf7gHH3ej3hcfSR089b7R8wDBOp-&index=1&t=13s>

The Inevitable Church Docuseries

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wqWfvOMVfPw&list=PLkBAimf7gHH3Gs0jQwHN6E6_EZX5MODVs&index=1

Foundations Series

The Foundations Series is an ongoing series of content that introduces core principles of the Inevitable Church. These videos act as the introductory content for any viewers who are new to the channel, and they also offer the backbone from which all other content may be supported.

The playlist for the Foundation Series can be found here:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLkBAimf7gHH1JK0gpCC2Jh17GI9BXzux_

For additional episodes in the Foundations Series, see Project Documentation Appendix E.3.1-2.

The NPO // Foundations Series Episode 1

The Foundations Series is an ongoing series that highlights big ideas about the church and culture in our modern era. It's here where ideas are strung together in series to create a basis for understanding how to navigate the future of the church.



Figure 2.1. The thumbnail picture and title card for the Inevitable Church Foundations Series

The link for “[The NPO // Foundations Series Episode 1, Uploaded by Min Soo Choi on December 11, 2021](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hPc5NrdTWj4&list=PLkBAimf7gHH1JK0gpCC2Jh17Gl9BXzux)” can be found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hPc5NrdTWj4&list=PLkBAimf7gHH1JK0gpCC2Jh17Gl9BXzux>

The Foundations Series starts off with a montage introduction to a vast world. I wanted to create an expansive visual element to create wonder and curiosity at the beginning. The title card was also designed to create this sense of communication—that I am transmitting a message to my audience. The background is this fascinating golden geometric abstract that I think signifies culmination and fulfillment. In a way, it’s a vision of the triumphant future and I like how it contrasts with the title.

The purpose of this episode was to place my NPO in context of what is happening in our cultural moment and to create a starting point that allows us to have a dialogue about the future of the church. The video takes on the perspective of both disorientation and wonder about what God is doing in this present moment. What does it mean to be faithful today? What does the metaphor of salt and light call us to in this age? The digital age is a complicated one and requires a tremendous amount of thought and wisdom to begin seeing how it is driving change.

The Inevitable Church is all about bridging a path from today to the actual church that will exist in the decades to come. What if we knew what they knew now? What about technology do not we not understand yet? What about ministry will undergo changes that we are unaware could change? What about changes that we are actively against?

As you dive into the actual episode, you’re introduced to my studio office where I filmed most of the content. The set was designed to reflect a little bit of me but also have interesting

visual objects and lighting to create a professional atmosphere. There are tools, art, books, and assorted décor. The centerpiece is the desk that was bought from Ikea that was originally designed to be a kitchen island, but I liked it because it was heavy and sturdy. Desks can often be loose and make noise and so I needed a tabletop that had a thickness to it that would dampen any interaction I had with it with my arms and hands. See section 3. Video Production for more information about studio design.

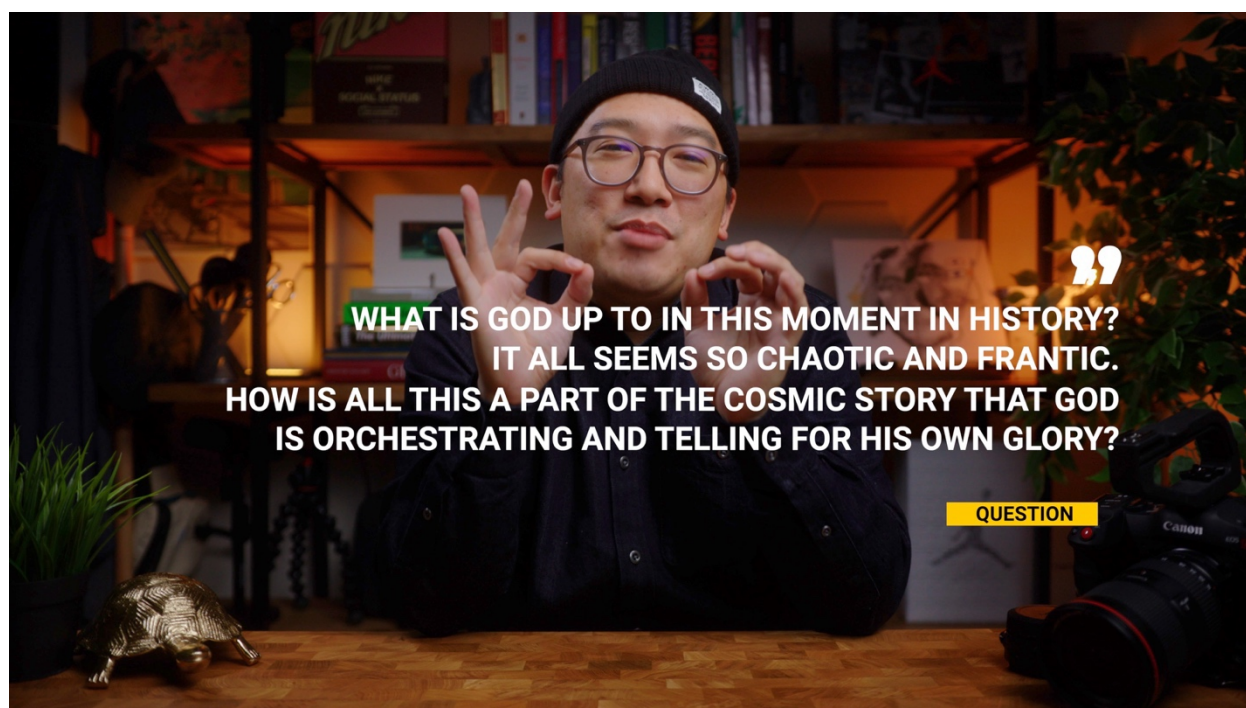


Figure 2.12. Screen grab from Foundations Series Episode 1: NPO showcasing the set design as well as a title animation used in the videos. Two prominent details included here are the camera on the right side of the table as well as the golden turtle on the left. The camera signifies filmmaking and the digital medium while the turtle represents steadfastness and perseverance, the two qualities needed to navigate a network revolution.

Script for NPO // Foundations Series Ep. 1

In most videos, a script was fully written to be used on a teleprompter during filming. This allowed for accurate and precise wording and that helped communicate meaning with clarity.

In this script, I wanted to address the peculiar dance we have within our Christian circles with form and substance because at the heart of the matter of Christian faith in a digital age is the question, “What do we do with all the parts of our practice and traditions that never knew of a digital dimension?” Which leads into the NPO. And then, after stating the NPO, I wanted to lead the viewer into a layered progression that illustrates the logical outworking of what I was attempting to bring to light. Here is the script:

Hello everybody, I am your host Min Soo Choi and welcome to the Inevitable Church Foundation Series.

The videos in this series are meant to give a contextual overview of what the channel is about and what the aim of the content ultimately is. As you watch these episodes, hopefully, you’ll gain insight into some of the major principles of my research, you’ll hear some of the behind-the-scenes stories of how these ideas have taken shape over time, and perhaps some of this content will be relevant and useful, inspiring, and encouraging you in your faith and in your ministry.

This channel has its roots in my doctoral research at Portland Seminary as I pursue a Doctor of Ministry in Christian Semiotics. And for the last three years, I’ve had the opportunity to build a project dissertation that focuses on the intersection of Christian faith, culture, and technology and specifically, technological forces that are creating a historically uncommon sociological phenomenon today called a “Network Revolution.”

It’s clear that technology is outpacing us and our ability to assimilate it. Iterations from major categories of technology are swelling up and converging together, and now it feels like everyday a new disruption or a new breakthrough in tech is about to take and shape our work life, schooling, as well as our relationships and communities.

If you’ve ever thought that tech is pushing us towards a more disruptive and fractured era of human history, you’re not alone. That’s what I am observing as a semiotician—The world feels very much like it is inverted and suspended mid-air.

And I think, especially as the church, you’re wondering what God is up to in this moment of history—it seems so chaotic and frantic. How is all this a part of the cosmic story that God is orchestrating for his own glory? And what’s our place as a people that find ourselves called into this world but to not be of this world?

And all these questions eventually lead me to this overarching question: given this brave new, digital world, what is the relationship between our orthodoxy, or faith, and our ortho-praxy, our ethic?

Do we understand how technology is affecting discipleship, evangelism, faith education, theology, community building, and cultural engagement? Are we aware of how technology aids us in bearing good, spiritual fruit?

And what ministry practices and principles that used to be commonplace in a lot of American churches, perhaps these things that are still heavily relied upon, which ones are quickly becoming outdated, ineffective, and even counter-productive because technology is shifting the conditions of how our societies are forming?

The classic relationship between **substance**, the essential characteristics of Christianity, and **form**, the diverse expressions of those characteristics, is the central mystery that the Inevitable Church is exploring and the primary thesis, if you will, of this channel is that the form will need to rapidly transform. Our churches will go through a reorientation and a rebuilding. And that will create a lot of tension and conflict between churches and within churches.

Our unexplored frontier is digital, virtual, and augmented. What will we learn about ourselves and God in this world? What will be birthed out of this generation? It is both exciting and frightful.

Within human history, every new age has brought a brand-new set of needs, opportunities, and problems for the pioneers and explorers that are called. In my program, the NEED, OPPORTUNITY, and PROBLEM or “NPO” is the cornerstone and center point of this project. It’s what I spent over the last couple years exploring, testing, and refining.

Here’s the NPO of the Inevitable Church:

The modern network revolution is shifting our primary medium for social interdependence from print to digital, which is reforming culture including the church and is creating a critical need for innovation in ministry strategies, recontextualization of orthodox Biblical principles, and the acquisition of digital-based expertise and competencies for modern discipleship, evangelism, and community building.

In this NPO, the first part of my research was focusing on how a network revolution affects societies sociologically. One of the last world-changing network revolutions was in the 1500s when the Gutenberg Printing Press was invented, and historians have observed how this invention revolutionized every major

category of society in Europe: it was not just literacy and education, but scientific research, global news, banking, education, politics, the arts, and religion. When Europe went from a culture of orality, or speech-based, to a culture of print, an incredible amount of disruption occurred that led to major historical events like the Protestant Reformation and the Scientific Revolution. Today's network revolution from print to an A.I., blockchain driven metaverse is going to make what happened in the 16th and 17th century look insignificant in comparison.

For example, let's talk about the Protestant Reformation briefly. An unintended consequence of print was that it undermined the incredible amount of power and influence the Catholic Church had accrued over hundreds of years. Martin Luther utilized the technology of print as he did not just famously nail his 95 Theses to the doors of All Saints' Church in Wittenberg, but he copied them and distributed it across Europe and because of that he gained an immense amount of support and protection from the Catholic Church. Technology of the printing press was a crucial vehicle to spread his message to expose the errors of the church.

And consider the response from the church in the years following. Not only did they attempt to silence Martin Luther and his followers, but the church also tried to undermine all manner of progress regarding printed materials—they censored and burned books, they tried to keep the Bible from being so accessible, and they generally tried to impede progress.

We know the power of books today. We can't imagine a world without access to writings. We have built our entire society on our ability to pass information using the medium of print accurately and reliably.

We often give so much credit to Luther's convictions and his resolve, but it was Martin Luther's radical use of print technology, I would argue, that allowed him to create a movement in opposition of the Catholic Church that swept across Europe. It would be hard to argue that individuals like Wycliffe and Jan Hus had any less conviction or motivation for church reform—they simply did not have the tools that would allow them to balance the power in their favor.

Fast forward to today: what if the same story is happening again today? In America, the church has had a longtime in the cultural spotlight. What if today's shift to digital is undermining the power and influence of the established religious orders of today? That would be a natural reason for churches to dismiss and denounce the digital medium. What if the secret motivation underneath prudence and wisdom was the preservation of power? And what if God is calling us to think digitally? How would we know if we are in disobedience?

We need a spirit of humility and an open-mindedness as the church. We need Biblically informed innovation, being guided by the gospel of Jesus Christ. We need knowledge and discernment that allows us to read the signs of today correctly and to properly recontextualize truth. To do that, we must begin exploring the possibilities that technology is affording us now and in the future.

And so, this is the vision of the Inevitable Church—to be faithful to God and to be faithful to the times that God is calling us to, both here in the present as well as the future.

The foundation of this NPO is built on three ideas:

1. First, the medium is the message, it's an idea conceptualized by the great thinker Marshall McLuhan. He spent much of his life's work breaking down the fundamental sociological effects that going from a print-based culture to an electrified, telecommunication-based culture would bring. He noted massive differences in how societies work, learn, and come together between the two cultures. And he also said that there would be loss, that both orientations of society had things to gain and to lose.
2. Secondly, when a network revolution happens, the primary medium used for communication and connection shifts and creates social disorientation, a period of unrest, fracturing, and conflict as the old falls and the new rises in its place. This in-between period is chaotic because not all places transform at the same rate. And so, we find ourselves in a period where depending on your location, progress might be happening rapidly, like in urban environments, and you also have areas where progress has been incredibly slow. And out of these two categories of progress, you'll get people who have gone through a metaphorical metamorphosis and are flying, and you still got people who are still crawling. This creates fracturing.
3. And lastly, that means, new language of thought, new strategies, new signs, and new principles will be needed, and we'll have to learn how to recontextualize the Gospel for this world. We are entering into an age where pioneers and innovators of Christian faith will be most needed to cultivate the conditions for the new birth of salty, illuminating churches into this digitally terraformed planet. To do that, we will need the heart of a novice once again, learning how to navigate with child-like faith, allowing our faith and traditions to guide us but also being wise and examining novel things and testing them,

As Andy Warhol said: "They Always say that time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourselves."

The Inevitable Church is the expression of these three ideas.

To support the content visually, assets were chosen for this episode that highlighted key points. Also, title animations and graphics were created to reinforce words that were spoken or highlight a key concept or chapter in the video.

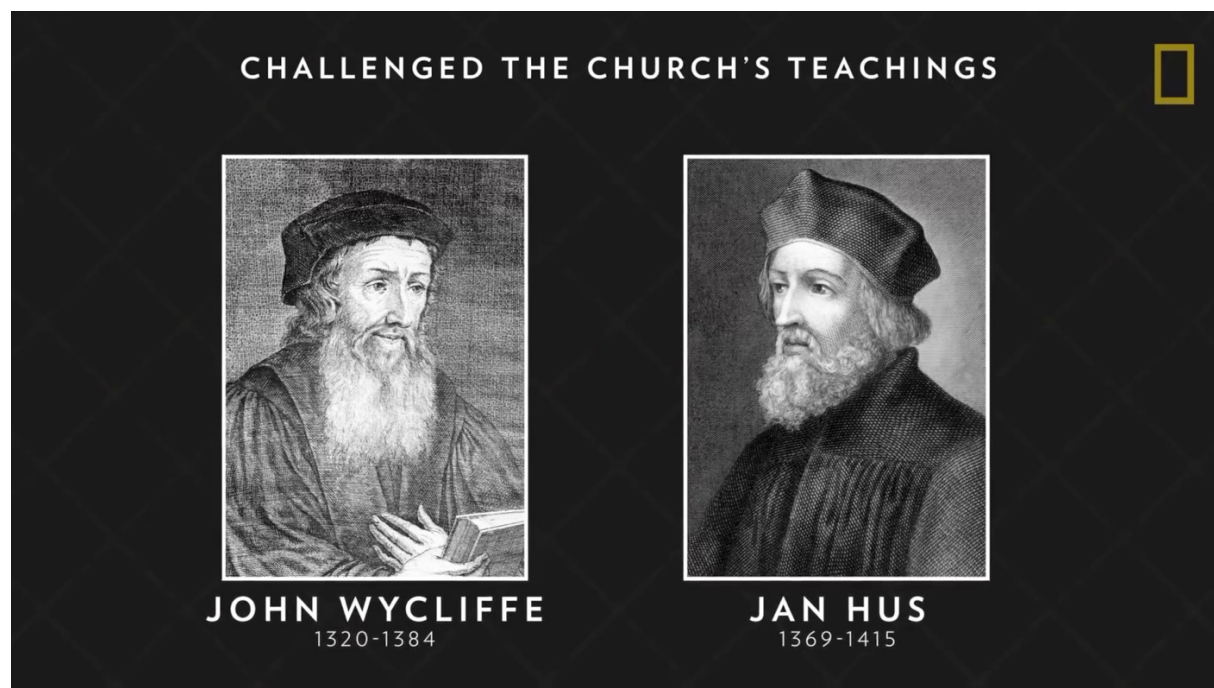


Figure 2.13. Image of John Wycliffe and Jan Hus from National Geographic. "History 101: The Protestant Reformation | National Geographic," National Geographic. October 27, 2017, YouTube video, 1:11, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IATyzSAjClw>



Figure 2.14. Image with text “The Bible Became More Accessible” and Martin Luther. “History 101: The Protestant Reformation | National Geographic,” National Geographic. October 27, 2017, YouTube video, 3:16, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IATyzSAjClw>



Figure 2.15. Screen grab from 3:40 in the NPO video showing the thesis of the episode in a title animation



Figure 2.16. Screen grab highlighting major chapter titles within videos. Font is Bebas Neue and utilizes a simple text animation top reveal at 3:25.



Figure 2.17. Title animation with NPO statement shown at 4:26.

YouTube Description

The YouTube description is helpful in creating more context for viewers on YouTube. The description consists of a short summary of what they will view, how to contact me, other YouTube videos that are related, and a link to Portland Seminary.

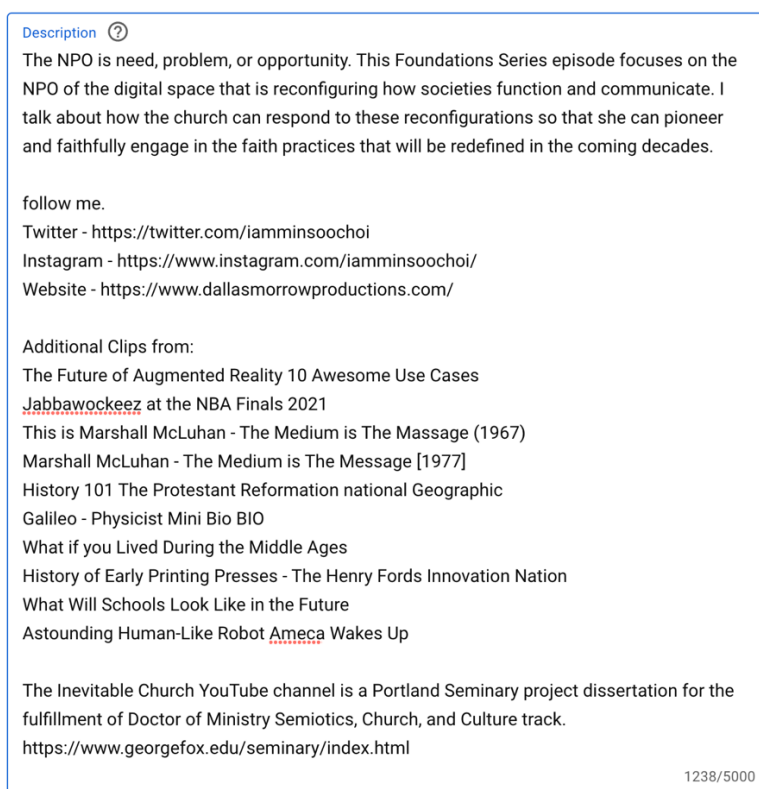


Figure 4

Most Viable Prototype // Foundations Series Ep. 2

View “Most Viable Prototype // Foundations Series Ep. 2”, by The Inevitable Church, uploaded on December 13, 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WSYgjT2mRUA>

The Most Viable Prototype is a video that dives into the merits of a YouTube channel. The episode highlights the journey of how the project centered on video as a medium. It touches

upon the general accessibility and habits of our culture today. See Figures in E.3.1 in Appendix E for additional assets.

Script for Most Viable Prototype // Foundations Series Ep. 2

In the program, we were tasked with designing the form of our project dissertation, which is a cool core characteristic of the DMin program at Portland Seminary.

We spent over a year engineering prototype around our NPO but the core requirement was that the project had to be grounded in actual ministry. In other words, the project dissertation wasn't just an academic exercise in theory or principle but something that would be deployed and integrated today and into the future to address the existing examples of our actual NPO.

For me, the most critical way that I wanted to approach addressing my NPO was by building the principles through research and then deploying them in a non-print based medium in order to develop the language and skill set required to become competent enough to teach and guide other ministry-minded individuals and entities.

So, my MVP became this:

A YouTube channel called “The Inevitable Church.” The channel will consist of short video content produced in various formats and series focusing on semiotics-based insights on how the digital network revolution is affecting and shaping ministry principles and practices. The aim of the channel is to produce content that will evaluate, educate, and edify churches, leaders, and followers of Jesus who are exploring digital technology in the areas of evangelism, community formation, discipleship, and cultural engagement.

Picking video as the primary medium was an important choice. Learning how to create video content at a high level is like learning a brand new language. It takes commitment. It takes risk. You have to be disciplined, you have to practice humility and a growth mindset, you have to practice and immerse yourself into the technical and artistic side of filmmaking. And you have to be patient above all, it takes years to get into any sort of groove—at least that has been my experience. I've been doing it for 10+ years and I am just now getting the hang of the entire process.

A lot of folks, especially the leaders, experts, and officials of today, don't even realize how the way they have learned, prepared, and worked has been shaped by the principles of a print culture. What has made them successful and effective has been in part of mastering the medium. But when they approach video,

social media, and virtual using printing press principles, which have been developed over half a millennia and passed down, it feels out of their element and significantly more difficult for them to produce the same level of work.

One of my favorite quotes on this matter comes from A. N. Whitehead:

“The major advances in civilization are processes that all but wreck the societies in which they occur.”

Societies are being flipped upside down because of the power and speed of change. The people who hold the power are losing their advantage because tech is equalizing and redistributing it. Everyone is becoming perpetual beginners in this new world and so the advantage, if you think about it, really goes towards those who double down on learning and relearning what is emerging. This is where the people who don't want to adapt will fall behind and those who take risks will pave the path into the future.

As we look ahead, the future that is coming will require us to be gracious and generous, lifting each other up and having a mentality that to be fruitful, we got to do it together. There's going to be hardships and pain in the disorientation. There's going to be whiplash. But I believe there is hope if we remain faithful to the Spirit that is orchestrating the Gospel providentially into the future.

In the next episode, I want to talk about the theology of the Inevitable Church. My work is rooted in Christian ethics and a biblical understanding of cultural engagement. I want to talk about how the work that I am pursuing leads to gritty, gospel-rich churches that will have the ability to stay faithful to the prime directive of Christ, have a curious, humble posture towards what's being revealed in culture, and a deep love for their neighbors.

Thank you so much for watching! You can support the channel by subscribing, hitting that thumbs up and that notification bell, and dialoguing with me and others in the comment section below! Peace be with all of you in Christ!

[Theology of the Inevitable Church // Foundations Series Ep. 3](#)

The third episode dives into the theological underpinnings of the Inevitable Church. I thought it would be helpful to draw out some of the theological ideas that have guided the research and project to create a common point of reference. In this video, I talk about three distinct theological ideas: the gospel, via media, and sacrament. These ideas have a slightly more

Anglican tradition built in as that is my tradition, but I thought that these were broad enough to be positively viewed by many.

View “Theology of the Inevitable Church,” by The Inevitable Church, uploaded on December 16, 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=noOshYQIjhY>

See Appendix Figure E.3.2 for more assets.

Script for Theology of the Inevitable Church // Foundations Series Ep. 3

Hello everyone! Welcome to the Inevitable Church, a channel about faith, culture, and technology. My name is Min Soo Choi, I am a Christian Semiotician with a keen interest in how digital tech is changing how ministries might be modeled and designed in the near future, especially churches.

This video is part of the channel’s Foundation Series and tries to lay out some of the core tenets that guide the research and content that you’ll find here.

In this episode, I want to talk about the theological scaffolding of the Inevitable Church. It’s important for me to be able to share with you the core values and beliefs that drive the mission and vision of this channel.

I recognize whenever the discipline of semiotics is involved or when we’re talking about the future or talking about culture and tech, it can get pretty out-of-line and unwieldy really quickly. And I think it’s really important that what I am striving for isn’t just communicating my opinions. A deep value for me is that this channel is a community of shared ideas and beliefs, that we are collectively seeking truth together, and we don’t just pontificate without discernment.

Invariably, we will talk a lot about the future and we will have to use our sanctified imaginations often, but this channel isn’t trying to be prophetic or apocalyptic. In fact, it’s the exact opposite: we want to understand human beings and the history of human beings. We’re historians more than we are prophets.

We believe that human beings have always been human beings, and we collectively share the human condition, and more than anything else, that is our guiding principle as we try to unfold the future.

This channel is grounded in sociology, philosophy, the sciences, and as I mentioned, history, and church history, too. I want to curate thoughtful questions and insights, community discussion and exploration, and most of all, I want it to be a reliable resource that helps us tell the story of Jesus in the world that we live in today.

My hope is that all the work that is put into this channel ultimately diverts our attention from various things and squarely puts a spotlight on the Gospel of Christ. And that's why I want to talk about some of the theological principles that guide what I say, how I say it, and what I hope you take away from it.

I'll share with you some of the theological ideas that guide us as we journey into the rabbit holes. A robust theology helps us stay tethered and grounded in Biblical truth, which is a primary commitment for me.

The Gospel

First, I want to start off with the most important theological truth that I cling to daily and is also central to this channel, naturally: the Gospel. The gospel of Jesus Christ. And I think it's important that you and I have a common definition because without the Gospel, this channel does not hold together.

So, for me, my favorite three-word summary of the Gospel comes from J. I. Packer: "God saves sinners."

Here's the full quote, which is rich and dense in meaning:

[TITLE] "God—the triune Jehovah, Father, Son and Spirit; three persons working together in sovereign wisdom, power and love to achieve the salvation of a chosen people, the Father electing, the Son fulfilling the Father's will by redeeming, the Spirit executing the purpose of Father and Son by renewing. Saves—does everything, first to last, that is involved in bringing man from death in sin to life in glory: plans, achieves and communicates redemption, calls and keeps, justifies, sanctifies, glorifies. Sinners—men as God finds them, guilty, vile, helpless, powerless, unable to lift a finger to do God's will or better their spiritual lot."

First and foremost, the gospel is good news about what the person of Jesus has already accomplished for us. It's not a program, it's not a principle, it's neither insight or enlightenment.

The Rev. Tim Keller calls it the "accomplished substitutionary work of God." He goes on to remind us in his book *Center Church* that "the Gospel is not something that we do but something that has been done for us."

And so, God has saved me, a sinner, through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and this channel first and foremost hopes to remind me and you of this profound, beautiful, good news.

But, here's a natural follow up question: what does "God saves sinners" have to do with faith, culture, and technology then?

Well, at the heart of the channel is a desire to do good works. And out of the gospel, good works becomes possible. Because without the gospel, all work eventually gets exposed as self-serving and insufficient. But the heart of the gospel is grace. It's the idea that we ourselves are not enough to do the good that needs to be done to make a better world. And the debt of sin that has been paid on our behalf is too large to ever pay back through our own works. And so, we are motivated to do good not because we are good and loving, but because we believe that only Jesus is good and loving—that motivation, according to Scripture, is the only motivation that does not get easily corrupted by our own human ambitions.

Our faith is built on grace that overflows with a pure heart to do good in this world.

Martin Luther famously pointed out that we are saved by faith alone but not by a faith that remains alone. He writes,

"Works avail nothing, but faith alone, and that without any merit whatever, avails before God. On the other hand, the Apostle declares that without fruits faith serves no purpose. To think, b is to despise the grace of God. **Idle faith is not justifying faith.**"

I am convinced not only that the Gospel is salvation and salvation inspiring good works, its truth and implications give us proper motivations, the right end game vision, a resilient ethic in navigating the complexities, and even the corrective measures when we veer off the path, which is certainly bound to happen.

The Inevitable Church is a signpost in an era where getting lost and discouraged is commonplace. It's the staging ground for the Gospel to renew us, to educate us into the present work of the Spirit, and to remind us of the Gospel.

And it's hopefully a jumping off point to spelunk back into the world knowing that we are securely and firmly tethered to Christ.

So, I am reminded that the work that is displayed here is designed to echo back to the only truth that transforms us, that sustains us, and that can actually accomplish redemption, healing, and renewal.

This is the first and most important theological proclamation of the Inevitable Church.

Via Media

Via media is an important principle within The Inevitable Church. A literal reading of it just means “through a medium,” which is actually quite fitting and what this project is all about which is, understanding mediums and the social implications of using them.

But Via Media is a famous Latin phrase meaning “middle path” or “middle way.” It’s an important aspect of my tradition, the Anglican tradition. It roughly signifies the idea of moderation in everything, nothing in excess. But I like including an addendum that my teacher, Len Sweet, would often say in lectures: everything in moderation, including moderation itself. Somethings are divinely excess by design, and we should remember that in our lives.

What I love about via media is that there is a dual accountability embedded in the principle. Traveling down the middle path requires us to pay attention to the left and right side, above and below, and quite often backwards and over the horizon. It’s the most vulnerable position but it’s also the position that gives us the best angles to perceive anything.

The Inevitable Church desires to consider faith and culture broadly, globally, and ecumenically, including voices in opposition. We seek truth wherever it can be found and no matter how inconvenient it is. And what we hope to convey is a commitment to learning, a commitment to open-mindedness and growth, and a commitment to dialogue.

By the way, this is important. Within the principle of via media is a semiotics discipline of self-critique—to investigate how we’ve been shaped, how we’ve been raised up, what presuppositions and biases we’ve adopted, and how signs can help us reveal our blind spots, the parts of our knowledge and framework that are weak and underdeveloped.

The middle path suspends us in tension with ourselves and with the world, it calls us into wonder, liminality, and mystery. It makes us use all our sense to grow in tacit knowledge in intuition, and discernment of the spirit.

I’m reminded of Romans 12.

The work found on this channel is spiritual worship as much as digitized content and Paul reminds us,

“DO NOT BE CONFORMED TO THIS WORLD, BUT BE TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWING OF YOUR MINDS, so that you MAY DISCERN WHAT IS THE WILL OF GOD—what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

That’s the heart of the content that I want to give to you all—transformative, good, pleasing content that helps you grow in your faith and in your ministries.

Sacrament

The Gospel affects virtually everything including the virtual. That’s there is a focus on digital, virtual, and augmentation on this channel.

For the Semiotician, signs, images, objects in our physical reality are incredibly important. The incarnation of our savior teaches us that our faith is rooted in the reality we live in—it’s physical as much as it is spiritual. And what we’re realizing is that our digital dimension is increasingly becoming more and more overlaid onto our physical dimension.

That is why we need to be thinking sacramentally:

In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul reminds the church of the sacramental nature of the Gospel.

Now I would remind you, brothers, and sisters, of the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand, through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you—unless you have come to believe in vain.

For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God, I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them—though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. Whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you have come to believe.

—that is Jesus Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, he was BURIED, and that he was physically raised on the third day. And then Paul just pops off and rattles off all the appearances—he appeared, he appeared, he appeared. The divine has breached the physical

Lesslie Newbigin wrote this, “The Christian story provides us with such a set of lenses, not something for us to look at, but for us to look through.”

The Gospel is tacit, incarnated, it has converged into our reality—this is sacramental in nature. It’s news that we desperately need like air. It’s not meant to be pristine or preserved. We do not glance at it like a valuable painting closed off to human interaction. The Gospel is more like a child’s kaleidoscope, designed to be held, used, and explored, to be taken and carried, and through it, we be allowed to imagine, wonder, and worship God the way that he sees the world.

A sacramental understanding of our faith is quite important in an age where there is this growing dimension of our lives that can seemingly separate mind, heart, and body.

The hope that we have is God reigns. He reigns the physical, the heavenly, and the digital. He is already spreading his Kingdom into this dimension. And he is calling us to be the church there as well. To proclaim the Gospel, to engage people, and to do good works.

These are a few of the core ideas that shape the ministry of the Inevitable Church. In future videos, I am hoping to revisit these ideas and bring in other important ones.

Script for “Discipleship // Foundations Series Ep. 7

This script has not been made into a video yet and is scheduled to be filmed in March 2022.

So, let’s talk about discipleship and why possibly we need to (re)sign it.

As a semiotician, I think these early decades of the 21st century is some of the most complex for Christian discipleship in America. The rise of the internet, the progressive secularization of culture, and a general jadedness with religion have all contributed to this weakening of disciples occupying the public square in culture. This isn’t news to any of us; but what’s the future of discipleship in America?

We're living in a time where there's significant amount of disconnect between church and culture, and also within the church, between spiritual leaders and their congregation. It seems like we are funneling into whatever we want to subscribe to with very little need to hear outside of our bubble.

Obviously, a lot has changed in society over a relatively short period of time and the church has had a hard time adjusting to the new questions and demands people living in these times are facing. Culturally, we are fracturing, having less and less "common" experience even though we might live in the same neighborhoods.

We are politically and socio-economically divided, and the gap is only widening—although, I do understand social media exaggerates that divide but what's important is that the narrative continues to grow.

Technology is giving us greater ability to choose and filter, right? We get to preferentially determine what kind of world we want to see to an extent, and so, all that access has also given us excess, and naturally with excess, we extract, and if we are unaware of our blind spots, we will extract with prejudice, creating echo chambers. Does this sound familiar?

The church currently faces the challenge of bearing good news during all this cultural tumultuousness while at the same time having to address many of its shortcomings from the past.

So, what is the future of committed Christians in this kind of world?

One of the intriguing things about all of this is this significant redistribution that is happening—it's sort of a very powerful social "currency"—and I am not talking about bitcoin. I'm talking about "symbolic capital." What is that?

Symbolic capital is a sociological idea that I was first introduced to from James D. Hunter in his book *To Change the World*. And what it essentially is is a kind of social credibility that signifies influence, honor, or prestige in a given culture—think about Barack Obama and his post-presidency influence or Elon Musk how he seems to influence the tech space, or a LeBron James for basketball and pop culture.

And not just individuals—think about the major brands and businesses that also have a heavy hand in generating movement in culture—Apple, Meta, Amazon, and Google. When you look at these individuals or businesses in America, it's clear that they have a disproportionate amount of symbolic capital in their respective spheres and beyond.

What's interesting is that symbolic capital can be fairly easy to track nowadays—think about subscriber numbers, or “likes,” or retweets—you now can quantify this social currency and be able to see how much influence they may have in general.

And what does symbolic capital allow an individual or group to do? Well, in a nutshell, they get to pioneer and shape the future. Its influence, its authority. It allows you to pronounce what should and shouldn't be, what trends, what is accepted...and there is this cascading domino affect that what you create trickles into how others create also. And that's very powerful.

By the way, symbolic capital isn't dependent on how many individuals make up your group—you don't have to have a ton of people, which makes it less about being in the majority and more about positioning yourself in the right points of culture.

What's interesting to me about this post-Christian, post-church culture is how absent the church is at the inflection points of our culture even though we are many in this country.

According to Pew Research and Barna Group, about 25% of the U.S. population self identified as “born-again” Christians in 2018-2019—conservative number, no time to dive into the definition of what

constitutes this or that. And yet, this massive group in the U.S. is perceived to have an extremely low amount of symbolic capital in culture, and that is a major concern. What's caused this?

Tim Keller writing in his chapter on cultural crisis in *Center Church* points out that for the greater part of the twentieth century the church largely practiced Pietism when it came to her attitude on and relationship to culture. He writes,

“The basic stance [of the evangelical church] was to ignore culture and put all stress on conversions and on the spiritual growth of individuals...I would argue this was not so much a negative view of human culture as one of indifference. Culture simply was not an issue. Too much attention to it was seen as a distraction.”

Think about how churches would shape their ministry, what they would emphasize theologically, if they didn't really have to account for culture, and specifically, didn't have to deal with an antagonistic culture? Well, I think those frameworks would produce a kind of a disciple that also did not have to be concerned with culture.

I guess what I am trying to say is that the type of disciples that were raised in the 20th century would not be well-equipped to handle today's cultural conditions, conditions where cultural values and systems wildly fluctuate across the country. And so, the major concern I have with how we view discipleship today is that it's still largely based on models from the near past.

I think versions of this old model of discipleship that relied on these long gone conditions are still practiced in many churches and we sort of tout them as “Biblical” or “Orthodox,” practiced since the beginning. And I think what's probably more true is that our predecessors built a theology of discipleship upon their cultural conditions—

EVERY generation of churches does this but here's the “aha moment” that I want to communicate: the difference that needs to be accounted for in this generation of churches is that the change we experience is

so drastic and so rapid, that we need to take a major leap into both understanding the new cultural conditions and rediscovering the theological foundations that will help us navigate this new terrain.

When it comes to core ideas like discipleship, I believe we don't spend enough time asking important, foundational questions of what works and doesn't work when it comes to making disciples, especially when Christian beliefs are on cultural trial.

Later in the chapter Keller conveys the counter argument,

"Others who adopt a pietistic stance have argued that it is not a proper goal for Christians to try to improve culture at all, even indirectly. The nineteenth-century evangelist Dwight Moody was reputed to have said, 'I look upon this world as a wrecked vessel. God has given me a lifeboat and said to me, 'Moody, save all you can.' This is a classic depiction of the pietistic mind-set. The argument is this: who needs to engage culture when people are spiritually lost and dying? What should matter is evangelism and personal discipleship."

He then says, "But this view is naive about culture's role in preparing people for evangelism."

Evangelism? I thought we were talking about discipleship. See, Keller makes the point that our crisis of discipleship is a direct result from our crisis of evangelism. The church of the 20th century fell asleep at "preparing people for evangelism." In other words, the culture became estranged to the source of faith while yet still retaining the values of the faith and the church didn't realize it before it was too late.

Now, that's not to say that Christians did not enter into the public sphere, or the church had little or no influence on public life the last 50 years—quite the opposite, religiosity in powerful spheres still happened in politics and education. What didn't happen though was a process of accountability. Accruing power, leveraging power was Americanism dressed up as Christianity, but the church never condemned it. They didn't see the cost of what was happening and at best, they were indifferent to it, as Keller points out.

Coming from a more existential perspective, Makoto Fujimura writes,

“Our failure is not that we chose earth over heaven: it is that we fail to see the divine in the earth, already active and working, pouring forth grace and spilling glory into our lives.”

The church today is paying off the debt that has been accrued for not “seeing the divine in the earth.” I think that is poignantly said.

Today’s disciples will need to correct the naivety of our predecessors. So, how do we move forward? What does the inevitable church and her disciples need to consider in this next decade?

As I said in the beginning, we need to (re)sign discipleship. We need to consider the role of discipleship in context with evangelism, the great commission, as well as how the church is meant to relate to culture—to be both citizens of heaven and citizens on earth.


But I want to specifically talk about what it means to be a citizen on earth in 2022 and beyond. What does it mean to be committed citizens of Christ living in a digitally saturated reality?

First, we need to deconstruct outdated models for discipleship that has been laced with Americanism and reexamine the biblical principles that address our living and thinking.

This is critical because Christian discipleship again should rely on biblical truth and faith rather than symbolic capital or anything else. We should be wise, careful, and complex in our approach. We won’t always get it right and I am sure the generation after us will criticize us for dropping the ball in many ways.

Today, Christian discipleship is much more costly than it was a century ago. And ultimately, this is a good thing—nominal Christianity is just as insidious in the way that it can convolute and confuse the message of Christ.

But what does recommitting to Biblical discipleship mean for our digital world? Well, simply, that is what all of the great individuals of faith did throughout scripture in times where the people of God were increasingly sojourners and visitors. My favorite example of this is Daniel.

 David Kinnamon, the president of Barna, frequently utilizes the term “Digital Babylon” to describe our modern context and it’s because of the spiritual and cultural parallels that he sees between what the people of Israel may have experienced as foreigners in Babylon in the book of Daniel.

It’s not a perfect term and there are some issues with the correlation but overall, I think it is accurate to describe our digital landscape as a “foreign place” that sort of makes us, human beings, sojourners.

Perhaps a more apt parallel is Paul at Athens giving a sermon at the Areopagus addressing the rampant idolatry by pointing out possibly the most epitomized example: an altar with the inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Paul in that moment correctly diagnoses the symptoms and addresses the Athenian culture’s desire for worship to ultimately know the unknown.

Secondly, we need disciples that not only care deeply about souls and eternal destinies but also about culture, the social context, doing good, working towards justice and flourishing—

These are the markers of spiritual fertility in a culture that is looking for good news. And that means, we have to begin learning what it really means to be individuals as well as church communities that reemphasize being a good neighbor. Culture is not a distraction—it’s part of our calling to engage it well.

And I think the digital avenue allows us to do this in creative and interesting ways. Not only can we start non-profits from our personal smartphones in a matter of minutes, but we can also crowdsource, we can

gather attention through different channels and networks, we can share our needs and find needs that we can serve much easier. There's so much we can do but we don't because I just think we don't know how. We don't preach this kind of discipleship from the pulpit—when's the last time your pastor exhorted you to do any of these things?

When I was living in Chicago, a pastor once preached that a church should be doing so much good that if it unexpectedly closed or was uprooted, the whole city would feel loss.

See, too many of our churches are closed off from her surroundings and wouldn't be missed at all if it suddenly closed. Many churches are more country club than culture caregivers, and I don't mean that these churches are just trying to be exclusive or high brow.

Their "country club-ness" is a direct result of their inability to do anything other than exist, to only attract those who are already bought into Christian teachings, to welcome only those who are already like-minded and similar in appearance.

These churches have slowly become insular, and they'll justify it with theology, with a vague mission and vision for their church. The greatest deception that I find in the church is the church believing and speaking authoritatively about only literal matters of the Bible and completely ignoring any social ill, whether it is racial injustice or political strife, or anything else.

By the way, we need disciples of all kinds, of all professions, in both low and high places. If all of our disciples turn to the priesthood, we will surely wither from the culture.


Thirdly, we need disciples that are learners first.

Now, certainly, disciples should be great learners of the Bible and theology but disciples who understand the intricacies of the cultural landscape will pioneer the gospel to the next generation.

Where the pure counter-culturalist will simply look towards the quiet and the secluded. And the progressive liberals will be wooed by every great new spirit and lose their way often. But if we are committed to a blended approach, to be ecumenical in theological matters as well as in our paradigms and frameworks, that will certainly be advantageous. Because nothing is staying the same.

Kevin Kelly, the renowned futurist and founder of Wired magazine, writes this in his important book *The Inevitable*:

“It’s taken me 60 years, but I had an epiphany recently: Everything, without exception, requires additional energy and order to make itself... life in the future will be a series of endless upgrades...the rate of graduation is accelerating... and endless upgrades make you into a newbie, and worse, we will be newbies forever. That should keep us humble.”

 Tech. Digital. The future. it’s humbling all of us. As Christians, we should be well acclimated to being humbled. So we should dive in.

Fourthly, we need disciples who divers, spelunkers, explorers, and pioneers.

The church’s fundamental is the doctrine of grace, that we live not with a need to be accepted but have an identity of complete acceptance in the Father— and that should break us away from the fear of failure or the unknown.

In my mind, the gospel allows us to be great pioneers and innovators because we believe that it’s Spirit of God who is going ahead of us and orchestrating all things. We should want to go forth and seek the Kingdom.

Tradition is good but it is a both/and approach and if tradition makes us static and dull, we should suspend it and double down on creating new rhythms and traditions.

I know, it's risky, it feels prodigal in a way, doesn't it? But remember that in Christ we are given the great example of the true older brother who risked infinitely more so that he could bring us back to the father.

That is

Our hope isn't in the world or even that God will take us out of this world, but our hope is in God who calls us to the world.

I often wonder how this digital dimension of our human lives came to be and the only thing I can conclude is that God orchestrated it this way for a reason.

The final thing is that we need disciples who create and tell stories

I think a modern-day counter-reformation is needed in America and it's going to be led by our capacity to revitalize the story of the gospel in the newest contemporary mediums. Our symbols and signs have been hijacked, the fruit severed from the root, so to speak. And we need to tell stories that resonate with our faith and point to Jesus in a story-saturated, crowded arena.

One of the ways that discipleship is in crisis is that we, ourselves, have become just as consumeristic as anyone else. In other words, we've denied our faith speaking into our digital lives.

What also complicates the issue is that most of the response from the church the last 10 years is that technology is essentially negative and harmful even in moderation. How can Christian faith compete with such a dopamine-generating, addictive source of entertainment and information?

We've essentially created a narrative that technology is only good for consumption. The problem is that's just not true. Social media certainly has a bias—it's controlled by companies that want you to stay on it but

if you're a creator or your intention is to share as much as you take, then how you engage with these networks fundamentally change.

And I want to cover this more deeply in another video, but today's disciples can't get around this anymore: if we are followers of Jesus, then Jesus commands us to go and make disciples, to spread the gospel of Jesus,

Today, we are living in an age where digital technology, the internet, video, and audio are taking over print and that is creating an entirely different set of conditions for human beings to live, learn, work, and relate to one another. And I believe it means that we also need to be a digitally grounded church with native digital disciples.

Semiotic Spelunk

The Semiotic Spelunk is a series that compliments the Foundations Series with content that is much more practical and contextual to today's culture. The vision for this series is to do small dives into different events and developments that are happening today. The technological processes that are unfolding today can inform us in critical ways as we think about how we engage culture.

Spelunking is the activity of cave diving. It's an apt metaphor because we require both being tethered to secured rope as well as a commitment to jumping into the darkness with an appropriate amount of risk. Engaging culture is a lot like spelunking in this regard. The church has become way too indifferent to culture and the American church, especially, has lost its commitment to the Great Commission. The Semiotic Spelunk, therefore, is a call back to being gritty, risk-taking as a church. In our Christian faith, our tether is Christ and the Scriptures, and

as we explore the shifting world, we are to be hopeful, risky, seeking to love and to proclaim the Gospel.

View the Playlist for Semiotic Spelunk here:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLkBAimf7gHH0la9RGepo7J9epNzG-8aHT>

Watch the first episode of the Semiotic Spelunk here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MhS9gohaw2U&list=PLkBAimf7gHH0la9RGepo7J9epNzG-8aHT&index=1>

See Figures E.3.6 in Appendix E to see scripts and assets for episode 1.

[Introduction to the 5 Principles of Church Website Design // Semiotic Spelunk Episode 2](#)

View the “5 Principles of Church Website Design,” by Min Choi, uploaded on January 6, 2022, here: <https://youtu.be/VsIYjQ8GQlg>.



Figure 2.18. Title sequence for the Semiotic Spelunk series that includes a dark blue, aquatic/diving theme to convey “spelunking,” which is a cave diving term.

Episode 2 focuses on principles with which modern church websites should be designed. You’ll notice that these principles are less technical and more human-centered. We often associate a digital space as a curated space of the best and the brightest moments. But a mature digital space is more like a window into the life of the church. A website can create this experience, but it requires an understanding of the capabilities and a prioritization of maintaining it from week to week. A digitally adept church is a learning church. It’s a church that wants to use all the tools and means that will help it proclaim the good news of the gospel.



Figure 2.19. Thumbnail image for 5 Principles of Church Website Design // Semiotic Spelunk Episode 2.

Script for 5 Principles of Church Website Design // Semiotic Spelunk Episode 2

Let's talk about church websites.

In 2022, websites will still play an important role as the front porch of your church—that's not a groundbreaking statement, although some of the most legendarily awful websites to ever be created on face of the internet were constructed by our brothers and sisters in an era long past—God rest their souls.

However, web 3.0 is just around the corner and with this better, stronger, fitter internet, websites are going to, once again, need to be (re)signed. And not just because technology will give us new capabilities but because creating connections with people will only happen more and more through digital mediums as we march into this decade.

And I think that's good news. As we investigate the future, the church will have more opportunities than ever before to connect and build incarnational relationships with community members and visitors, both near and far, because of what digital mediums will afford us.

And we need to quickly correct our thinking that digital is either artificial or a distraction. It's here to stay, it's not a fad, and it's a crucial element in our obedience and faithfulness to Lord Jesus in the 21st century.

Whether your church website is beautiful, functional, and well-maintained or it looks like this:

We're all going to have to think once again about our digital footprint more intently, whether it's a website, social media, live-streaming, or something else. Because web 3.0 will mark yet another opportunity for the churches of this generation to pioneer how their digital front porch can aid her in discipleship, evangelism, and community engagement in this new decade.

And I am most excited about small to medium churches, both in rural and urban settings to explore digital avenues for their ministries. And it's because designing and maintaining a digital footprint has never been easier to do.

With all of that being said, I want to talk about 5 principles to church website design that I think are crucial to creating a digital footprint that authentically, meaningfully, and honestly connect and build relationships with individuals, families, Christians, and non-Christians in your local area, regardless of the size or demographics of your church.

Now, a quick word about the 5 principles in this video. First, these principles are more descriptive than prescriptive, and the simple reason is because these principles offer more value in the long run when they point to the unique context of your church. Now, I'll show examples that reinforce what I am talking about but the intention here isn't to copy another church's website. Every church is different with different needs and so, the website should reflect those differences as best it can.

Secondly, these principles are not intended to make your website do the heavy-lifting of what people should be doing in a thriving faith community—websites don't replace people. What websites should do is accurately reflect what your people already embrace and do.

Lastly, principles for digital design take a long time to implement but take longer to implement. If your church is new to utilizing digital mediums, just remember that you're going to experience a lot of iterations, revisions, trials, and errors. Dedicating resources and committing to a culture of open-mindedness is incredibly important.

I know I said lastly but one more critical note: I believe digital footprints are most powerful when they aren't trying to attract or to sell an idea but when they are trying to tell authentic, honest stories; Stories about truth, about beauty, about life. Stories that are real and ultimately point to the story of Jesus.

So, with all of that being said, here are the 5 principles of church web design:

3. Create Hospitality

Ok, so the first principle and a good one to focus on in the beginning of this process is thinking about hospitality with the homepage being active, consistently updated.

I mentioned earlier those websites are the digital front porch of your church because it serves an important function: to be welcoming to visitors and guests who are searching for a church like yours.

Now, if the website is the front porch, then the homepage is the signpost—it's the most important part of your website and a lot of things happen in the minds and hearts of visitors when they go here.

A lot of church websites try to make the homepage as beautiful and curated as they can; they'll have their logo up, a beautiful picture, maybe their mission statement, or something very impressive like a reel of a lot of energy, a baptism, or an outreach. These kinds of strategies have a lot of dazzle and energy to them, but I think it can indirectly try to sell an experience that isn't very common at the church.

I think this is a mistake. Why? Because hospitality is best when there is a sense of presence. And that's what is missing when you look at all these amazing websites. They are beautiful, they are decked out in cool b-roll or fancy designs, but they are static—they are created to just replay the same images over and over. Once you've visited once, you never have to see that front page again.

In contrast, I think the top portion of your homepage should be active, dynamic, showing weekly updates, and not like a blog where you can endlessly scroll down but a single most-recent post that serves both guests and community members.

Take a look at Bridgetown Church in Portland, OR, what their homepage looked like on the eve of a heavy snowfall. Just right at the top, "Hey, we're cancelled." The picture is recent with Christmas tree on the stage. I think something like this serves people more even though it's not the most attractive design.

2. Paint your culture

Principle number two: define your culture. A lot of churches will put in their about page, the church staff and leadership, core beliefs, and mission and vision statements, right? And I think those are important although I will say that a lot of these websites have very bland and unspecific statements that don't really reveal much about the church.

But I think the website should reflect the culture of the church and the “about page” should talk about what your church is intentional about building every single day.

Yes, we are, of course, driven by our beliefs and, by our vision and mission statements but I think identity statements, “who we are,” can be powerful as well.

Again, the why’s are important but that’s not what sticks inside people’s minds—the how statements are much less abstract, much more memorable, and I think it also keeps the church accountable to her identity.

When you go to the About page at Oaks Church, the first thing you see is the culture of the church:

One—we are for your family.

Two—we are party people.

Three—we are generous givers.

Four—we are for this community.

Five—we are always getting better

Six—we are always inviting.

Now, there’s plenty of things that I would love to see Oaks Church try to do to make this specific page more personal and meaningful, but I like that the staff page and the beliefs pages are sub-pages.

Let me say one more thing and it goes back to the accountability thing that I mentioned. When you paint your culture, you also create a challenge to live up to that culture.

For example, if you say you’re all about hospitality, like “we have saved a seat for you,” then your ministry better have individuals, both staff and members, that don’t let people fall through the cracks, that people are served. And I know some people want to stay incognito, I get that, but you better acknowledge them in some way, find out if they need anything, answer questions they might have, and create a point of contact.

And see, everyone has a form of hospitality, right? What church is saying hospitality is on the bottom of our list? The challenge is painting your version of that!

You most likely will not distinguish your church from any other church in your area with mission and vision statements. You must know your culture and paint it everywhere, especially on your website. But if you are aligned in your culture and in your ministry, I think creating a website that reflects those things can be a powerful addition.

3. Tell your story

Alright, principle number 3 and this one is huge! You have to tell your story, all of them. One of the most frustrating things on a church website is the absence of storytelling. Churches are built on the greatest story of all time and yet, on a website of all places, you rarely find stories.

And if you visit these church websites, you'll be told about the amazing events that they have planned but never a page where they share how those events turned out. You get bios and short intros for staff but you never have a spot where there's a short video about them and the story of Jesus. What about how the church was founded? What about what's ahead soon for the church?

Churches should be telling the story of Jesus every single day in the life of their church and it's because human hearts are story shaped.

Storytelling is difficult and takes a lot of work to be powerful and honoring but it should go hand in hand with media, it should go together with programming, and various ministries.

I like how Cornerstone Community Church shares their origin story told by their senior pastor:

I like how this video shows off the local community in the b-rolls, I like how ordinary and down-to-earth this story is. You can get a sense that the pastor has a love for that neighborhood.

We need to invite storytellers into the life of the church—that includes writers, artists, speakers, young and old, and those who want to share Jesus in creative and collaborative ways.

3. Engage the neighborhood

I think the true treasure of a church is found in her people and community and yet, it's super rare to find examples of community voices prominently on church sites. Of all the principles, this one may be the most difficult and complex because you must be very careful about what you're intending and what you're communicating.

I think a simple clarification of this principle is that you should design your church website around the idea that it is a part of the greater neighborhood of that city or town.

And I think a good marker for how a church is doing when it comes to partnering in things like discipleship, evangelism, and community building is showing how you are engaging in all of these various things and then documenting them.

Too much of church website design is centered on Sunday worship. That's when everyone is gathered in their Sunday best, that's when it is most energetic and spectacular, but I think church websites reinforce this disconnection between what's happening on Sundays vs the rest of the week. And more importantly, churches are far too shy about lifting the very city they are rooted in.

In this day and age, we should be looking for ways to tell the story of Jesus from homes and neighborhoods, we should seek stories not just about salvation and redemption but stories about public good, the needs and challenges of the city, and communicate a commitment to this endeavor.

I think a church network that does this super well is Redeemer Church in NYC. On their website, one of the most prominent things they have right at the very top of the homepage is "Skeptics Welcome."

If you go to the page, you not only hear from Tim Keller and his heart for addressing doubt and skepticism but there's also videos showing testimony of actual people engaging with this value found at Redeemer.

Welcoming Skeptics isn't just a provocative tagline, it communicates something deeply caring to many people in New York City. And when you have it right up there, you are saying that engaging the city is of utmost importance.

3. Document your journey

The 5th and final principle flows and reinforces the other four principles and it's this: document your digital journey.

I think one of the most hospitable, creative, powerful ways to tell the story of your church and your people is by committing to creating content around the journey of your church.

A lot of churches will post livestreams of their Sunday service but very few will do podcasts, blogs, YouTube videos, and other digital mediums about contemporary issues, the life of the church, where the church has been and where the church is going.

This, perhaps, is the true test of what a church wants to do with digital. In 2022, we have so many simple ways to start these creative endeavors. It used to be technology was the limiting factor. Back in the day,

very few churches would have the resources to invest into expensive technologies and studio equipment but now we can do everything from our phones and so the real limiting factor is the willingness of hearts and minds.

Churches should be creating content outside of the sermon! There're just way too many important issues, there's way too many beautiful and tragic things going on that people need to think upon deeply and if the church is unwilling to publicly address and engage these things, then they are choosing to take a backseat to what God is calling them to in culture.

I think one church that does this well is Church on the Move. They have an entire arm of their ministry dedicated to people coming together and talking about matters of Jesus, faith, and the Church. They have regular hosts but then they are bringing in members of their community all the time. They talk about seasonal things, they are talking about real life issues, challenges in this season of pandemic, mental health, and more!

OK, so hopefully these principles can be a guide not only in how you might design and build your church's digital footprint but hopefully a starting point for how your church is going to move into the future.

Going digital is difficult! It's both a lot of work and there's an added element of wondering how this all comes back to loving and serving people.

But one thing is clear, the Inevitable Church will become more and more digitized in interesting and powerful ways. The only thing we don't know yet is how we are all going to get there.

But I am praying that as we journey together, we can be guides for one another, encouraging each other to pursue the spirit and tell the story of Jesus.

Peace.

Semiotic Spelunk Assets



Figure 2.2. Screen grab from “5 Principles of Church Website Design” at 2:39 with title saying, “These principles are more descriptive than prescriptive.”



Figure 2.21. Screen grab from “5 Principles of Church Website Design” at 3:18 with title saying, “There are no principles of web design that replace people.”

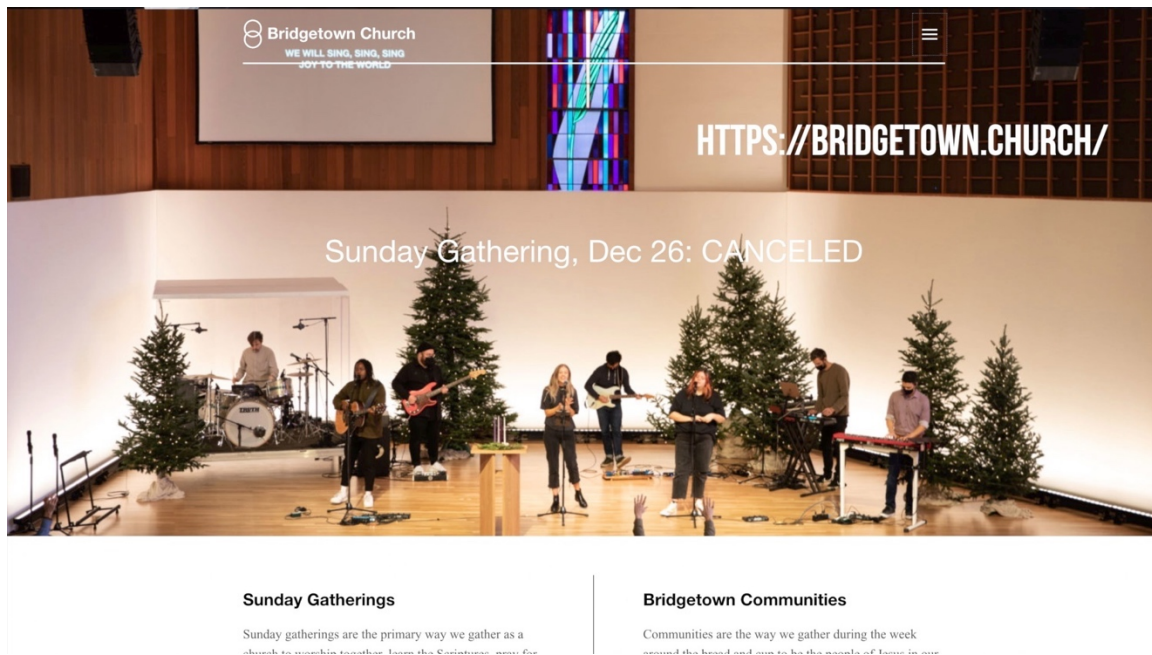


Figure 2.22. Screenshot of homepage of Bridgetown Church in Portland, OR, <https://bridgetown.church/>



Figure 2.23. Screen grabs of the titles of the 5 principles talked about in “5 Principles of Church Website Design”

YouTube Description of 5 Principles of Church Website Design

Title (required) ⓘ
 5 Principles of Church Website Design // Semiotic Spelunk Ep. 2

Description ⓘ

Websites are still important. They are your digital front porch, the modern day church sign. People will find your church through your websites. But websites have become generic and they often highlight the least important aspects of your church. Yes, information is good, leadership bios are good, but the true impact a website brings is when it is well maintained, active, and actually show a window into the life of the church.

Table of Content

- 0:00 - Introduction
- 2:04 - Preface
- 4:00 - Create Hospitality
- 6:35 - Define your culture
- 9:53 - Tell your story
- 11:48 - Engage your neighborhood
- 14:32 - Document your journey
- 16:36 - Conclusion

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Website - <https://www.dallasmorrowproductions.com/>

The Inevitable Church YouTube channel is a Portland Seminary project dissertation for the fulfillment of Doctor of Ministry in Semiotics, Church, and Culture track. Check out their program at the link below if you're interested in an incredible, transformative program that seeks to aid you in your ministry calling.

<https://www.georgefox.edu/seminary/index.html>

Figure 2.24. Screenshot of the description section of the “5 principles of Church Website Design // Semiotics Spelunk Ep. 2” video

Docuseries: The Network Revolution

The docuseries is a long-term project within the Inevitable Church that will dive into the network revolution during the dawn of the Printing Press in the 1500s. The idea behind the series is to learn about the major changes that took shape as Europe moved towards a print culture and out of their history of orality.

The Docuseries was the initial idea for the channel. I wanted to tell the story of the last major network revolution because so much of how our society is organized is based on the technology of print that was discovered in the 1500s. We often think technology rapidly waxes and wanes throughout history but there are technological forces that are so powerful that they steer the course of history for centuries.

What fascinated me about the dawn of print is how it coincided with the Protestant Reformation. Here was a great example of technology accelerating a religious movement in Europe as well as a scientific revolution. We often think that theological truth is the basis for how a culture is shaped and that is tested in history again and again. We forget that the metaphysical workings of the world are orchestrated by God alone—that there are many designs of the world that are far more powerful than what we can do individually or even generationally.

And so, as we learn more about these inevitable processes in history, we can perhaps learn to navigate any future occurrences, knowing that these processes unfold over centuries. Then, it's not a matter of finding stability or a sure footing in culture, but a faithful response to where God has placed us.

The Docuseries will be a continued series post-launch to explore the network revolution that we are navigating today. The delay of the series was due to a difficult fall season of COVID-19 pandemic.

View the “The Network Revolution,” by Min Choi, uploaded on April 26, 2021, here:

<https://youtu.be/wqWfvOMVfPw>.



Figure 2.25. “Thumbnail of *The Inevitable Church* Docuseries Episode 1: *The Network Revolution*.” The image is meant to convey disorientation within a rolled-up newspaper signifying the age of digital overtaking the age of print.

The Network Revolution Script

THE NETWORK REVOLUTION

“The major advances in civilization are processes that all but wreck the societies in which they occur.” —
A.N. Whitehead

Electric technology has reshaped and restructured our patterns of social interdependence and every aspect of our personal life for the last half century.

—

Script

We are morphing so fast that our ability to invent new things outpaces the rate we can civilize them.

—

All the world’s a stage,

And all the men and women merely players.

They have their exits and their entrances; And one man in his time plays many parts...

—

Looking back on human history is like observing a grand, cosmic opera, interconnected with complex beginnings and endings, distinct acts and movements, stories of tragedy, of comedy, and everything in between with heroes and villains rising and falling from one generation to the next.

Perhaps, one of the most fascinating points of an operatic story is the transition, where the story can take a major transformation as one act ends and a new one begins.

In theatre, the transition signals change. The deconstruction of the set, the changing of regalia, and the setting up of the new world for the subsequent act to play out. For the stage crew this intensely chaotic yet controlled process is performed all while the curtains remain closed to the audience. It's a bit of irony but the most difficult choreograph and collaboration is never seen.

Likewise, our history is full of these "transitions,"

periods of time where we would see an explosion of human progress and advancement but if we choose to look deeper and lift the curtains, we uncover intense conflict and disruption, revolutions, and the proliferation of science and culture. Reading about it is one thing,

**But what if we were living in a major transition? How would we know? What would be the signs?
And even more importantly, how would we need to live?**

What is fascinating about our modern times is how volatile and rapid it feels. The internet and the exponential capabilities of technology are thrusting us into the future. So powerful is this change that within a couple generations, we are about to transition to a different primary medium: from print, flat 2d base for text and images, to a virtual 3D environment that is proactive and anticipatory.

And because of this we are living in the midst of possibly the greatest transitional event in human history: a network revolution beyond compares, a sociological phenomenon where how we predominantly communicate, connect, and form communities changes every aspect of daily life.

Docuseries Assets

The two types of assets utilized in this video were clips and music. The theme of the video was to create conflict and disorientation and so, I wanted to curate assets that were abstract, dark, and had this looming quality. In the second portion of the video, it shifts to a more hopeful tone. This is signified by a much lighter, brighter set of assets.

The songs used in this video are “A Tear and a Smile,” by Emil Homström and Peter Vikström, released on December 18, 2020 and can be found here:

<https://www.epidemicsound.com/track/qkhELnriwX/>

“Multitudes,” by Humans Win (Formerly Lance Conrad), accessed on April 21, 2021, which can be found here: <https://www.storyblocks.com/audio/stock/multitudes-hkh2ypqo8kao4a4s3.html>

“Escaping Forever,” by Michael Vignola, accessed April 20, 2021, which can be found here: <https://www.storyblocks.com/audio/stock/escaping-forever-hog3rptosk2xlgdd7.html>

One of my favorite quotes that is included in the beginning of the video is from A.N. Whitehead and it telegraphs exactly what the entire project is about: “The major advances in civilization are processes that all but wreck the societies in which they occur.”

The major advances in civilization are processes
that all but wreck the societies in which they occur.

-A.N. Whitehead

Figure 2.26. Screengrab from “The Network Revolution.” It’s a quote from A.N. Whitehead.



Figure 2.27. Screen grab from “The Network Revolution.” An animation of a digitally connected world. Permission received through license agreement through Storyblocks.com.



Figure 2.28. Screen grab from “The Network Revolution” at 2:54. Footage of people reading the Bible at church. Permission received through license agreement through Storyblocks.com.



Figure 2.29. Screen grab from “The Network Revolution” at 4:51. Footage of an individual studying with a tablet at the library or store. Permission received through license agreement through Storyblocks.com.



Figure 2.30. Portrait of Marshall McLuhan



Figure 2.31. Screengrab from “The Network Revolution” at 10:06. Footage of medical professionals looking at a digitally rendered hologram of a brain. Permission received through license agreement from Storyblocks.com

YouTube Description

Title (required) ?

The Network Revolution

Description ?

In this episode 1 of the mini-documentary series, The Inevitable Church introduces the sociological phenomenon of the network revolution and how it affects our society. The scope and speed of network revolutions vary depending on the technological advancements but the one we are currently in could be the biggest yet in human history. How we compare what we are going through with past network revolutions such as the one observed in the 1500s?

Written and Produced by Min Soo Choi. A project dissertation of the Doctor of Ministry Semiotics, Church and Culture track at Portland Seminary in Portland, OR.

Figure 2.32. YouTube video description of “The Network Revolution.”

Vlog Series

The vlog series on the channel is meant to create content about the process and document behind-the-scenes aspects of creating a YouTube channel like this one. It’s also the series of sharing more experimental thoughts and concepts that may turn into full-fledged episodes in the future. Every good YouTube channel creates personal connection, and the vlog has become one of the most common ways to build personal branding.

Vlogs also reveal an important attribute that people desire in this digital age—they want authenticity and vulnerability. The entire narrative of YouTube is creating personalized content, content that you yourself have come up with as an independent creative. This is the power of YouTube, and vlogging is a natural expression of this narrative.

Vlogs help keep channels active; they help keep things fresh and new; they allow space for creatives to explore other avenues and topics as well. And most importantly, they give insight into the personal lives of individuals. The not-yet perfect, rawness that vlogs often are is an attractive, entertaining medium. It's a reflection of the time we're in as learners and explorers.

View the entire "Vlog" playlist for the Inevitable Church here:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLkBAimf7gHH3jRNuzvWupaADUxclzxQw>

The Metaverse and the Inevitable Church

View "The Metaverse and the Inevitable Church // Vlog Ep. 7," by Min Soo Choi, uploaded on November 17, 2021, here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XZILsipvfTo>

In vlog episode 7, I wanted to start talking about the metaverse and the place it may take in our society. At its core, metaverse is a natural next step for web 3.0 and a more immersive digital experience. It addresses the spatial limitations that everything up to web 2.0 has exhibited. The limitation of the screen is a common subject because it requires human beings to conform to it, rather than a tool conforming to how humans want to interact. And so, I thought it would be a great topic for a vlog because it's a relatively new concept and its implications are not quite clear yet.



Figure 2.32. Thumbnail picture of Vlog Ep. 7, “The Metaverse and the Inevitable Church.” A picture that showcases the merging of in-person and digital in a singular room.

The introduction sequence is just an abstract, static, distorted themed backdrop. There’s a transmission-centered aesthetic to it and I wanted it to feel a bit dystopian and science fiction-like. There’s darkness contrasted with pixelated color. I thought this set the mood for a vlog introduction. It has a bit of cyberpunk flavor in there.

The metaverse is a very novel idea for many people. It can be a subject matter that induces a lot of reactions though. Some consider the metaverse to be highly subversive and dangerous, another platform for corporations to profit off our attention and data. Others see it as a new era of learning and work. Regardless of how we all feel individually, it certainly will bring its own biases, amplifications, and amputations. Things will be lost, forever gone from human history. Also, things will come into existence and spread into ubiquity. It’s hard to understand right now what those things might be but they will create disruption and disorientation.



Figure 2.33. Title card for vlog series.

Script

Let's talk about the Metaverse. What is it? It's so funny, how in life, fiction inspires reality and reality inspires fiction. The idea of the metaverse really has its roots in science fiction—Neal Stephenson famously coined the term in his novel *Snow Crash*, which I have right here, in this universe the internet has evolved into a three-dimensional virtual space that looks like an urban environment. This book was published in 1992, by the way! And look how we've come full circle! Today, we're starting to see the Metaverse gain significant momentum in various tech companies, in media, and in culture.

Some notable examples of the metaverse in culture:

Ernest Cline's 2011 book *Ready Player One*. In that story, the world is captivated by the OASIS, basically an 80's themed virtual multi-world system where people can play, own and sell property and goods, make a living.

Half-Life: Alyx. One of the most anticipated games ever as Half-Life is an extremely popular IP in video games. Valve built this game from the ground up for virtual reality, meaning you can only really play the game using a VR headset. What's really interesting in the game is not just the story and the objectives, but how you can manipulate random, menial things in this virtual sandbox. You can pick up a marker and write

on the window. You can stack random objects, use the environment in creative ways. The game marks a significant leap in player agency and virtual world feedback.

And lastly, as I am sure all of you have heard, Facebook the company that brought you things like... Facebook, changed their name to Meta recently. It wasn't just a rebranding to fix their current rocky public image, but they basically said that they needed an identity that fully encapsulates who they are and what they want to accomplish.

Facebook is doubling down on the metaverse concept—they see a future where the internet goes from a 2d flat image to a 3d version of the internet, kind of like what Neal Stephenson envisioned 30 years ago.

They are defining “The ‘metaverse’ as a set of virtual spaces where you can create and explore with other people who aren't in the same physical space as you.”

Why is the metaverse important to think about? Why would we want that?

Up until now in our technological evolution, we have created an internet that is primarily interfaced with through a screen. It's been powerful, effective, and it really is an extension of the age of print that we as a civilization have come from. In short, we've so far, watched the internet and yes, we've been able to dabble and manipulate it in relatively limited ways. Monitors, laptops, tablets, though all these things have gotten smaller and more portable, we are still “outside looking in.”

The Metaverse is a response to this limitation and at the fundamental level is an online space that is incorporating more and more the elements of our physical reality and transposing it to our digital worlds but with added properties that only comes digitally. In other words, we are going to escape that window!

We sort of already do this but at a very basic level. In the metaverse, much of how we interface with the internet will be through spaces. And if most of what we want to connect to are basically digital houses, that means there's going to be portals that allow us to go from one space to another, and it will be as seamless as going from Google to whatever you're searching for.

This version of the internet, web 3.0, the metaverse, will come even closer to recreating our offline, physical world, reimagined, and augmented digitally through network computing, big data, and the internet of things, and AI. We are getting to the point where these major advancements in technology will converge and synergize together to offer something vastly more powerful and immersive to the average user.

What will be the implications?

What does it look like to create wearables that allow us to have Iron-Man like sensors and overlays that analyze our surroundings in real time with helpful, proactive information? Or what does it look like to create a set of digital ecosystems that allow us to seemingly go from my office to your office, or from a live concert in Madrid to a political election rally in Tokyo? What would Disney+ or Netflix look like in a 3-dimensional space? How would we curate our preferences, the things that we relate with?

And what will it mean if we are all doing it seamlessly?

Today, we should talk about the Metaverse because it's inevitable! It will be our reality in the near future.

And that means the inevitable church will also have to both consider it and be willing to participate in it. But what will be our posture and what will be our principles? Are we just going to follow reluctantly? Are we going to just try and mimic corporations and businesses in how they are going to use it? Is there a way that the metaverse will add to human flourishing without necessarily commodifying people and products?

I think there's a way forward where the church can pioneer a gospel way into the metaverse.

Here are 5 aspects of the metaverse that the inevitable church will need to consider:

3. Whether we like the metaverse or not, that's where people are going. Everyone will be invited into it, and it will fundamentally change how we learn, how we communicate, and how we work. All three of these aspects of our human condition are important and crucial to faith and spirituality, and so we must venture forward, but tread lightly.
2. Secondly, we are not just going there but we're going to stake our claim and stay there. Once the internet morphs into a metaverse structure, that means there is going to be even more compelling reasons to claim our space in the metaverse. People will build extraordinary, world-spanning communities that feel even more local and personal. People will identify and join in more powerful ways. And that should give churches some thought about what sort of potential is there for spaces to explore faith and spirituality, to consider the big questions that the metaverse alone will not be able to answer?
3. People are going to learn and work there. Education and vocation will be significantly impacted by the metaverse. And during that shift, there is going to be an extraordinary need for answers about meaning, purpose, and calling. New career paths and jobs are going to come into existence overnight. What will be the ethical considerations? What will be the intended and unintended ramifications of a metaverse-driven economy and society?

3. People are going to get real confused in the metaverse. Think about how we were first introduced to social media. Did we come into it knowing what we were getting ourselves into? No, some of our biggest challenges in society has come from the side effects of using social media without a clear set of principles or a tradition of wisdom. It just wasn't in the cards for us to navigate social media perfectly. And yet, we are not going back and we're not erasing the place of the social media in our lives. And here's the kicker, as the metaverse comes in, some of us will not see any value in it and not participate in it at first. But look at how you connect with your families, how do you your work, and how you connect to your neighborhoods—you may not like social media, but the younger generations have completely assimilated to it. Metaverse will do the same, but it will come with a lot of challenges—and we must prepare.

3. Lastly, people are going to come out of the metaverse. The metaverse is not designed to replace the physical world although some may fall into escapism. We know that the metaverse will have a more seamless capacity for us to come in and out with—with the advent of wearables and augmented reality, we are going to navigate the passage from the physical to the virtual. But the metaverse will be a real experience, people will cultivate things there and then bring them out. The inevitable church will need to consider this passage from one reality to another and continue to stake claim in the physical world, to draw people to a faith that is at its foundation an incarnated Savior.

These are the 5 things we need to consider as we move forward into the future. As human beings, the end game for us is not tethered to screens or stuck in a virtual environment. It's about connection, meaning, purpose, looking back in history, talking about ethics, our biology, justice, renewal. And yes, the Gospel of Jesus is primed and ready to enter these worlds too, and how we talk about theology, the Bible, and ultimately, God himself will be a fascinating proposition.

Assets

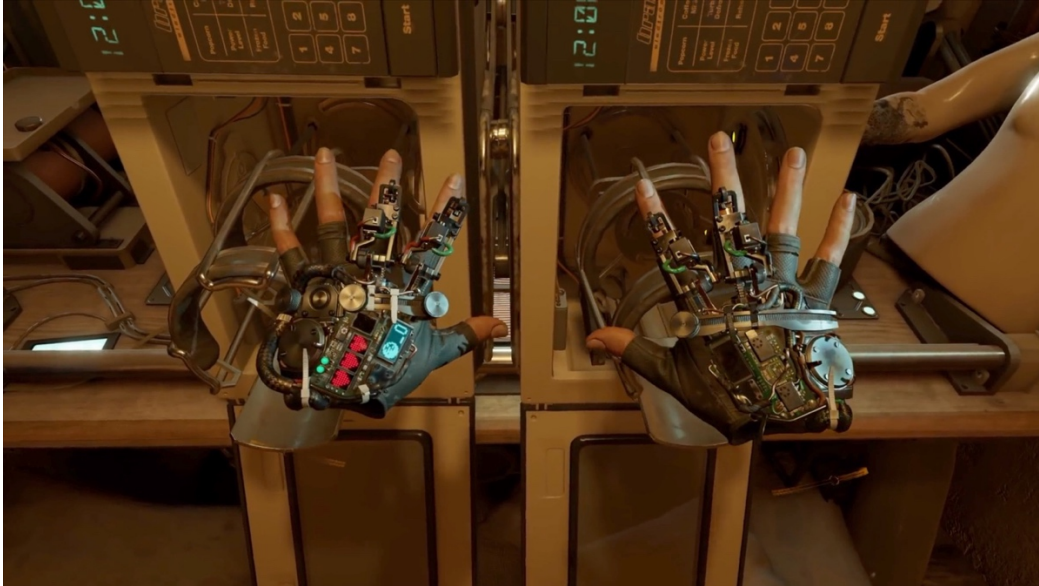


Figure 2.34. Screengrab from “The Metaverse and the Inevitable Church // Vlog Ep. 7.” This is a screenshot of in-game footage from “Half-Life: Alyx,” a virtual reality game created by Valve. It’s a picture of virtual reality hands that corresponds to the player’s actual hands utilizing hand remotes. “Half-Life: Alyx Announcement Trailer,” by Valve, uploaded on March 23, 2020. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O2W0N3uKXmo>

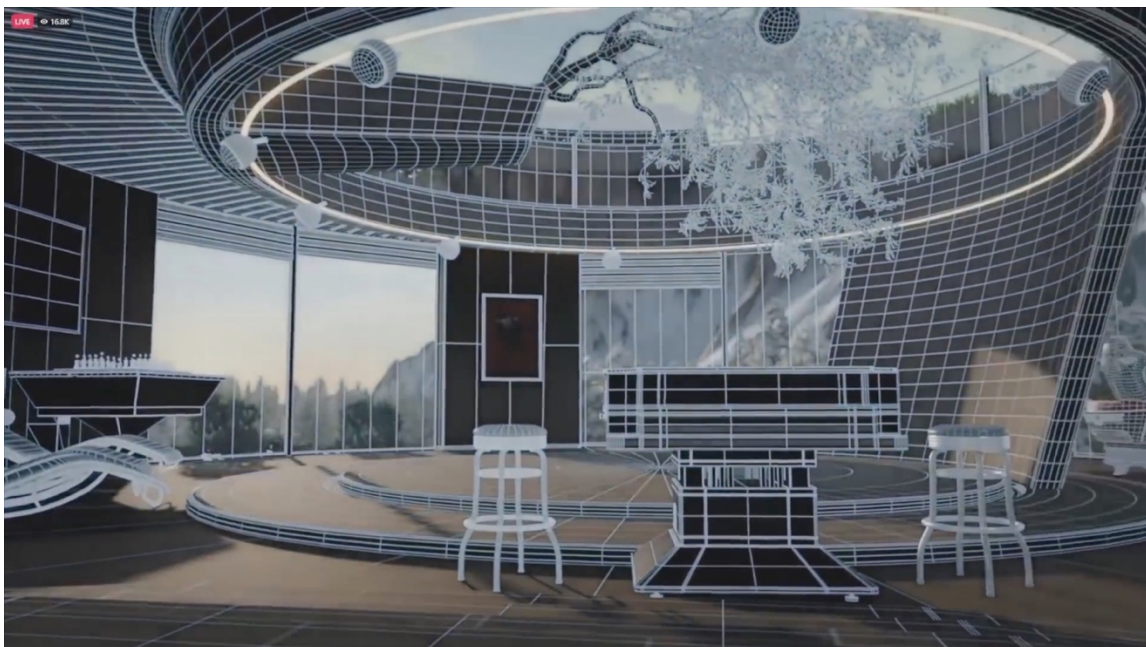


Figure 2.35. Screengrab from “The Metaverse and the Inevitable Church // Vlog Ep. 7.” This is a frame from the video “Everything Facebook revealed about the Metaverse in 11 minutes,” By CNET. Uploaded on October 28, 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gElfIo6uw4g>

The five points about the metaverse in the video: 1) People will enter the metaverse, 2) people will stay and inhabit the metaverse, 3) people will learn and work in the metaverse, 4) people will get confused in the metaverse, 5) people will leave and take their experience out from the metaverse.



Figure 2.36. Title animations from “The Metaverse and the Inevitable Church // Vlog Ep. 7.”



Figure 2.37. Screengrab from “The Metaverse and the Inevitable Church // Vlog Ep. 7.” An image that renders a futuristic office space with augmented technologies that create screenless monitors.

YouTube Description

Title (required) ?

The Metaverse and the Inevitable Church // Vlog Ep. 7

Description ?

Let's talk about how the metaverse and how the church will intersect with it in culture. When we think about the metaverse, we think about gaming, virtual reality, and something that is secondary and perhaps, a bit impractical. Today, our current societies are not dependent on digital or augmented spaces to function. And yet, our technological progression is continuing to creep towards a reality where navigating the virtual space will not be an option--this will be the way! And so, what do we need to start thinking about now in order to meet that reality with thoughtfulness and wisdom?

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The Inevitable Church YouTube channel is a Portland Seminary project dissertation for the fulfillment of Doctor of Ministry Semiotics, Church, and Culture track.

<https://www.georgefox.edu/seminary/index.html>

Figure 2.38. YouTube Description section of "The Metaverse and the Inevitable Church // Vlog Ep. 7"

Vlog Script for Vlog Episode 9

Most of the early vlogs utilized notes and outlines rather than fully scripted material. But the latter ones utilized scripts and teleprompters. Episode 9 is a great example of my current workflow where I get to write and script out my entire vlog.

Script for “James Webb Space Telescope: Shaping the Future by Showing the Past // Vlog Ep. 9”

On Christmas, NASA launched the James Webb Space Telescope or JWST, the largest space telescope to ever be built, dwarfing the historic Hubble Space Telescope in size and, well, scope...

and at the time of this filming, JWST has had a successful initial launch and is now going through its 6-month unfurling and diagnostics process, which might seem slow until you realize how massive and intricate the engineering that went into this telescope is.

Now, if you're not a huge fan of astronomy or space, you might not realize what a monumental moment this is, not just for NASA or the scientific community, but for all of us, and as I got more curious about this story, I started realizing how important this technology potentially is.

See, what's really unique and interesting about JWST is not just that it is the latest and greatest telescopic imaging device with greater detail, longer range, higher resolution—it certainly is taking a gigantic leap forward in its technological capabilities.

But it will be the first space telescope of this scale that will be able to capture INFRARED light, which is going to be quite literally a game changer for us earthlings.

And the reason why this is significant is because up to this point, we've relied on visible light, you know ROY G BIV, to tell us what our surrounding galaxies and nebulae are like but visible light limits what we can see, what data we can extract, and what we can ultimately deduce. Think about all of the iconic pictures of space in our school textbooks and on the internet—those have come from our beloved Hubble Telescope, which gathers visible light.

In contrast, the infrared spectrum of light, which is a longer wavelength and carries much older “information,” breaks through these limitations allowing us to capture light coming from galaxies and

nebulae that are not only farther away with relatively greater detail but snapshots that are much, much older.

And so, this is the most exciting part: JWST can capture and render infrared light that has been traveling for 13.6 billion years, light that has been traveling through the universe since the earliest stars came into existence, formed, and exploded. And what that means is that somewhere out there is light that if captured can render actual images of the earliest things in the universe and tell the story of the origin of all things.

JWST may be a telescope in its form, but the primary function is more like a TIME MACHINE that allows us to peer into the cosmological origins of the universe. In one gigantic leap, technology for the first time will pull back the heavy, opaque veil of history past and unfold the story of the ancient past.

If that's the case, then JWST is not an extension of the eye but of time—by gathering infrared light, we will now gain the ability to overcome the hurdle of time that has passed. And whether you're an astrophysicist or a historian or a semiotician, this is an exciting proposition for new discoveries, breakthroughs, and insights into the beginnings of all things. If we know what has happened in great detail, maybe, perhaps maybe, we'll have a much better understanding of what's happening now and what might happen in the future.

In the next decades, we are going to be able to see and tell the earliest stories of how our universe came to be. How might that change how we think about who we are, our place in the universe? How we think about our origins and our destiny? How might that inform how we move forward and what questions we formulate next? What mysteries will we solve and what kinds will be introduced?

See, we're not just talking about stars but we're also talking about the mystery of our very existence.

My favorite quote about all of this comes from NASA astrophysicist Amber Straughn who has been working closely on this project for over a decade. She sees JWST as not only the fruition of a 25-year plus journey driven by a quest to seek knowledge and understanding but also the catalyst to incredible breakthrough as well as the breaching of a new frontier of mysteries and questions that will invariably set us on a new charter of scientific research.

She says in a Vox interview, “We have all these specific plans, these specific things we want to learn, but I think that the most awesome thing we’ll end up learning with this telescope we haven’t even thought of yet. Because when we increase our technology by an extreme amount like this, I think it’s inevitable that we’ll find something that completely surprises us and causes us to rethink how we understand the universe.”

What these sparks in my mind is the excitement of the unintentional discoveries that are bound to happen wherever human beings forge into the uncharted. I love the idea that

JWST has the potential of reshaping science and philosophy, how we learn, what questions we ask, even the very course of human endeavors in the future. It signifies the pinnacle of human curiosity and wonder, and I believe that it will become a conduit to inspire goodness and awe of the creator.

Perhaps like Galileo and Copernicus before him, our endeavor to pursue the truths that lay out there will perhaps give us insights into who we are and why we are here in the first place.

Thanks for watching the Inevitable Church. Like, subscribe, and leave a comment below and I hope to see you in the next video!

See Figures E.4 in Appendix E for additional materials and assets in vlogs.

Short Content

Short content are relatively shorter videos that are highly produced. They include sequences, storyboarding, scripting, and post-production. These are meant to be trailers, reels, artistic pieces, and promotional content that are conducive to social media distribution and marketing.

Semiotics: A Short

The first short content that I wanted to create was centered around the concept of semiotics. Semiotics is the driving engine of the channel and yet, it is not as widely known in the States. The hope of this video was to create a polished gem of a video that allows me to use a lot of creativity in challenging ways. These videos are meant to capture the language of filmmaking in beautiful ways. They are exhibitions of where I am in my creativity and process.

The process of trying to create short content like this is lengthy. You go through a phase of ideation and conceptualization, then storyboarding and writing. Then the production process requires location scouting, choreography, proper filming, and audio capture. Lastly, in post-production, you're adding a relatively denser number of edits and assets.



Figure 2.38. The thumbnail image for the video “Semiotics: A Short.”

Script

INTRO

Welcome to the Inevitable Church. A channel about faith, culture, and the future of the Church.

My name is Min Soo Choi, I am a Doctor of Ministry Student in my last year of my program.

In this video I want to talk about Christian Semiotics, the fundamental discipline that we utilize in every single video.

We’ll talk about semiotics at a basic level very briefly and then, we’ll introduce Christian Semiotics and its function, why it matters to the Church, and what specific practices a Semiotician often engages in in order to bring value to the world.

WHAT IS SEMIOTICS?

The origin of the word is Greek, “*SEMION*,” which translates to the English word “signs.”

What do we mean by signs? Are we talking about literal road signs, icons, symbols—are we talking about miracles or evidence of some spiritual or supernatural thing?

Semiotics is a discipline involving the study of sign processes. Every sign is a “SIGNIFIER” that acts as a source that communicates a meaning, idea, or concept that is not the exact literal sign itself—there’s a transmission or translation happening in the process.

A sign can be pretty much anything, which often makes semiotics a difficult discipline to nail down and explain.

And ultimately, whatever that transmission becomes to an interpreter hearing it, we call that the “SIGNIFIED.” The received meaning.

So, when I say the letters A-P-P-L-E in that order, the signifier is the word APPLE. But the signified could mean multiple of things depending on the interpreter.

For some, it could mean a category of fruit or a very specific version of that fruit, or to others, that word represents a certain tech company. Whatever image or idea that pops into your head most prominently or the most assumed or shared idea or image when you hear the word APPLE is the “signified.”

This is the basic concept of semiotics.

And the prime directive of the Semiotician is to understand the process relationship between the signifier and signified to a given interpreter (or even to an entire culture); in other words, investigate and understand what a particular signifier commonly transmits in terms of a signified meaning, and how that signified meaning elicits a response from the interpreter.

There are two basic categories of a signified meaning: the DENOTATION and the CONNOTATION. Most signifiers have both categories of meaning.

The DENOTATION or DENOTATIVE meaning of a signified transmission is often translatable or literal in nature. Denotations act as definitions or core characteristics of objects or ideas.

FOR EXAMPLE: if you hear the word HOLLYWOOD. An example of a DENOTATIVE meaning is a specific area of Los Angeles or perhaps, the center of American filmmaking.

THE CONNOTATION or CONNOTATIVE meaning of a sign is the more interesting category for the Semiotician but much more difficult to nail down and grasp.

A connotative meaning is cultural, it’s emotional, it is non-neutral, often viewed as either positive or negative, pleasing or displeasing, in vogue or taboo. The CONNOTATION of a signifier is affected by social overtones, cultural narratives, events.

Like a stock market, the CONNOTATION can change for any given signifier.

And furthermore, the CONNOTATION of a signified meaning is often what elicits a response.

FOR EXAMPLE: Going back to the word Hollywood, a CONNOTATION of that word could imply

INAUTHENTICITY, PRIVILEGE, GLAMOUR, FAME. The RICH, the FAKE, the CELEBRITY

These one-word meanings, depending on the individual, have positive and negative baggage attached to them, they certainly can be infused with emotion, and they represent ideals, values, and cultural issues.

And you can imagine how this Signifier-Signified stuff can quickly become unwieldy. A signified meaning can turn into a signifier, and any signified can morph into something completely different, and on top of all that all of these “SIGNALS” have intentions, biases, they demand a response, and have an agenda.

All of this if read and understood accurately and effectively, gives the Semiotician an edge in anticipating and responding “correctly” to take advantage of things. They see things quicker and allows them to respond quicker. Therefore, they make great market analysts, trend predictors, cultural zeitgeists, influencers, etc.

SO, WHAT DOES A CHRISTIAN SEMIOTICIAN DO?

So, what sets apart a Christian Semiotician? What is their aim?

Well, in one sense, a Christian Semiotician aims to do what every Christian is called to do—to glorify God, to spread the good news of Jesus, and to be a holy people set apart while also being a royal priesthood.

But the way that a Christian Semiotician endeavors towards these ends is by examining, peering into our culture and world, and seeing how stories and the cultural narratives are shaping the hearts, minds, and souls of individuals and groups. And then helping the church respond, seeking to do what Paul masterfully did in Athens, recontextualizing the Gospel accordingly.

We are storytellers, we try to understand what captivates our imagination and wonder as a society, and then we bring that imagination and wonder into close proximity to Christ.

Our language is metaphors—the quintessential signifiers that point to complex and mysterious truths and meanings.

EXAMPLE: Jesus once said that he is the truth, life, and the way. These are the three grand signified—they represent the totality of what the human heart longs for. The stories of our culture also attempt take claim to these three categories, and the great response of Christian Semiotics is to keep going back to Jesus.

ONE OF THE MISCONCEPTIONS of semiotics or semioticians is that they are modern day oracles that can see into the future—that's not the case at all.

Good semioticians study the past—they are historians first, cultural analysts second; they are in part practicing the discipline of a historian so that they can make educated guesses on what is plausible and probable in the future.

Storyboard

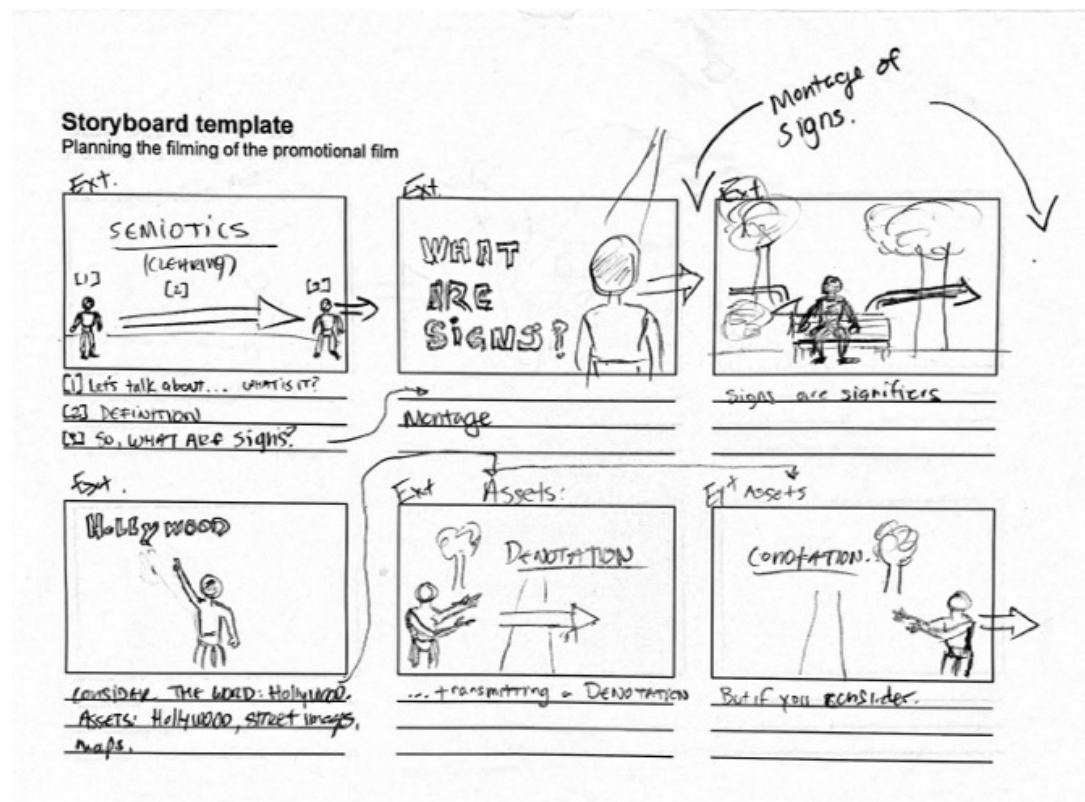


Figure 2.39. Storyboard for *Semiotics: A Short*

Assets



Figure 2.50. Screen grab from 0:09 seconds into "Semiotics: A Short." This was the initial question, "What do you think about when you these letters together?"



Figure 2.41. Screen grab from 1:21 into "Semiotics: A Short." An important question about semiotics and the church.

YouTube Description

Title (required) ?
 Semiotics: A Short

Description ?
 A short video explaining the discipline of semiotics visually.

 follow me.
 Twitter - <https://twitter.com/iamminsoochoi>
 Instagram - <https://www.instagram.com/iamminsoochoi/>
 Website - <https://www.dallasmorrowproductions.com/>

 The Inevitable Church YouTube channel is a Portland Seminary project dissertation for the fulfillment of Doctor of Ministry Semiotics, Church, and Culture track.
<https://www.georgefox.edu/seminary/index.html>

Figure 2.42. YouTube description of “Semiotics: A Short”

Video Production

A significant component of the project was investing in the video production process and learning how to properly film and create content. Film as a medium is deceptively difficult, especially for a solo creator because you must keep track of so many details in the production process, including pre-production, and post-production. There’s an incredible learning curve to

developing a workflow that accommodates for how your brain thinks and how you want to accomplish different processes. It truly does contain elements of learning a new language.

This language is becoming increasingly critical for churches and leaders in the coming years. Video literacy is not just about showing beautiful and professional images. It's more about reaching a level of aptitude with video to communicate, engage, and create connection. It's tied to the skills of video making rather than to a professional set of gear or to a "television" personality. And so, if it's tied more to learning a new language, then, perhaps, it's something that anyone can invest into and learn.

Set Design

Set design is an important part of creating content. Sets are visually meaningful, they help define your content, style, and of course, each set is filled with semiotic meaning. What's important about set design is that it requires commitment and dedication. Studios take up space. They are costly just by existing. And then, just like any other interior design endeavor, it requires an investment of both time and money.

Sets often set the mood; it gives the content context. It telegraphs to the audience what they are about to receive. Matching up the content to the context is a very important step in creating content. It's a significant step towards creating an experience that immerses the audience into your world and message. If you can somehow draw your audience into your world, then you're able to connect on a much more meaningful level. So, putting energy into my sets was a high priority.



Figure 3.11. Studio office set used to film most of the content for the Inevitable Church.

The aesthetic choices of the set reflected my own personality—clean, neutral, warm colors with a few objects that have strong, bold colors. I also wanted to incorporate a wide arrange of items from sneakers to books, apparel, and faux plants. When configured together, I got an overall sophisticated studio office vibe.

The center piece is the table from IKEA. It's a kitchen island counter that has nearly a two-inch thickness that is extremely sturdy and comes with shelving underneath. This is important because you don't want the table to rattle or move while filmmaking because it can be a huge distraction. The butcherblock pattern on top adds texture and that is very pleasing.



Figure 3.12 Close up picture of bookshelf and décor.

The shelving is industrial and minimalistic. It's very sturdy and wide. It allows for the display of many items. There are coffee table books, shoe boxes, hats, tools, office supplies, and accent lights. Making an interesting background that doesn't detract from the subject is a balance of lighting, color, and the spacing of items.

Video Equipment



Figure 3.13 Video equipment laid out on the studio table.

In video production, video equipment is a factor when deciding how to make content. Investing in higher quality gear has less to do with image quality and more to do with convenience in workflow. Efficiency, ease of use, and intuitiveness are the main factors when accumulating a foundation of tools for filmmaking. If you are a solo operator, you want to be able to make the process as simple as possible to create the most space for creativity and filmmaking.

For my studio work, I have invested into the Canon ecosystem with the main camera being the C300 Mark III cinema camera. This camera allows for an incredibly broad dynamic

range that translates to more cinematic and pleasing images, but it also allows for greater flexibility for post-production (i.e., adjusting exposure and white balance).



Figure 3.14. Closeup of the Canon C300 Mark III cinema camera with Sigma 18-35 F/1.8 Art lens attached.

The secondary camera that I use is the Canon C70. It has the same sensor as the larger C300 Mark III, which makes it a perfect pairing. In filmmaking, having a secondary camera or “B-Cam” is immensely useful. It allows for simultaneous filming with different angles. This is most commonly useful in the post-production editing process where you can switch cameras seamlessly to cover up cuts. These cameras would be extraordinarily costly for strictly YouTube work and so, they would not be the ideal candidate for beginners or even intermediate filmmakers. But they do produce an extraordinary image and they are incredible to work with.



Figure 3.15. The Canon C70 cinema camera with the Canon 16-35mm F2.8 L III wide angle lens.

Another important part of video production is great audio. Without great audio recordings, it doesn't matter how great the image quality is--People will not tolerate hollow, muffled, or distorted voices. In videography, having a dedicated microphone that can isolate peripheral noise and focus on the talent's voice is the ideal way to capture audio.

In the studio, I am using a Sennheiser MKH 416 short interference tube microphone that is considered industry standard. This microphone allows me to capture my natural voice with a broad dynamic range, and it rejects interference and unwanted noise coming from outside or other parts of my home. The microphone has incredible dynamic range and is well-matched to my voice. In audio, there is no "greatest" microphone because microphones are built and attuned to specific frequencies and depending on the model, favors specific types of voices.

My voice is relatively deeper and has more bass. The Sennheiser MKH 416 works well with my type of voice because there is a natural boost in the mids and highs.



Figure 3.16 Sennheiser MKH 416 set up in studio with Aputure 300x key light

Lighting is also a crucial element to creating pleasing images that look professional and cinematic. I use a set of Aputure lights for both the key light as well as the hair light. The

purpose of lighting is to isolate the subject in a flattering, dramatic way. Lighting helps create separation between subject and background, and it also creates highlights and shadows that gives direction to where the viewer should be looking.

For when I film, I script out everything that I am going to say and then send it to a tablet and then place it on the teleprompter mount. Tablets are versatile and their touch capabilities allow for easy, convenient adjustments during filming.



Figure 3.17. Tablet used for teleprompter script display.

The teleprompter unit is cleverly built. It sits in front of the camera lens and utilizes a special mirror to project text towards the subject without being captured by the camera.



Figure 3.18. Glide Gear teleprompter mounted on top of a tripod.

Software

Post-production can be one of the most overwhelming and difficult aspects of the filmmaking process. It's because to edit videos you not only have to know the basics of editing (e.g., cuts, transitions, adding alternative rolls, music) but you must know how to implement those edits using a video editing software. And this is where a lot of beginners will struggle for a while. Learning how to use tools, navigating the interface, getting familiar with shortcuts, and then getting to a point where you're not bogged down and can begin editing a video takes hours and hours of practice with very little reward in the beginning.

To create compelling videos, you need to learn how to conceptualize a good visual idea, then, you must film it, keeping track of all the equipment and properly using them, and finally, you have to learn how to stitch it all together in an editing software.

Each time you're editing video, you're learning something new. Either a completely new feature or tool or a faster method of implementing the edits. Throughout this project, I've had an immense amount of practice in mastering the basics. The main goal for the editing process of the project was to make the entire process second nature and create efficient habits that allow for quick edits and more time to write or create.

Final Cut Pro X

Final Cut Pro X is my “NLE” of choice. It is a native video editing software for MacOS and it has professional level tools and plugins that allow you to create any kind of video.

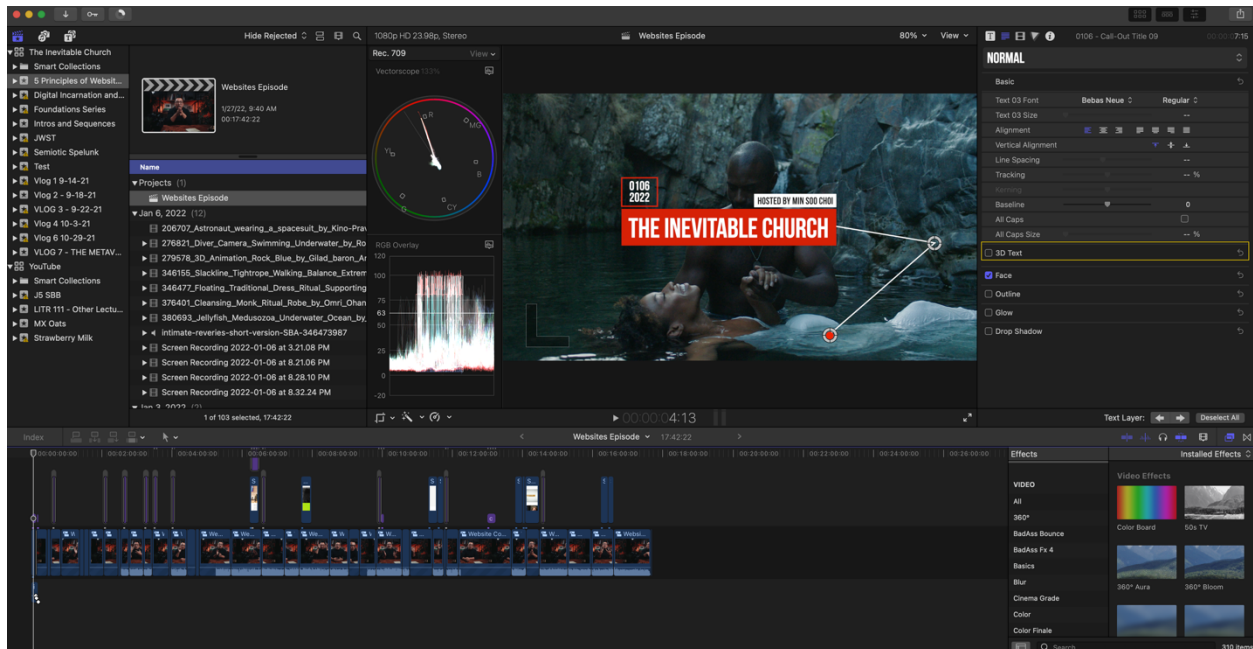


Figure 3.19. Final Cut Pro X interface

Every video goes through an editing process to add in cuts, titles, images, and alternative footage. It's also where you will add color grading, exposure, and color adjustments, and all of the other technical aspects to the video.

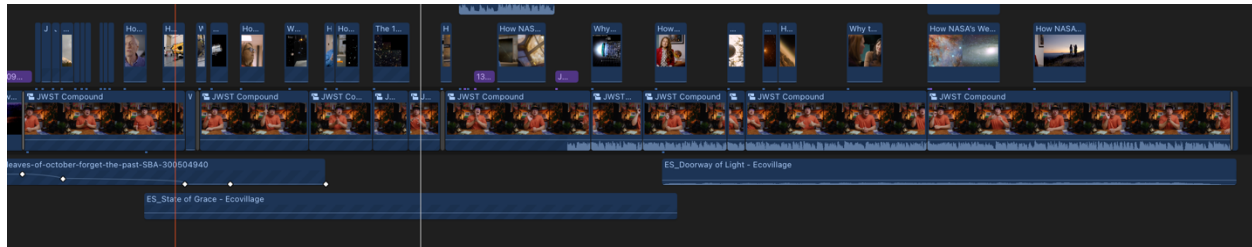


Figure 3.20. Final Cut Pro X timeline of James Webb Space Telescope video.

Promptsmart Pro Teleprompter App

Promptsmart Pro is the teleprompter app that I have used in many of my videos. The unique feature of this app is that it has a proprietary voice activated feature that listens to your voice and where you are in the script and then automatically scrolls to your own talking speed. This is a game changer in the teleprompter world because no longer are people chained to this steady, unnatural pace of talking. Sometimes, we talk slow, sometimes we talk quickly. It depends on our energy, subject matter, and just overall personality. Now, we get the benefit of having our script right in front of us in an undistracting way but also, we get to talk in our normal cadence.



Figure 3.21. Prompsmart Pro App is made for iOS and android

ASSESSMENT

In assessing the project, I will utilize the key markers underneath the benchmarks (See Benchmarks for the stated questions that guided the assessment) and incorporate interview feedback reported in the Project Progress Report found in Appendix D: Milestone 4 – Prototype Iteration Report.

In assessing the quality of content overall, the level of visual and audio fidelity in the production value has been a success and it is at the level that I was aiming for. From the beginning, I wanted to make sure that the content does compete visually to communicate a high level of quality and sophistication. From candidate feedback, the content looks professional, cinematic, and matches the intended vision of the overall project. Throughout the development of the project, a lot of time was dedicated to experimenting with the look and color of the videos as well as developing the title animations to create a clean, minimalistic style. The first 15 videos have a unified, cohesive style, which creates consistency and familiarity with the audience.

In terms of total content and number of videos, the amount of work required to produce the scope of the project, in retrospect, was far too ambitious for the fall semester and each video required more time and resources than expected, even after an initial revising with my peer advisor.

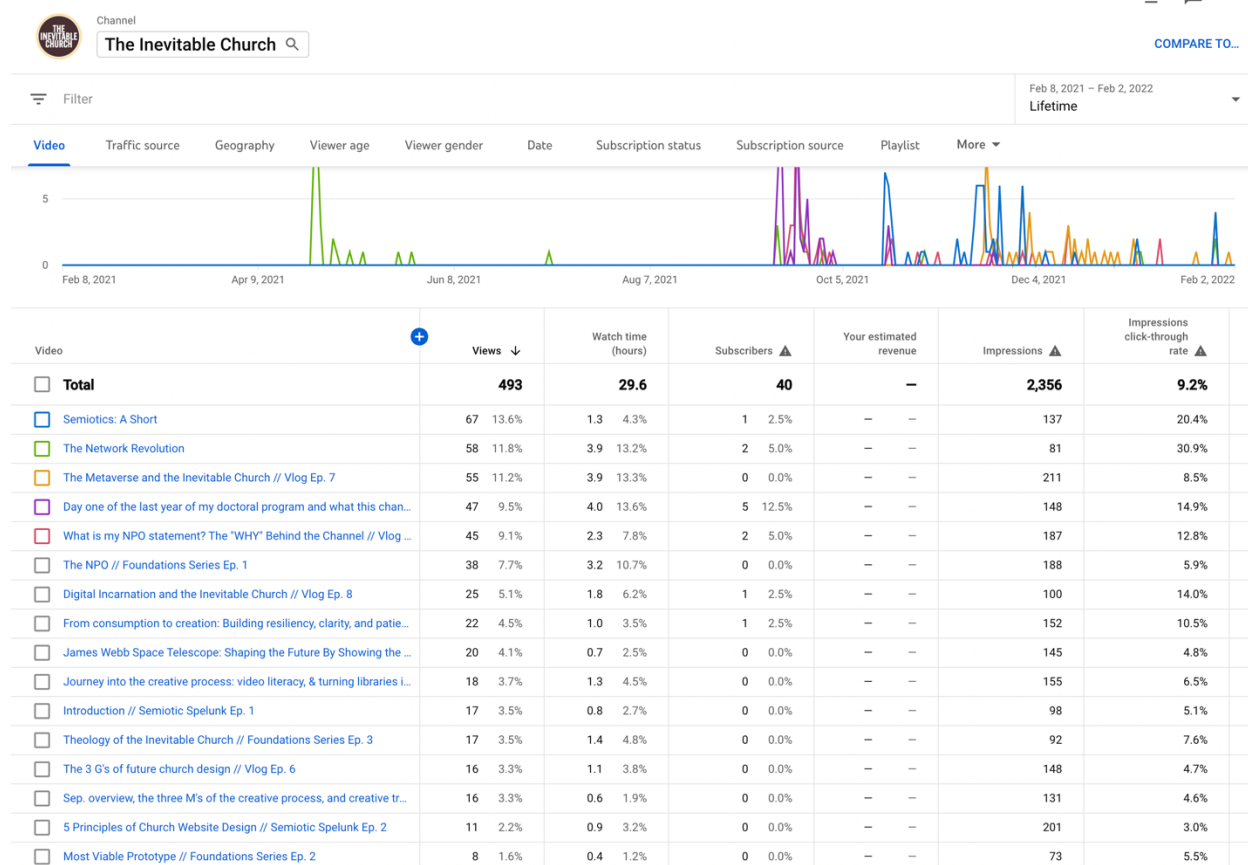


Figure 4.1. YouTube analytics and viewership for the Inevitable Church channel. Nearly 500 views so far since the channel has started.

When we look at the analytics on YouTube, at the time of this report, we have close to 500 views on the channel, 40 subscribers, and a total watch time of 29.6 hours. Those numbers are good for a pre-launched channel, but I am hoping to create more content and be more active in 2022 and raise the subscriber count to 100 by the end of the year. Viewership is grown by producing excellent, relevant content at a consistent pace.

Your channel has gotten 493 views so far

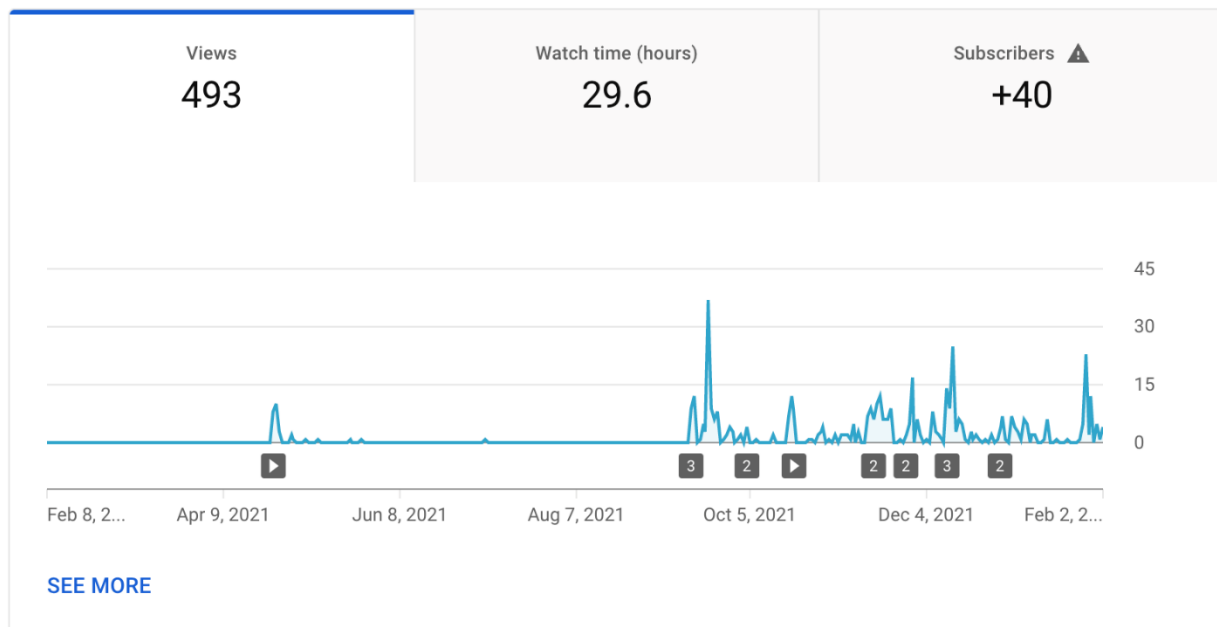


Figure 4.2. 493 views as of February 3, 2022.

The amount of time dedicated to the project exceeded 200 hours (See Figure E.8 in Appendix E for a distribution of work) but I wish there was time to make 3-5 more videos by February 2022. In creating multiple series, I did not account for the time it takes to conceptualize an idea and then build a video on that idea. Perhaps, creating multiple series was not the best strategy for efficiency but it has created a broad foundation for different kinds of projects in the future.

It is worth mentioning just to document that COVID and the flu and cold season in general was particularly difficult to navigate and create protected space for content creation. On workflow, there is much to improve to create a production schedule that supports the consistent creative efforts for the channel. To create content at a consistent rate takes a

tremendous amount of discipline and dedication on top of the knowledge and skill required to create videos. In the future, I want to create a robust how-to series on being able to integrate filmmaking and YouTubing into a life where you have a full-time job and a family.

The writing was a key part of the project, and an emphasis was made to make sure the content is educational, edifying, and entertaining. These were the main metrics assessed in interviews with candidates. The overall rating (educational, edifying, and entertaining metrics) of these videos were 4.25 out of 5 amongst individuals interviewed. See E.7 in Appendix E for interview notes and survey data. Though it was not stated up front, my goal was to produce content that individuals would rate 3.5 out of 5 or better. Although the feedback was limited in quantity, most candidates did notice the production value as professional, that the content was generally hitting the intended benchmarks, which were communicated to them in an introduction, and the experience was overall positive. I believe the writing overall is personally satisfactory for the beginning of the channel and my intention is to continue to grow as a writer and researcher. My hope for future content is to continue to refine the content in two ways: first, is to continue to accurately reflect my own voice in my writing and delivery. Second, is to incorporate a more captivating way of writing, including stories, interesting segments, and a more creative “show.”

On benchmark question 1a., “To write scripts and produce videos that explore the concept of a network revolution and the various effects it has culturally?” Several videos were made to address this: “The Network Revolution: Episode 1” in the docuseries, “NPO: Foundations Series Episode 1,” and “vlog episode 2: The “WHY” Behind the Channel.”

On 1b., “To write and produce content utilizing semiotic principles,” several videos address this topic: “James Webb Space Telescope: Shaping the Future by Showing the Past //

Vlog episode 7,” From Consumption to Creation // Vlog Episode 5,” “Digital Incarnation and the Inevitable Church // Vlog Episode 8,” and “The Metaverse and the Inevitable Church // Vlog Ep. 9.”

On 1c., “To write and produce content that churches can utilize as a reliable resource for ministry strategy and innovation in digital technology implementation,” “5 Principles of Church Website Design // Semiotic Spelunk Episode 2.” The 3 Gs of future church design // Vlog Ep. 6,” and “Theology of the Inevitable Church // Foundations Series Ep. 3.”

The branding of the channel is consistent and creates a great basis for evolution over time. The future goal for the brand is to create a nonprofit organization and all the branding that has been created thus far will be transferred to the branding of the organization and future projects. The look is meant to be minimalistic for the purpose of having an iconic look that doesn’t require an immense amount of design work.

In terms of community engagement, what has been a nice surprise has been the direct messages and comments that new viewers have made throughout the last 6 months. The most affirming thing is knowing that churches are navigating these things and see and feel the very same needs that I am experiencing. It would have been valuable to spend more time reaching out to various ministries to ask them what their relationship to digital technology was, especially their ministries.



Figure 4.3. Example of a direct message on Instagram from a viewer and follower who is thinking about digital technology and their church.

Overall, I believe that my project has successfully created a solid foundation to move into the next phase of development. I have identified the branding, style, and format of the content of the channel. I have the studio set up in a way that allows for consistency in content creation and a professional look. I have created multiple social media accounts that will help me distribute content. I have gained a significant amount of filmmaking experience and I hope to create resources that will help others who are wanting to create their own content.

MILESTONE 6 – PROJECT LAUNCH PLAN

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The NPO of this project is:

The modern network revolution is shifting our primary medium for social interdependence from print to digital, which is reforming our social and cultural structures and creating a critical need for innovation in ministry strategies, recontextualization of orthodox Biblical principles, and the integration of digital-based skill sets in church design and practices.

The Inevitable Church project is a semiotics-based ministry set out to address the stated NPO by training ministry leaders how to integrate digital strategies, creating educational, edifying, and entertaining content around the intersection of church and culture, and recontextualizing Biblical truth using semiotics-based hermeneutics.

The goal for the Inevitable Church is to not only build a healthy and growing YouTube channel but 1) create and establish a non-profit consultancy organization for the purpose of training ministries and organizations how to integrate digital tools and strategies into their context and mission, and 2) deliver relevant, research-based content through video, podcasts, and eventually, published works. To be successful, the Inevitable Church requires an ability to gather an audience and create attention. Part of the metrics for the project is creating bonds and relationships within Christian networks.

To create impact, you need to be able to connect with prominent voices as well as with individuals who are interested.

AUDIENCE

The intended audience is for any Christian disciples who desire to engage the gospel and matters of faith and culture within the digital space. The content will be most relevant to people who are interested in content creation, whether it is a personal vlog or an educational series on a particular topic that aligns with their calling and passions. Furthermore, the content will also be of interest for ministers, church planters, missionaries, and anyone who is desiring to engage in digital mediums to reach their audience and engage their communities.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

There are three major milestones that the Inevitable Church desires to reach by year 5:

1. Create an organization: become a 501©(3) nonprofit organization that offers consultancy and video production services for churches by January 2023.
2. Grow the channel: reach 1,000 subscribers on the YouTube channel and Instagram account by 2024.
3. Publish content: Write and publish the Inevitable Church book by 2027.

The first milestone is to transition the Inevitable Church project into a non-profit organization with the mission of supporting ministries who desire training and consultancy on integrating digital strategies into their teams and processes. The non-profit aspect of this

project would be the umbrella organization for all branches. In other words, the true aim of The Inevitable Church is to become a ministry organization that offers multiple products and services to educate and edify churches and other organizations. Phase 1 is to create exposure and credibility by making content on YouTube as well as other platforms. Phase 2 is to generate an audience and create a following. Phase 3 is to leverage the content into various products including published books and consultancy guides.

The first milestone is to register the Inevitable Church as a non-profit organization. This requires establishing the proper paperwork and details about what this organization will do.

Key deliverables include successfully submitting a nonprofit business application, conducting a Needs assessment, and completing market analysis, writing a business plan, completing the Foundations Series on YouTube, writing 3-5 published articles, and interviewing 3-5 key voices in the field.

Key assessment metrics include identifying key supporters, donors, and volunteers—do we know the needs of our target audience, and do we know our key players? Who would support an initiative like the Inevitable Church? Finding out motivations, communication strategies, how to pitch the idea, etc.

The second milestone is reaching 1,000 subscribers on the YouTube channel and Instagram account by 2024. A steady stream of uploaded content is central to spreading the brand of the Inevitable Church.

Key deliverables include 25-50 pieces of unique content per year on YouTube with consistent engagement over social media. This will be, at first, self-funded but I am hoping to find a partner and/or sponsor that would be willing to finance production within the first 24 months of launch.

Key assessment metrics will be embedded in the YouTube analytics. Who is viewing my content, what content is most engaging, and how the channel can be improved will be the main assessment metrics for growing the channel.

The third milestone is to write and publish a book about the Inevitable Church by 2027. This book would be a composition of all the content that is created on the channel and would be aimed at helping the church catch a vision for a digital world. Within that time, a thesis would have to be developed as well as a theory. Publishing a book would be immensely beneficial to both the Inevitable Church organization as well as the YouTube channel as it is still a critical avenue for generating attention and creating “buzz” for the ministry.

Key deliverables include writing a manuscript by 2024, reaching out to publishers through 2025, and going into the final stages of publishing by 2027.

Key assessment metrics would be identified during the writing stage but setting a goal of about 500-1000 words per month and uploading 2-3 videos per month would give a consistent pace to building content towards a full book.

The entire process is to utilize digital tools and social media networks to generate attention and grow a following to build trust and credibility. Modern digital strategies require a brand or organization to utilize every single medium that they can which can include videos, podcasts, and various social media accounts.

DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The main development for the rest of this year is to continue to make content on the YouTube channel. Built into that process of creation is research, writing, and coming up with new ideas and series that align with the greater mission of becoming a leader in digital ministry.

This will require not only academic and cultural research, but collaborations and interviews with ministry leaders and churches that have similar goals and interests. The YouTube channel is expected to organically grow by continuing to create educational, edifying, and entertaining content.

The project will be evaluated by the steady amount of traffic that I can build and assessing how many subscribers I can accumulate over the next twelve months. Building an audience and a community is very difficult and slow in the beginning but if the content has merit and I can continue to develop it consistently, then I am hopeful more people will stumble upon it and engage with me. Finally, engaging with like-minded individuals and organizations will be critical to developing my voice and expertise in this field.

APPENDIX A: Milestone 1 – The NPO Charter

PERSONAL RESEARCH MANIFESTO

I will exercise humility and excellence in my pursuit of truth and understanding throughout the research process to provide value and service to the future church.

NPO STATEMENT

Rapid technological progress is significantly changing how faith-minded communities will form in the future, creating pressures and opportunities for churches to innovate community building strategies.

NPO SCOPE

The scope of the NPO will involve a three-part research component: analyzing the current technological, sociological, and religious forces, predicting the directional shift of each, and then hypothesizing the probable implications and insights. The research will predominantly involve reading relevant literature, academic journals, data sets, articles, blogs, podcasts, and other media content from both secular and theological sectors. In addition, a secondary exploration of my specific Anglican diocese will be necessary in order to create a manageable boundary when creating specific applications and contextual conclusions. What may be involved

is interviews, an ordination process, and collaborative projects within the local church.

NPO CONTEXT

The ministry setting for the NPO will focus on North American urban (cities) environments that exhibit a wide multi-cultural and multi-generational makeup. In addition, environments where there is a broad exposure to technology with adequate documentation and reportage will be valuable. Within these environments, a particular focus will be to understand how to aid local church ministries and future church plants that are designed to be between fifty to five hundred members that desire to serve the city. The Anglican Diocese of Churches for the Sake of Others will be the model denomination and special attention will be given to her affiliates and churches.¹ In terms of the chronological context, the research will focus on two decades: 2010-2019 and 2020-2029. The former decade will be researched to understand contemporary technological and religious pressures so that hypotheses of what the coming decade will bring can be offered.

ROOT CAUSES

Two root causes identified by the discovery session were self-vision (selfish ambition or individualism) and inauthenticity (lack of honesty and vulnerability). Both root causes formed early on in the process largely in part to personal experiences around the usage and relational consequences of social media in particular. Generationally, our foray into the usage of the

¹ <https://www.c4so.org/>

common apps and tools, especially the ubiquitous use of the smartphone, has created a surplus of opportunities but also many problems and needs. Both root causes require a response and a focus in the research to achieve outcomes that can benefit modern churches and plants.

A third one that is identified by broad culture is the negative effects of social media usage.

DISCOVERY SESSION STAKEHOLDERS

Programmer

Parent

Communication Faculty (2x)

Student Development Professional (2x)

Pastor

Art Professor

Pharmacist

ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS

Pastor of Community Development

Pastor/Generation Z researcher

Pastor of Campus Programming

ACADEMIC RESOURCES

Vital to the NPO will be academic resources that specifically critique and deconstruct evangelicalism and mainline Christianity of our recent past. An exploration of ministries and organizations that engage intimately with the intersection between Christ and Culture are greatly desired. An example of this would be the Veritas Forum, an organization that works mainly with secular universities in order to articulate faith in relation to various expertise. Another field to explore will be the sociology of religion. Resources that deal with the trending shifts in faith will be necessary.

Appendix

[Discovery Session and One-on-One Interviews Report](#)

Appendix B: Milestone 2 – NPO Topic Expertise Essay

INTRODUCTION

As we explore the semiotics of faith and culture in this new decade, the goal is to understand the pressures and challenges that the modern church will navigate in the near future in regard to communication, discipleship, and evangelism. Through technology, we have carved an avenue of unprecedented progression and now, we are on the cusp of a fourth industrial revolution that will rapidly precipitate a new world, one that will require vastly new ideas and strategies to be fruitful and effective. This catalytic period can be identified as a network revolution—one that is changing the primary way we communicate and interact. Even now, we are in the midst of a global pandemic that is disrupting our decisions, behaviors, and our relationship with technology. As the church navigates the coming age, there is prudence to reexamine the framework and prime directive of the church from the Scriptures to guide our faith in the way of Jesus.

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Network Revolutions and the church in the Biblical World

Why does the 1st century church offer us insight as we navigate forward to the future? First, the church is described as a single entity, the “body of Christ,” and like a body, there is a unifying DNA threaded through each “cell” from Pentecost until now. This means that we share in the same heritage and purpose, and because of that we stand to benefit from the NT writings just as much as the original audience.

Secondly, we know that historically the church, as it spread throughout the Roman world, showed a paradoxical quality of being both highly resilient in preserving its roots and an adaptability to recontextualize the gospel and translate its teachings into various cultures. This is worth examining deeper as it gives evidence that the gospel of Jesus has proven to have resonance and significant implications for all cultures, even ones with competing values and ideas about origin, morality, destiny, and meaning.

Lastly, the NT writings were written for the purpose of teaching and strengthening the early churches that faced a multitude of challenges both internally and externally as they began rooting throughout the Roman-controlled provinces of Galatia, Macedonia, Achaia, and Asia. The New Testament reveals that drawing faith communities in and rooting them in greater culture was a complex and turbulent endeavor and obstacles such as strife, disorder, and error threatened the church's witness and effectiveness. As we examine and reflect on some of these specific challenges, perhaps we can contrast similar modern challenges the church faces today.

In order to pursue an orthodox understanding of the dynamics of faith and culture for the earliest Christians, we will briefly explore several key passages from the New Testament that give insight to how church communities formed in cultures that had no context for the gospel. What were the key characteristics that attracted the heart of individuals to the movement of the church? What teachings and practices strengthened followers? And what were the major concerns of the New Testament writers for various communities spread across the empire? These questions will be briefly explored for the purpose of formulating a biblical framework.

TEXTUAL DISCUSSIONS

Acts 2:41-47

After Pentecost, we get insight into possibly the earliest church in history—the first days. Luke presents the beginning movement in its most ideal, pure form: a spirit-baptized multi-cultural community that adhered to the apostle's teachings, shared meals, and prayed together. This was a community with purpose and excitement, and we're told that great signs and acts of generosity happened daily as they gathered both publicly and in homes. This resulted in the Lord adding to their fellowship day by day those who received salvation. This brief section lays out a blueprint for the church. We see the essential design elements that an authentic church would express—sound teachings and leadership, daily fellowship, sharing of homes and meals, extraordinary generosity, good public relations, and spiritual growth. Notice how the text lacks specificity, allowing room for churches to express these characteristics contextually and with great freedom in their own communities.

It's important to note that the church community is without strife, disorder, and persecution so far. The picture-perfect image of the earliest church is both narratively intentional and meant to contrast with the events that follow—the calm before the storm, so to speak. As readers, we know that the church is about to exit the honeymoon phase of their newfound community—the rising action, so to speak, is about to begin in the narrative. And as we follow the story, what is worth tracking is that every conflict that the church faces here on out has the potential of disrupting or undermining one or more of the original elements of a church community described in Acts 2:41-47. Perhaps, for the modern church, we too need to give an account of how well we are practicing what is found in this text.

Hebrews 10:19-25

We've established that there are qualities that have appeared in every faithful church since the first. But what are the implications that create the framework of the church? We see that one of the primary challenges of the New Testament writings were to bring clarity and understanding to the gospel and to correct theological errors. By becoming part of the body of Christ, all believers had to undergo a transition from their old ways to one built upon the life and ministry of Jesus. This mechanism of sanctification required a new prime directive.

So, what was this new prime directive? The writer of Hebrews in the tenth chapter persuades his audience that this is not to observe and upkeep the law for the law is inherently limited to allowing God's people to commune with God. He writes, "The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves; "Rather, he argues that a greater offering has now been given through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ once for all, removing the need for sacrifices and consequently, the foundation of the Old Testament community.

Furthermore, this great sacrifice could do what all other sacrifices attempted to do but could not—make perfect forever those who seek forgiveness and holiness. The prime directive, then, for faith communities is not to offer up sacrifices but to *partake in* the sacrifice of Jesus and to allow him to be our righteousness to God. Notice that in verse 19, the writer is pointing out that the two driving forces of an Old Testament faith community are no longer necessary for people to enter the "Most Holy Place," an Old Testament signifier of righteousness and justification. Through the blood of Jesus, a way has opened, a high priest is there to meet us, and we are forever cleansed. Therefore, the church cannot tout the observance of the law or adopt the sacrificial offering system without denying Jesus himself; in Jesus, the fulfiller of the law, we

find fulfillment and that fulfillment lifts the curtain that separates us from God and allows us to draw near to God.

In light of these truths, the writer corporately exhorts the community to hold unswervingly to the hope in Jesus and consider how we may spur one another on towards its implications. Holding to hope and spurring one another on toward love and good deeds are the marquis characteristics of the community of Jesus. This is why there is such an inclusiveness in the community of God—to engage neighbors and offer hospitality is the heart of the gospel. That is why the church must continually look outwards towards the culture they are embedded in.

But a warning is also mentioned: “to not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing.” The gathering of the community is of great importance to the author. Notice how specific the warning is compared to the exhortation right before it. There are many ways to consider how to spur each other towards love and a bounty of good deeds but the one requirement is that the community gathers. A priority is laid before the church to continue engaging with one another and to value it greatly “as you see the Day approaching.” The temptation to disengage is intentionally contrasted with the earlier portion in verse 19. In fact, verses 19-25 is one complete sentence—meaning the two ideas are inseparable. Our confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus is counterfeit if we are unwilling to meet together for whatever reason. The writer of Hebrews identifies the Christian gathering as intimately tied to the sacrifice of Christ, to deny one is to deny the other.

1 Peter 2:1-12

What identities mark every faithful church? A Biblical ecclesiology developed from a Petrine framework leads us to a foundational identity. Peter is writing to suffering and distressed churches scattered across the Roman province of Asia Minor and exhorting the churches to

persevere in the midst of great trials. This perseverance is defined as living a godly life, as good, gentle citizens, modeling service, and placing hope and trust in God. The call to persevere is because Peter wants the church to envision the true reality that they live in as the people of God. Though they are experiencing persecution and hostility, they have something greater and more precious—hope and grace in Jesus. And this precious gift is making them into two paradoxical identities: a holy nation and a royal priesthood.

In his first epistle, Peter describes the church in four terms: (1a) chosen people, (1b) a royal priesthood, (2a) a holy nation, (2b) a people belonging to God. There are two couplings, (1ab) chosen people and royal priesthood and (2ab) holy nation and people belonging to God. These two couplings form the core dual identities that define the church, especially ones undergoing intense trials.

The first identity centers around the imagery of a chosen royal priesthood. Two major characteristics are defined here. First, Peter draws from Exodus 19:6 and reminds the church that every single follower of Jesus inherits a priestly identity—not just leaders or privileged individuals—and this identity is central to the church. The key characteristic of the priesthood is to mediate the reconciliation between an individual and God. In other words, the church is designed to offer a way of reconciliation to those who do not yet know God.

The second identity of the church is to be a holy nation belonging to God. This is an inner motif that is meant to characterize the church as distinct and “set apart” community. Not in the way where it becomes severed from the rest of the world, but in a resilient and purified way. The church is meant to holdfast jealously to God alone and to be devoted to his will above all else. Peter reminds the church that no power or authority in the world can undo what God has sovereignly set up.

SYNTHESIS OF THEMES

What can we synthesize from these texts? First, the church has two distinct directives from which it can measure its faithfulness: to be a chosen royal priesthood and a holy nation belonging to God. This parallels another biblical principle: we are to be in the world but not of it. As we navigate the cultural shifts that are coming in the near future, the temptation will be to abandon one or both of these identities. When we abandon our priestly identity, we will shut out the world from our church doors and over time, we will become exclusive and hostile towards the world. If we abandon our holiness and spin into disarray and disharmony, we will be tempted to conform and lose our distinction as gospel carriers. When change happens, these are great temptations, and we must hold fast and persevere as Peter calls us to.

Secondly, the great implications of Jesus as our high priest are designed by nature to be shared and worked through in close community. The Hebrews author reminds us that there is temptation is to not prioritize the gathering, which is essentially an act of denial towards our Savior. Additionally, we must be wise in being able to identify how our own held beliefs can skew the way we understand how the implications of Jesus' blood plays out in the church.

Lastly, it is important to acknowledge that we do not measure the health of the church by how much it is being persecuted but by how devoted the church is to the person of Jesus. Are we taking Jesus and his teachings seriously? Do we articulate the way of Jesus in our communities? The earliest churches were ones that devoted themselves to sound teaching, generosity, hospitality, and the sharing of burdens. Astray just a little and we can quickly morph from these qualities without even knowing. These principles are critical to us navigating an uncertain future.

II. HISTORY AND KEY VOICES

Topic History

We are in the midst of a network revolution ushered in by a technological renaissance that is disrupting and changing how the world will look for the next hundred years. And as we navigate into the future, the challenge that we as the church ought to confront is 1) understanding what disruptions caused by technological forces are affecting the framework of faith identity, 2) developing strategies around what these forces are making newly possible when it comes to faith engagement, and lastly, 3) removing or adapting ministry strategies that are now antiquated, outdated, and categorically impossible to sustain. Without addressing these challenges, the church is at risk of being unable to bear fruit in the new world that is being created.

Author and former FCC chairman Tom Wheeler identifies the disruptions we are presently experiencing as a “network revolution,” a revolution that is shifting the primary medium of communication and media that society utilizes to connect, share, and progress with one another. As we experience this migration to a new medium, it is important to understand how much influence or bias that medium has on what is communicated. After all, we are a network-centric species and what connects us ultimately defines us.

The earliest network revolutions in human history revolved around nature—mountains, rivers, and varying types of environments. Human settlements reflected their surroundings. But the first human-made, technology-based information network, according to Wheeler, did not happen until the fifteenth century with the invention of the movable-type printing press. It is undeniable that the printing press has had reverberating effects on human civilization, so much so that our modern way of life can still largely trace its beginnings to this piece of technology. As we consider our modern challenges, perhaps exploring the history and effects of the very first

technological network revolution can be vital to our ability to understand and anticipate the upcoming shifts that may take place in this new network revolution.

The Dark Ages: A Period of Orality

Prior to the fifteenth century, the world was coming out of what historians call the Dark Ages or the Medieval Period. Aptly named, this period of about one-thousand years can be characterized largely as an era where information and communication were slow and centralized. Books and records were all handwritten, intolerably expensive to commission and store, and knowledge was barricaded—even deterred—from the vast majority of people by the elite. Consequently, most people living underneath feudal states were illiterate, agrarian, and disenfranchised.

In this time period, people lived in a culture of orality—a culture “untouched” by writing. Walter Ong, an American Jesuit priest and professor of English literature and a disciple of Marshall McLuhan, characterizes the difference between the languages of oral and literate cultures:

It is possible to generalize somewhat about the psychodynamics of primary oral cultures, that is, of oral cultures untouched by writing... Fully literate persons can only with great difficulty imagine what a primary oral culture is like, that is, a culture with no knowledge whatsoever of writing or even the possibility of writing. Try to imagine a culture where no one has ever ‘looked up’ anything. In a primary oral culture, the expression ‘to look up something’ is an empty phrase: it would have no conceivable meaning. Without writing, words as such have no visual presence, even when the objects they represent are visual. They are sounds. You might ‘call’ them back— ‘recall’ them. But there is

nowhere to ‘look’ for them. They have no focus and no trace, not even a trajectory. They are occurrences, events.

Ong argues that it is difficult to quantify and characterize the absence of “focus and trace” when it comes to transmitting information. To introduce such a psychodynamic concept would be incredibly jarring and highly disruptive. That disruption would come from the German inventor Johannes Gutenberg.

The Gutenberg Printing Press and The Visual Medium

Gutenberg invented the metal movable-type printing press in 1436. The mechanism involved a key breakthrough in print copying: the ability to arrange metal type molds on matrices into whatever desired configuration relatively efficiently, reducing the time to complete a book to only a fraction of what it would have taken a traditional scribe. This made the once-unsustainable process of producing a complete book sufficiently cheap enough to create a market, which led to the beginning of the print industry and the Printing Revolution.

The implications of a cheap, mass-producible book are many, but Wheeler summarizes it succinctly, “Johannes Gutenberg picked the lock that had kept knowledge confined for centuries. The result was an intellectual explosion that shook the foundation of the Establishment’s power and propelled a new inquiry-driven trajectory.” The book represented not only a repository of knowledge but a way to know about current events across the world from one place, scientific collaboration through the reliability of preserving accurate data, and the decentralization of power and censorship away from the establishment such as the Roman Catholic Church.

Two crucial figures that illustrates the volatility of a network revolution is Martin Luther and Nicolaus Copernicus. Gutenberg’s press made it possible for best-selling authors to rise

through the ability to distribute one's work quickly and widely, and Luther would certainly become one of the earliest literary celebrities in history as he took advantage of the press. And Nicolaus Copernicus' scientific studies and the ability to corroborate data would become the catalyst for a scientific revolution across Europe, one that would challenge the centralized power of the church.

Martin Luther: Reform through Technology

Martin Luther was a priest and a professor of theology who rejected many of the pervasive teachings of his contemporaries, including the practice of indulgences, and sought a way bring reform to the church. Perhaps, his most famous act, the nailing of the 95 Theses to the church door in Wittenberg on October 31, 1517, perfectly illustrates how one individual utilized the technology of his time to create a movement against the established powers.

Luther was not alone in his critique of the church, but he was the first to utilize print in his strategies. Historian Ada Palmer notes that Wittenberg was not Luther's only audience—broadsheet copies of his 95 Theses were being printed in places like London within weeks of his initial act. This meant that a fringe voice could not be easily squelched--copies are notoriously difficult to expunge from history.

Luther was eventually excommunicated from the Roman Catholic Church, but he successfully sparked the Protestant Reformation, forever changing church history. He went on to utilize the printing press in translating the New Testament into German and writing many more books. Luther saw the opportunity that the printing press afforded. The German reformer in his work *Tischreden* states: "Printing is the ultimate gift of God and the greatest one. Indeed, by means of it, God wants to spread word of the cause of the true religion to all the Earth, to the extremities of the world."

As Luther began disrupting the ecclesiastical establishment held by the Roman Catholic Church, it is important to note that a famous and widespread censorship system was built by the Catholic Church called the “Index of Prohibited Books.” According to historian Peter Burke in *A Social History of Knowledge*, this index was an official list of books that were forbidden to be read by any members of the faith. This is important because it highlights the common response of the establishment or the ones currently in power when facing the rise of the fringe voice. Rather than collaboration, the church pursued the censoring of these voices in an attempt to suppress and reinforce their own authority. There is a modern equivalent of this through moralizing specific strategies and mediums as negative and hostile to authentic faith.

Nicolaus Copernicus: The Fringe Scientist

The printing press undoubtedly helped disrupt the state of religion and spirituality in Europe through Luther and others, but it also ushered in an age of scientific discovery. Historian Elizabeth Eisenstein points out that the printing press didn’t just proliferate information quickly and widely, but it did so accurately and precisely. In scientific fields, the preservation of data is paramount. Prior to Gutenberg’s press, if data were to be shared, it had to be hand copied, which would have been unreliable and arduous to do. So, scientific collaboration was relatively rare. With the press, the accuracy of data could be assured and accessible to those interested.

Nicolaus Copernicus was a Polish polymath and notable astronomer who heavily relied not only on his own scientific observations but utilized data and printed tables of planetary movements from those he collaborated with throughout his life. His major contribution was *On the Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres*, which was finally published just before his death in 1543. In it, he hypothesized that his astronomical observations would have made more

“aesthetic” sense if the sun, rather than the Earth, was the center of solar system—a view that would come to be known as Heliocentrism.

The pervading theory of the time was that the earth is the center of the universe, a belief largely based on a theological interpretation of several key Biblical passages including Psalm 93:1. Copernicus knew that his work would be controversial and contentious. In fact, parts of his work had been circulating for years and rumors of its central thesis were known but Copernicus was hesitant to officially publish—he knew that publishing would bring opposition to the forefront. Notably, Martin Luther is quoted as saying in 1539, “People gave ear to an upstart astrologer who strove to show that the earth revolves, not the heavens or the firmament, the sun and the moon... this fool wishes to reverse the entire science of astronomy; but sacred Scripture tells us that Joshua commanded the sun to stand still, and not the earth.” It is hard to ignore the irony of Luther’s words, but it is a lesson that bears repeating—perhaps, Luther the reformer himself was not aware at the comprehensive reform print would have on his world.

In the end, Copernicus would not live to defend against the scrutiny of his work or convince the scientific world. But his legacy would inspire and influence the next generation of scientists including Johannes Kepler and Galileo. The latter of which would dedicate his life in arguing against a geocentric view of the universe and find himself in opposition to the church.

KEY VOICES

Today’s key voices are often yesterday’s fringe voices—voices that spoke historically out of turn and were met with great resistance and ridicule as they vied to bring light on the changing world. The reason they are key voices today is because they adhered to their message and persevered in the face of opposition. Marshall McLuhan was often the target of fierce intellectual opposition by his rivals. Kevin Kelly would often be laughed out of executive offices of the most

prominent television networks for trying to push this new “fad” called “websites.” Andy Crouch saw the erosion of Christendom and the tendency for a lot of churches to lose the ability to engage and lead in culture making.

Revolutions are won by those who track where truth will be, not where it has been. The following key voices are heralds of the world as it is today, and their voices continue to guide us into the future of this technological revolution. Their ability to see the key characteristics of the shift in our mediums of communication and connection are vital for us to unlearn and relearn how to engage the world and this next generation.

Marshall McLuhan

One of the most important voices on the subject of a network revolution is Marshall McLuhan, the great 20th century Canadian philosopher. His earlier works mainly involved the examination of the effect of advertising on society and culture but later he made a significant pivot to studying the larger influence of communication media independent of their content. As we continue to explore the shift towards new digital mediums, particularly artificial intelligence and virtual reality, it is prudent to study his contributions to navigating modern mediums.

Let us begin with McLuhan’s 1962 book *The Gutenberg Galaxy*. As we have briefly explored, the movable-type printing press ushered in a new age driven by visuality, not orality. And this change had significant transformative effects on the world. In this book, McLuhan suggests that communication technology (e.g. alphabetic writing, print, electronic images, etc.) not only affected speed or breadth of our ability to transmit information, it also transformed the content of the transmission itself due to what he calls “cognitive organization,” or how a mind processes the same information differently depending on what sensory or mechanism are involved.

This phenomenon, coined as “Medium is the Message,” has significant ramifications for social organization and is a cause for a hummingbird effect. He wrote:

If a new technology extends one or more of our senses outside us into the social world, then new ratios among all of our senses will occur in that particular culture. It is comparable to what happens when a new note is added to a melody. And when the sense ratios alter in any culture then what had appeared lucid before may suddenly become opaque, and what had been vague or opaque will become translucent.

In other words, content, depending on how it is delivered, can change meaning so much so that someone who has received content orally but then suddenly receives that same content in a text may interpret that content in a completely new way.

McLuhan’s most widely known work was *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. Written in 1964, it is considered one of the seminal works in articulating modern media theory. In this work, McLuhan’s main thrust was that a medium has a social effect, an effect that introduces biases of meaning and frequency of types of content solely based on the characteristics of that medium. His example to illustrate this was the light bulb, a piece of technology that had no “content” in itself but had “pure information”—light—which inarguably had a dramatic effect on our ability to craft society around darkness or night. The book, radio, and television are all like the lightbulb but they themselves have an additional characteristic of containing human content. This characteristic is less significant to McLuhan: “Indeed, it is only too typical that the “content” of any medium blinds us to the character of the medium...the electric light escapes attention as a communication medium just because it has no “content.” And this makes it an invaluable instance of how people fail to study media at all.” This failure is significant and possibly plays a part in the transitioning process from one medium to another.

Like the fifteenth century network revolution that pitted the metal-movable-type printing press against the pen and the woodblock typeface, today is a “clash of cataclysmic proportions between two great technologies,” the ever-evolving medium of digital communication versus what came before it. McLuhan concludes:

We approach the new with the psychological conditioning and sensory responses to the old. This clash naturally occurs in transitional periods. In late medieval art, for instances, we saw the fear of the new print technology expressed in the theme The Dance of Death. Today, similar fears are expressed in the Theater of the Absurd. Both represent a common failure: the attempt to do a job demanded by the new environment with the tools of the old.

In the years following the printing press, books became the primary medium in which human beings saw the world. The church saw books, especially the Bible, in the hands of the masses as a threat not only to their legitimacy and place in the world but also as something counter to what God was trying to do in this world. The Dance of Death is a posture of despair and hostility towards the physical-temporal nature of our reality. It is the posture that is commonly taken when either we do not understand, or we cannot see the hope in the coming future.

Kevin Kelly

Kevin Kelly is the founding executive editor of *Wired* magazine and an author of several books on the effects of technology. His 2016 book *The Inevitable* describes the twelve technological forces that are shaping our future. There is strong evidence that Kelly’s predictions are influenced by McLuhan. Kelly’s thesis of today’s technological forces is developed on a keen understanding of the foundational medium characteristics.

Kelly believes that the computer age did not really start until the early 1980s when computers and phones “melded into a robust hybrid.” Who could have predicted that such a combination would become the foundational medium for the proliferation of all of our modern technology? But Kelly says that this was bound to happen and predicted that it would for decades because of “technological forces.” These forces are a result of the characteristics of technology allowing new capabilities but also making outdated cultural behaviors and ideas unviable. Kelly talks about a “bias” in technology in the same way McLuhan talks about how the medium is the message.

For the past 40 years, Kelly argues that we have been on this inevitable trajectory that has ushered in our modern global society. But he doesn’t mean that he is an oracle that can predict the future with pristine accuracy. Kelly addresses his use of the word “inevitable” early in his book:

“I mean inevitable in a different way. There is a bias in the nature of technology that tilts it in certain directions and not others. All things being equal, the physics and mathematics that rule the dynamics of technology tend to favor certain behaviors.”

This aligns with McLuhan’s idea that even before content is transmitted, the medium is already producing a social effect that is so strong that society will move in that direction eventually. Kelly makes a distinction that certainly he could not have predicted the iPhone but telephony—long-distance electrically transmitted voice messages—was bound to happen.

What are the technological forces? Kelly identifies twelve but we will only briefly discuss a few. The twelve are: Becoming, Cognifying, Flowing, Screening, Accessing, Sharing, Filtering, Remixing, Interacting, Tracking, Questioning, and Beginning.

The “Cognifying” force in particular is a one that is only now emerging prominently to the general public. The advent of artificial intelligence has incredible implications for what our mediums of communication will be able to do for us. Even for someone like Kelly, the implications of a synthetic intelligence are daunting: “because synthetic intelligence is a combination of human intelligence (all past human learning, all current humans online), it will be difficult to pinpoint exactly *what* it is as well. Is it our memory, or a consensual agreement? Are we searching it, or is it searching us?” But it is quickly becoming apparent that the leaders of the next modern society will account for its purposes and uses.

As consumers, we have seen iterations of artificial intelligence already in things like IBM’s Watson playing chess and Tesla’s automated navigation features being implemented into consumer vehicles. A.I. is a medium that extends intelligence and thought but it also becomes an active agent and partner in human endeavors. What this ultimately means is that the jobs of the future will be configured in vastly different ways. Whole new sectors and industries will rise up from artificial intelligence. This means that many jobs that exist today will no longer be viable. The transition will be chaotic. Human beings are going to be freed up from things that technology will be able to do better and faster and start focusing more on things that human intelligence can solely do. But that also means many people will lose their livelihood overnight and have very few options to turn to.

Kelly identifies sharing as another force that technology continues to move us towards. The printing press made the copying of information accessible. Digital technology is going to make sharing mandatory on a level yet experienced for many things including consumer goods and the arts. This contrasts with where we’ve come from. We are coming out of a period of time where a significant amount of energy and work was done to make digital items proprietary and

locked—for example, Sony created incredibly expensive proprietary memory cards in order to lock consumers into their ecosystem of products and Metallica sued thousands of their fans for downloading mp3's on Napster (In 2018, Kirk Hammett expressed the same concern he had from the early 2000's that digital music has harmed the music industry). For years, companies and legislators believed that creating ways to block sharing of licensed content was not only the economical thing to do but the ethical thing to do. But Kelly points out that they were trying to push against an inevitable characteristic of a digital-medium world, and they were going to ultimately lose. All of the DRM's that limit our ability to copy and share software, music, eBooks, and movies would soon disappear because 1) these practices are negatively viewed by the public and ultimately, 2) it is an attempt to defy the inevitable. But now, we are slowly moving towards subscription services that circumvent “ownership” and promote the idea of transactional sharing. This calls back to McLuhan's point that perhaps we are still trying to navigate this new environment using old tools and old mentalities.

Kelly identifies forces that help us navigate what is happening in our society and gives us insight into possibly our own personal dispositions. He cautions us that any effort to resist these forces will at best only delay the inevitable. Anyone who is seeking a better understanding of our modern times and desires to employ new strategies that will be effective and influential will have to be able to understand what particular tensions are at play between the old ways of thinking and the new environment we are entering. If we continue to despair at the new and stubbornly hold onto past methods, we may lose our ability to help shape the future. A worse state would be to not embrace the medium at all and draw a line between what is real and what is artificial.

Andy Crouch

Andy Crouch is a bestselling author and a researcher of faith and culture. His voice has had an incredible influence on navigating the cultural changes from a Christian faith perspective. He often partners his research with the Barna Group, a well-respected faith research organization, and has written two key books that discuss the critical issues the church is facing today: *Culture Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling* and *The Tech-Wise Family*.

In *Culture Making*, Crouch writes:

I wonder what we Christians are known for in the world outside our churches. Are we known as critics, consumers, copiers, condemners of culture? I'm afraid so. Why aren't we known as cultivators—people who tend and nourish what is best in human culture, who do the hard and painstaking work to preserve the best of what people before us have done? Why aren't we known as creators—people who dare to think and do something that has never been thought or done before, something that makes the world more welcoming and thrilling and beautiful?

The key identifier that Crouch asks us to consider as a church is “cultivator.” He defines cultivation in an agricultural sense, that we are laborers working on fertile ground. Cultivation is a discipline forged through long apprenticeships and traditions—relational discipleship. Cultivation is not defining the world but making the world full of goodness with whatever it is defined with. Cultivation moves towards diversity, not conformity.

But Crouch says that the church has largely adopted alternative postures—one of critique, consumption, copying, and condemnation. Crouch sees parallel with how the church has postured towards culture in various ways and Richard H. Niebuhr's five paradigms of Christ and Culture. In short, some churches are set to attack and repel culture—this is known as the “Christ against Culture” paradigm—and view themselves as completely separate or detached from

culture. It is a triumphalist approach where the conflict is between God and the world. Other churches are set to merge and conform to culture, copying and mimicking the trends and ways that the world embraces—this view is known as the “Christ of Culture” paradigm. This is an antinomian view that places freedom and acceptance above all other values. These views are unbalanced extremes of the dual identities discussed in 1 Peter chapter two and certainly color how one would approach our technological modern society. It is important to study these paradigms in light of cultural artifacts such as the smartphone, the internet, social media, and other modern expressions of our digital world.

Crouch sees beauty and necessity in technology so long as it is put in its proper place. This is his central thesis in his book, *The Tech-Wise Family* and the posture that he writes with mirrors the posture he maintains in his earlier book, *Culture Making*—cultural cultivation. He sees technology as the way into the future and understands that abstaining from technology will become more and more untenable for the average person, and particularly a person who desires to engage faith and culture. But he argues for intentionality and understanding as we adopt new technological habits in our households. In the book, Crouch argues for ten commandments that account for the haphazard of utilizing technology as well as create good frameworks for purposeful interaction.

The critical factor, according to Crouch, for how we account for technology is how aware we are of the bias in the various technological artifacts we utilize. Do we know the influences and the nudges that move us towards idolizing tech? Crouch adds a moral-spiritual component to the equation informed by his Christian theological framework. Technology can become an idol. Addictions can be developed when using our smart devices. What compounds these issues is the fact that we are the earliest generation of human beings that have been exposed to this new set of

tools. We are the beta test subjects that are being exposed to something that does not come from our past (e.g. from tradition or our ancestors). We've unknowingly entered a new world and have not been directly prompted to this reality.

SYNTHESIS AND CONCLUSION

My NPO focuses on understanding the challenges and obstacles that the American church faces in the midst of the 21st network revolution catalyzed by technological advancements. Historically, we know that in this time of disruption, it is important to reassess how the church will exemplify the Acts 2 model in today's modern society. My growing concern is that like the established church during Luther's era, today's established churches will not adapt quickly enough to societal shifts and become ineffective over time. Why do the trends show that American Christianity is in decline? What is it about how people are encountering faith or navigating their spirituality that is contributing to our post-church reality? These questions are difficult and complex to answer and yet one major point of agreement to come out of the research is the affirmation that technology is imposing a force that has a magnitude and scope to reshuffle society—a society that cannot be navigated by the tools and strategies of old. We are evolving from the Gutenberg era and are quickly approaching a world built on a digital foundation—and we are not wrestling enough with the implications. And just as print forever changed how people behave, learn, connect, and work will shift, it is happening again with the advent of these new technological realities.

There is evidence that we are in the midst of a great hummingbird effect onset by the shifting of our primary medium for communication. Just as books made the oral processes of the medieval world obsolete, advancements in artificial intelligence, social media, and the virtual

space is making our Gutenberg-dispositions obsolete. This obsolescence might be a factor in the churches ability to deliver the gospel. What if it is a matter of the medium we utilize rather than a spiritual resistance? What if our disposition to resist integrating digital strategies is creating disconnection and discontent, especially with the younger generations? This has major implications to the church's ability to evangelize, disciple, and create communities. In short, technology has changed how communication, connection, and learning is done in our society. This, in turn, is radically affecting how organizations and institutions, the church included, ought to engage in society in order to accomplish their purposes.

The crossing over from one era to another is not an easy road. The Gutenberg Printing Press age has spanned from the 15th century until the end of the 20th century. Our traditions, pedagogy, how we think, and how we approach our reality has been shaped by the last 500 years. When we study the beginnings of this period, we see that the early generations struggled to comprehend the massive overhaul that print was ushering into the world. That generation experienced the shift from orality to visuality. The people who had the greatest obstacle of transitioning from their oral traditions to a visual-centric way of life was the establishment—those in power like the church. Today, the ongoing tension question is how quickly and how deeply do we commit to a church model that centralizes the new medium? Try and adopt too quickly and people will feel left behind. But not incorporating innovative practices can be detrimental to the long-term health of the church in America.

How do we build new strategies and frameworks around today's technology rather than trying to conform today's technology to do what we're used to? History shows that those who shape the future are the ones who can identify the opportunities and strategies accurately account for the changes. Some churches have opted to double down on what has worked in the past—this

is a risky strategy in the midst of categorical changes in how people connect, learn, and build relationships. Others are detaching themselves further from culture, seeing the external society as hopelessly wayward. These churches are effectively becoming monasteries of the old world—ignoring technology and more importantly, hindering the process of connection and community.

One gap in today's ministry and theological literature is a lack of accounting for a digital medium-specialized framework. We are still using Gutenberg era language and strategies and so, we leaders and innovators to build modern frameworks that are built on the capabilities of technology today. We also have not veered into discussions about what does it mean to be intelligent. Jonathan Merritt, a prominent Christian journalist for the Atlantic, wrote a piece titled, "Is AI a Threat to Christianity?" In the article, he points out that our modern theologians aren't paying attention to what's happening in the technological world. The idea of AI would disrupt thousands of years of Christian theology on what it means to be free-willed beings, what consciousness means, and even our understanding of the "soul." As we navigate forward, the church will have to reengage on these monumental and foundational topics that were once thought set in stone.

Appendix C: Milestone 3 – Design Workshop Report

NPO STATEMENT

The digital-social network revolution creates a need for comprehensive reassessment and innovation in modern church practices and strategies centered around discipleship, evangelism, and community building.

NPO SCOPE AND CONSTRAINTS

The scope of the NPO is to lay the assessment, identification and implementation of modern church ministry strategies that account for both the technological and social forces that are disrupting and reforming how communities connect and behave.

The non-negotiables for this NPO are:

1. Content creation across multiple mediums including podcasting, video, writing, and social media engagement.
2. Community involvement or community building component (i.e., multiple contributors, audience participation, and a common space for discussion and Q&A).

The scope of this NPO is the creation of a ten-chapter first season, each chapter covering one major area where faith and technology is reconverging.

NPO CONTEXT

The context for this NPO is my denominational tribe, the Anglican diocese Churches for the Sake of Others (C4SO). Our diocese constitutes a collection of local ACNA affiliated churches in North America that span across the South, West, Midwest, and Pacific Northwest regions but this initiative will be particularly interested in engaging communities in the Pacific Northwest.

Furthermore, NPO is particularly significant in locations where technology, culture, and faith are rapidly converging to create the most amount of progress and influence. Naturally, this NPO must anticipate and address behavior of the next generation. The demographic that is most vital to the NPO initiative will be Generation Z and younger (those who are born after 1996).

The NPO intends to assist and benefit current and future ministry leaders, church planters, pastors, faith-based non-profits, parachurch organizations, and networks.

ROOT CAUSES

Three potential NPO root causes emerged to prominence from the Design Workshop and subsequent 1x1 interviews. The first is an overexposure to “competitive ideas,” especially at a younger age than previous generations. Technology not only has given the ability to rapidly produce consumable content at a remarkable volume, but it has given end-users an extraordinary amount of customizability and reach when it comes to the kind of information they can access. This increased competition of attention and oversaturation of information has created challenges for churches.

Secondly, the outpacing of technology has continued to create disruption, unfamiliarity, and fracturing in communities. Digital mediums are constantly being outdated by newer, more innovative ones. Familiarity, common language, and uniform behaviors are becoming more and

more difficult to maintain in communities. In essence, technology is moving at a rate where camps will form not around age but capacity to metabolize new technologies.

Third, the ethical and spiritual uncertainty of technology use, especially what a biblical perspective should be.

THREE BIG IDEAS

Big Idea #1: Produce a 10-episode podcast series titled “The Inevitable Church podcast.”

Big Idea #2: Produce a 10-episode YouTube video series titled “The Inevitable Church.”

Big Idea #3: Write a 10-chapter manuscript for a book/audiobook: “The Inevitable Church: The Ten Ways Technology and Faith Will Transform the Future Church.”

DEFINITION OF ‘DONE’

The intended outcome of addressing the NPO is to produce the first season of the Inevitable Church initiative and establish a foundation moving forward for building a community of ministers and Christ followers who contribute regularly to navigating a digital environment with fruitfulness.

3 NAPKIN PITCHES

The Inevitable Church Podcast Season 1 (10 Episodes)

- Big Idea: A podcast that talks about how the church is adapting for a digital era.
- *Audience*: Podcast listeners, church ministers, local church community members, parents, and students.
- *NPO*: Create a cost-effective, accessible podcast resource to model and inform church ministries how to focus on critical issues of technology and faith.

- *Benefit:* The resource is free, well-researched, cutting edge, and accessible on any podcast platform. The creator benefits from the building of an online community that invites others to contribute.
- *Approach:* The approach is to research and produce excellent, credible analyses and insights about the state of church ministry in our digital-oriented environment—it is novel by embracing technology as central to church ministry.
- *Risks:* The risk of failure centers around the ability to reach the target audience (marketing and community building). High quality work requires the proper exposure through thoughtful marketing and distribution.
- *Assumptions/hypotheses to test:* several metrics will be utilized to test if the information is valuable and/or reliable including audience engagement, analytics, and consultation with various churches. Assumption: my target audience listens to podcasts (or are willing to).
- *Benchmarks of success:* community engagement (average number of listens, listener responses and comments, and participation of experts and relevant voices). More specifically, a consistent audience of 50 listeners is the goal with at least 2 guest speakers and experts.
- *Other approaches:* This approach relies not only on biblical principles and truths but also on experts and seminal voices who understand the technological forces that will have the most significant impact on human behavior, thought, and communication.

The Inevitable Church / Semiotic Shift YouTube Series Season 1 (10 Episodes)

- *Big Idea:* A how-to channel about exploring tools, strategies, and what other churches are doing to integrate into a digital era.
- *Audience:* A wide variety of ministers, leaders, and Christ followers who are looking to not only consume but build a digital community using YouTube's social media tools.
- *NPO:* Create a church paradigm that doesn't see technology as a threat but as a vital tool for ministry and for the great commission, to assume that technology is God-given and to learn how to utilize it in a competent way.
- *Benefit:* Monetization for creator, exposure of research, virtual community and collaboration.
- *Approach:* The approach is to write and script out the videos and then create a shot list including all the elements of filmmaking: b-roll, music, location, etc.
- *Risks:* One of the risks is how to manage and engage the community. Trust is much more difficult to garner over social media and what needs to be delivered is excellent content with credible sources—the arguments need to be relevant and sound, and it needs to have the capacity to be recontextualized into an individual's circumstance.
- *Assumptions/hypotheses to test:* YouTube has built in analytics that allows me to track viewership, demographics, and also gives me the option to dialogue with viewers.
- *Benchmarks of success:* a growing channel of 100 consistent viewers is the goal after ten videos.
- *Other approaches:* Producing high quality, sound video content is crucial in our modern context and should be considered foundational to not only creating a bridge for community but also for evangelism and discipleship.

The Inevitable Church (Book – 10 Chapters)

- *Big Idea*: A book outlining the major principles of what the church is, the state of the church in our modern digital context, and the ten technological forces that are affecting the way churches need to evaluate and execute their ministries.
- *Audience*: Readers, faith-minded individuals, churches and related organizations.
- *NPO*: a semiotics book on the future of the church as it pertains to technological forces and a revisiting of what the church is, what the gospel is, what is the great commission in light of these forces.
- *Benefit*: Ultimately, the onboarding of a new generation of churches that will become wise and skilled at employing technological tools for the gospel.
- *Approach*: The approach is to use the writings from the other pitches to ultimately create the backbone of a book that will be in audiobook form as well.
- *Risks*: Books are higher cost and require a lot of prerequisites from a publisher. This would be the final option to attempt and if only the other Napkin pitches are successful.
- *Assumptions/hypotheses to test*: The church is anti-technology, which is hurting its witness to our culture.
- *Benchmarks of success*: Getting published would be the highest aim but I think just writing it and sharing it in a blog would also be extremely successful.
- *Other approaches*: I think most would be published authors thing singularly about their books and then from that book comes everything else—I want to do it in reverse. I want to podcast and YouTube channels to be the foundation for the book.
-

DESIGN WORKSHOP STAKEHOLDERS

1. Senior Pastor, mid-30's, married.
2. Anglican Priest, parent, 30's, male
3. Higher education campus Pastor, parent, 40's
4. Anglican deacon, married, 30's, seminary faculty
5. Parents, Higher Education professional, Counseling professional
6. Anglican member, 20's, married
7. College student, Biblical studies major, 20's

ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS

1. Pastor/writer
2. Dean of college, Biblical scholar,
3. Ordained Priest, Biblical, Spiritual Formation scholar

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Taleb, Nassim Nicholas. *Skin in the Game: Hidden Asymmetries in Daily Life*. New York: Penguin Random House LLC, 2018.

The principles in *Skin in the Game* apply to modern church ministries and practices. Skin in the Game is about the idea of “symmetry,” or accountability that rewards positive outcomes and decisions and penalizes negative outcomes and decisions. The implications of “skin in the game” is the empowerment of the minority over the majority (relevant as the church continues to become obscured from the majority way of thinking), creates buy-in and incentivizing positive changes and strategies and penalizes static or closed-minded thinking, and ultimately creates passionate community members who share in the same vision. These principles are mostly

applied to businesses in the book but there is a strong opportunity to recontextualize it for the church. The most insightful aspect of this book is that it addresses the main perception and problem of the church—what happens when the church claims moral superiority, virtuous living, and charitable values without the symmetrical component of placing the church in the same position of accountability? This is what the book tries to address. The church over time has created an asymmetrical relationship with the greater culture which creates a huge potential for hypocrisy and an immunity complex.

Vaynerchuk, Gary. *Jab, Jab, Jab, Right Hook: How to Tell Your Story in a Noisy Social World*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2013.

Vaynerchuk is an entrepreneur and CEO of VaynerX subsidiary VaynerMedia. He found much of his success through his understanding of the huge advantages that adopting social media principles would garner in a competitive market. This book is a detailed look into his principles for creating attention in a hyper-competitive market. In a way, Vaynerchuk created his brand from establishing the central theme of “jab, jab, jab, right hook.” This idea is a complete embracing of the tactics of social media communication and connecting customers and audience members with a brand. Jabbing is about giving—giving more to your customers than what you’re asking them to give to you (which most companies refuse or do not know how to do). It follows the principle of generating content that benefits your audience as first principle—something that a church should be able to do well (but commonly fails). Vaynerchuk has been controversial throughout his career because he draws an immense amount of skepticism because of the extreme nature in which he doubles down on social media. The insights from this book are as follows: become an early adopter, be generous and charitable immensely more than taking, and then ask instead of prescribing. The church today does the opposite of this.

Vogl, Charles. *The Art of Community*. Oakland: Berrett-Koehler Publishers Inc., 2016

This book answers the challenge of the epidemic of loneliness with seven timeless principles for belonging, what the author identifies as the remedy to loneliness, by outlining the characteristics of a healthy community and then outlining principles that foster and sustain those characteristics. These characteristics include identifying boundaries, having initiation rituals, a sacred space or “temple,” shared stories, shared language, and shared meanings. With these principles, communities are able to address the intrinsic challenges to cultivating one such as onboarding, exclusivity barriers, isolation, and disconnection. The author draws from his Christian tradition but also from research and experience, including joining the Peace Corps, writing and producing a PBS documentary, and graduating from Yale graduate school. Vogl claims that within a generation much of our core principles of building community has eroded in part by the rise of our digital habits. Vogl outlines how our modern context contends with healthy community building practices, but he does not outline how technology can reestablish these principles. This work will be incredibly helpful as an essential list of characteristics that a community must exhibit to be healthy and sustainable.

APPENDIX A

DESIGN WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

The design workshop was held online via zoom with all participants on Saturday, October 24, 2020 from 2-4:30 pm. The initial plan was to host it on October 17, 2020 but schedule conflicts created a week delay—thankfully, the week after worked out for most people. The agenda consisted of four main elements or questions outlined in the Design Exploration Plan. The platform app.mural.co was used to collaborate and document the process.

The agenda examined the NPO from a historical, contemporary, and innovative perspective. Using the mural.co platform, I led the participants through a series of questions and topics that helped bring out both the personal experiences of the individual participants as well as their perspectives and opinions on varying matters. It was important for the participants to identify the dynamics of their relationship to technology, community, and faith development (in the areas of discipleship and evangelism, especially).

The participants who were able to engage in the design workshop were diverse across demographics as well as holding particular perspectives. For specific individuals in the Design Workshop, please refer to the Design Workshop Participants section. All of them were able to track relatively quickly with the target NPO, which helped create common language quickly.

Overall, I would rate the workshop experience a four out of five or satisfactory. I would say that the constraints of people's available time and the fact that it was an online exercise created the most challenges. Engagement was overall very good, but I noticed fatigue and disengagement as early as an hour in. But there was great insight and thoughtful ideas presented

throughout each of the exercises. I was encouraged and hopeful by the workshop as it led me to affirm the trajectory I am heading with this project.

DESIGN WORKSHOP DOCUMENTATION

[Design Workshop Documentation Link](#)

ONE-PAGE POST-WORKSHOP MESSAGE TO STAKEHOLDERS

Dear Stakeholders,

Thank you so much once again for participating and investing into my doctoral work. Over the last few years, a new crop of challenges and opportunities have been created by the rapid progression of our world. Our digital-technological capabilities have ushered in a network revolution—how we communicate, learn, come together, and do all kinds of work is going through total transformation. And as a minister of the Gospel, I am noticing that as the mediums for connection and communication change, so will how the gospel is transmitted and received—and that will feel disorienting and liberating at the same time. That is the focus of my NPO: the digital-social network revolution creates a need for comprehensive reassessment and innovation in modern church practices and strategies centered around discipleship, evangelism, and community building. And the world is moving so fast that an opportunity is being created to double-down on where we are going rather than being modest or resistant to change.

Through our exploration and discussions together, we've already highlighted some of the massive challenges that the technological quakes are doing to the landscape of our culture. We've identified root causes such as the proliferation of information, competing voices, and alternative narratives. We are noticing that technology continues to lap and outpace us every year—we're becoming fragmented just on the basis of how much change we can tolerate. And

lastly, we are having trouble identifying how the Bible informs and guides our strategies, our ethics, and even our attitudes about what is happening in our world. Where is God in all of this? It's an important question that we are desperately seeking to find concrete answers to.

My project is about exploring our ever-changing environment, utilizing the signs of our modern age, and incorporating a biblical framework into new innovations and strategies that will serve the future church. The foundation of this project is research that will be distilled into the modern mediums of today—YouTube, podcasts, audiobooks, and print. Today, we need as many avenues as we can become competent in and knowledgeable about. There are ten key principles that I think the future inevitable church needs to account for as more and more change comes her way and the overall goal of this project is to produce those ten key principles as chapters, episodes, and pieces across various platforms.

As mentioned before, you're always welcome to bring insights and feedback to anything I share with you in the future. Thank you once again for your support and help!

ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS DOCUMENTATION

[Design Workshop Documentation Link](#)

Appendix D: Milestone 4 – Prototype Iteration Report

PROTOTYPE #1 SUMMARY AND FINDINGS

PROTOTYPE DESCRIPTION

The prototype will consist of two pilot episodes that will tease the two formats that will be utilized in the podcast--a long form and short form. The first format will be the audio version of a video produced episode. The second pilot episode will be a discussion format podcast with two other co-hosts that I have already invited and recruited.

GOLDILOCKS STRATEGY

The two episodes will be produced but without additional production value (e.g. sound effects, music, audio clips, etc.). The teaser episodes will be relatively shorter than full chapter episodes by 30-50%.

RESEARCH QUESTION

Does the prototype deliver content that audiences find educational, entertaining (engaging), and encouraging?

ASSESSMENT BENCHMARKS

Three metrics, each having qualitative and quantitative measurements, will be assessed for this prototype: the educational, entertainment, and edifying components (See Appendix C1 for

interview script). These assessments are based on maximizing production quality, relevance of content, and audience engagement.

PROTOTYPE PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHIC DESCRIPTION

Participants were all adults with varying degrees of vested interest in their Christian faith, the church, and how their context and/or circumstance is changing because of digital technology. Amongst the participants were parents, creators, educators, leaders, students, and ministers, between the ages of 21-49.

SUMMARY

A great foundation to a new podcast is the people involved and the chemistry they are able to produce. The two individuals who agreed to work with me on this prototype gave their time and resources generously, and more importantly, they were the perfect pairing with great intellect, perspective, and spirit for learning. However, the podcast requires a more focused structure with thoughtful segments, engaging content, and experience in order to captivate a following and ultimately, to serve the church effectively. Participants wanted a shorter overall length, a focused episode that dives deeper into a particular topic, and varied pacing with memorable segments.

DISCOVERY

Within a podcast episode, a more focused, nuanced episode is overwhelmingly important over breadth--time is very valuable to the audience and the content must increasingly become interesting throughout the progression.

PROTOTYPE #2 SUMMARY AND FINDINGS

PROTOTYPE DESCRIPTION

The prototype is the pilot episode of a YouTube-distributed series called The Inevitable Church. The episode will be 5-7 minutes in length introducing the scope of the channel.

GOLDILOCKS STRATEGY

The pilot episode will be scripted and produced to be a 5-7 minute video that gives a brief overview of the major topics/chapters of the project. The video will include a pre-production, production, and post-production stage and will be fully produced.

RESEARCH QUESTION

Does the prototype deliver content that audiences find educational, entertaining (engaging), and encouraging?

ASSESSMENT BENCHMARKS

Three metrics, each having qualitative and quantitative measurements, will be assessed for this prototype: the educational, entertainment, and edifying components (See Appendix C1 for interview script). These assessments are based on maximizing production quality, relevance of content, and audience engagement.

PROTOTYPE PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHIC DESCRIPTION

Participants were all adults with varying degrees of vested interest in their Christian faith, the church, and how their context and/or circumstance is changing because of digital technology. Amongst the participants were parents, creators, educators, leaders, students, and ministers, between the ages of 21-49.

SUMMARY

A great video is engaging and immersive. The pilot successfully did captivate the participants in varying ways. What didn't necessarily work was the first idea of me being in the video as a host. I didn't feel like I could create the atmosphere that I was going for here. Participants did still say they wanted to connect with me through the video and utilize anchoring techniques like putting up keywords. The ending connected with them though as an exhortation.

DISCOVERY

The images and music make a dramatic difference on meaning--very semiotic. The video morphed into a documentary short and that connected well with the audience. Moving forward, I am going to capitalize on this and add more familiar imagery (while remaining within the copyright laws of YouTube), add more history behind the subject matter, and incorporate an A-Roll of myself more.

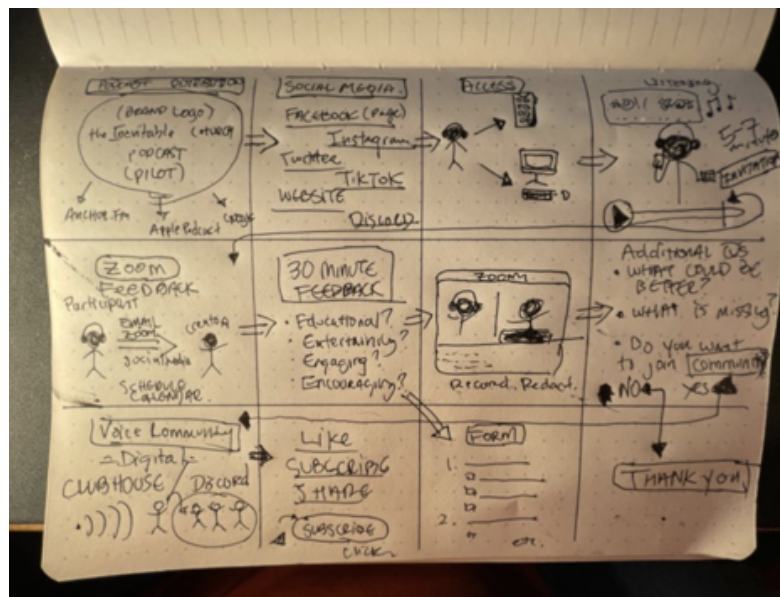
MOST VIABLE PROTOTYPE (MVP)

Between the podcast (prototype #1) and the documentary short (prototype #2), what had emerged early on from my interviewees was that the visuals would play a critical role in meaning and the complete vision of my NPO would benefit from video. The short documentary was more accessible and it was more effective in communicating the NPO for several reasons. Podcasts are relatively niche still and most of my interviewees had to jump through an additional hoop (e.g. creating an account or downloading an app) which created one obstacle too many for people to jump right in. The documentary short via YouTube was much more accessible and easier to

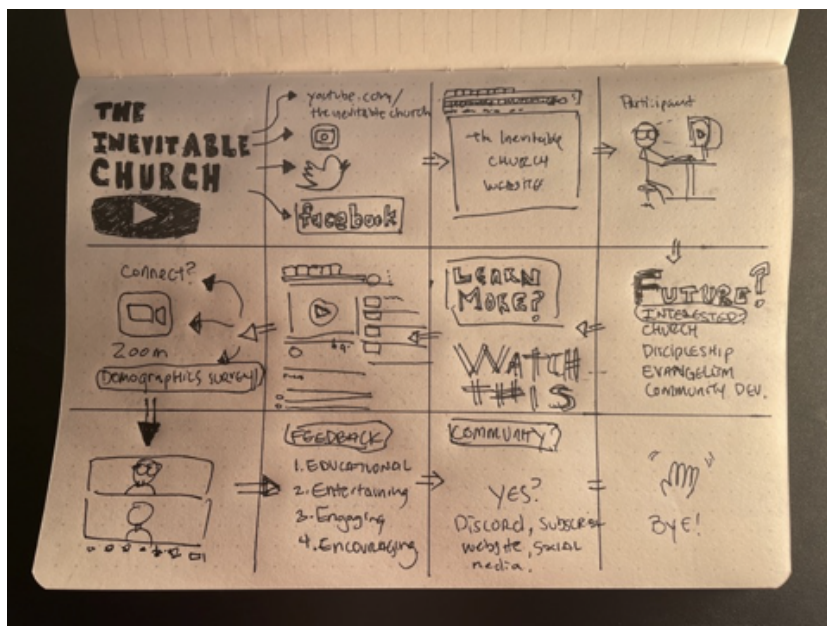
share on social media. YouTube is a very familiar platform and all interviewees regularly used YouTube. Additionally, the length and the demand for attention was much less for the video and to have the audio-only version of the video was significantly less engaging. The podcast morphed into a supplementary arm of the entire project (something that I am keen on continuing in the future but not for the main project). The video also gives a much more clear base for people to consider. The documentary style emerged during the creation of the prototype. It included portions of history, contemporary context, as well as theological implications and it was presented in an entertaining and provocative format. Lastly, filmmaking is definitely more in my skill set, and it was much more fun to create. It depends less on the reliance of my co-hosts (which is significantly important schedule-wise). The first episode is a great pilot episode to build an entire series on and I am excited for the next challenge of creating the entire series this next semester.

APPENDIX

A1. PROTOTYPE #1 STORYBOARD



A2. PROTOTYPE #2 STORYBOARD



B1. RECRUITER SCREENER PROTOTYPE #1

<p>Who Do You Want to Talk To?</p>	<p>What exact criteria will identify the people you want to talk to?</p>	<p>What screening questions will you ask? (Questions shouldn't reveal right answers.)</p>
<p>Vocational Ministers</p>	<p>Their primary vocation is ministry (full or part).</p>	<p>Do you work in ministry?</p>

Gen Z	Up and coming ministry-minded Christ followers	Demographics questions (e.g. Are you 18-23)
Faith-minded (or those who prioritize their faith)	Those who believe that the current and future church is vital to both the individual and to society	Is local church ministry important to you?
Anglican Denomination	The research is soft specializing towards Anglican churches because of personal vested interests.	Are you part of a denominational church? If so, which one?
Podcasters/Creatives	Individuals who create their own content (ministry-centric)	

B2. RECRUITER SCREENER PROTOTYPE #2

Who Do You Want to Talk To?	What exact criteria will identify the people you want to talk to?	What screening questions will you ask? (Questions shouldn't reveal right answers.)
Vocational Ministers	Their primary vocation is ministry (full or part).	Do you work in ministry?
Gen Z	Up and coming ministry-minded Christ followers	Demographics questions (e.g. Are you 18-23)
Faith-minded (or those who prioritize their faith)	Those who believe that the current and future church is vital to both the individual and to society	Is local church ministry important to you?
Anglican Denomination	The research is soft specializing towards Anglican churches because of personal vested interests.	Are you part of a denominational church? If so, which one?

Video Producers/Creatives	Those who believe that creativity will be more integrated into church ministry	Do you create ministry content?
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C. INTERVIEW SCRIPT

1. Educational Component (i.e. the delivery of well-researched, insightful content)
 - a. Did you learn something new from watching this episode? (Yes/No)
 - i. On a scale of 1-5, 1 being not very significant, 5 being very significant, how would you rate the significance of the content?
 - b. What did you learn from the episode OR what did you hope to learn from the episode?
 - c. On a scale of 1-5, 1 being not relevant, 5 being very relevant, how relevant is this content to your understanding of the relationship between the church and technology or faith and culture?
 - d. What components would you like to see in a future episode that would make the Inevitable Church Project more insightful/helpful?
2. Entertainment Component (i.e. the delivery of fun, satisfying, and immersive experiences)
 - a. On a scale of 1-5, did you enjoy the episode?
 - b. On a scale of 1-5, how likely would you consider subscribing to the account?
 - c. What part of the experience did you enjoy the most?

- d. What part of the experience did you enjoy the least?
- 3. Edification Component (i.e. the delivery of content that uplifts and encourages further faith development)
 - a. Did the episode encourage you in your faith journey? (Scale 1-5, none-very encouraging)
 - i. If yes, how?
 - ii. If no, what was lacking in the episode?
 - b. Did the episode give you insight into what God is possibly doing in the world?
 - c. Did the episode give you a picture of what the inevitable church in the future could possibly look like?
 - d. On a scale of 1-5, 1 being not important, 5 being very important, how important is a community component in navigating these matters?

D1. PROTOTYPE #1 DOCUMENTATION

D1a. Inevitable Church Project Survey

[Google Form Link](#)

Inevitable Church Project

Questions to answer after viewing!

* Required

On a scale of 1-5, 1 being not very significant, 5 being very significant, how would you rate the significance of the content to your life and/or church? *

1 2 3 4 5

Not very significant ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very significant

On a scale of 1-5, 1 being not relevant, 5 being very relevant, how relevant is this content to your understanding of the relationship between the church and technology or faith and culture?

1 2 3 4 5

not relevant ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ very relevant

On a scale of 1-5, did you enjoy the episode?

1 2 3 4 5

Did not enjoy ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very much enjoyed

On a scale of 1-5, how likely would you consider subscribing to the project?

1 2 3 4 5

not very likely ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ very likely

On a scale of 1-5, did the episode encourage your faith?

1 2 3 4 5

not very encouraging ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ very encouraging

On a scale of 1-5, 1 being not important, 5 being very important, how important is a community component in navigating this topic?

1 2 3 4 5

not important ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ very important

Submit

Survey Results

Timestamp	On a scale of 1-5, 1 being not very significant, 5 being very significant, how would your rate the significance of the content to your life and/or church?	On a scale of 1-5, 1 being not relevant, 5 being very relevant, how relevant is this content to your understanding of the relationship between the church and technology or faith and culture?	On a scale of 1-5, did you enjoy the episode?	On a scale of 1-5, how likely would you consider subscribing to the project?	On a scale of 1-5, did the episode encourage your faith?	On a scale of 1-5, 1 being not important, 5 being very important, how important is a community component in navigating this topic?	AVERAGE
3/2/2021 14:43:52	3	4	5	3	4	5	4
3/10/2021 9:12:20	5	3	4	3	4	4	3.833333333
3/11/2021 15:24:10	3	3	3	2	3	5	3.166666667
4/2/2021 12:25:25	4	5	5	4	4	5	4.5
4/9/2021 22:25:52	4	3	4	3	3	4	3.5
4/10/2021 16:56:02	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
4/10/2021 22:11:17	3	4	4	2	3	5	3.5
4/12/2021 18:27:45	4	3	5	4	3	4	3.833333333
4/14/2021 22:27:56	5	5	4	5	3	4	4.333333333

D1b. Podcast Cover Design

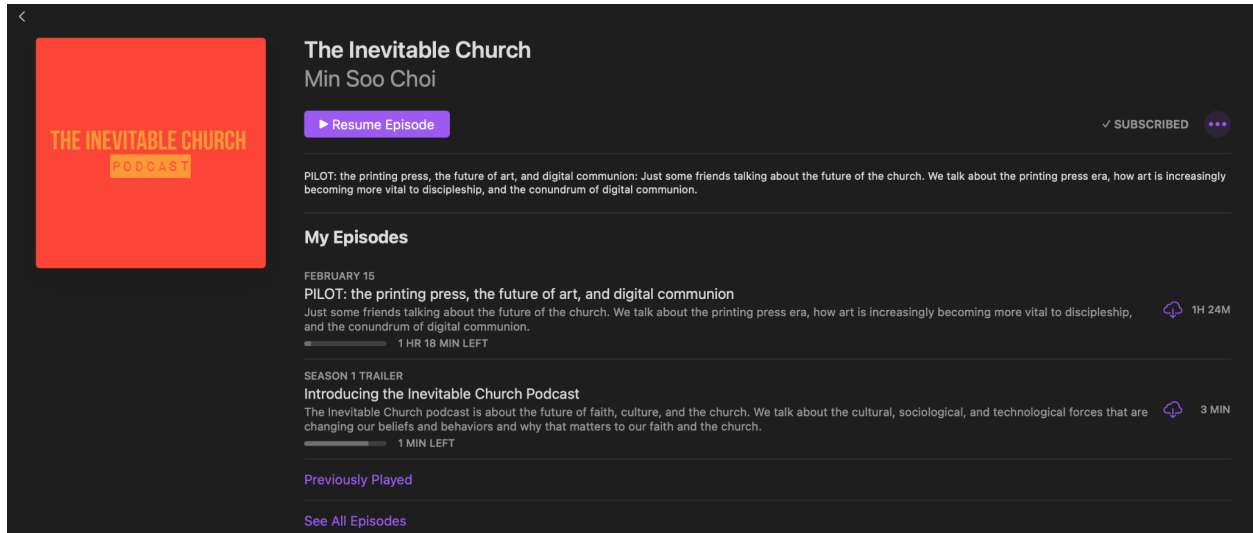


D1c. Podcast Link

[Apple Podcasts](#)

D1d. Equipment

D1e. Apple Podcasts Page

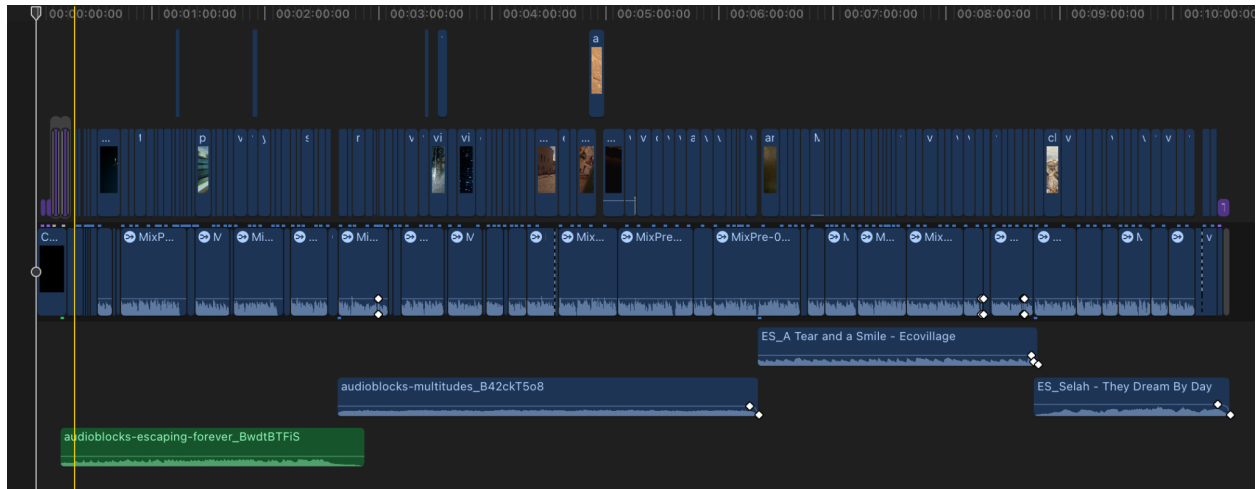


D1f. Podcasting Zoom Picture



D2. PROTOTYPE #2 DOCUMENTATION

D2a. Final Cut Pro Editing Timeline



D2b. YouTube Video

<https://youtu.be/z6KhJquUpCk>

D2c. Title Screen

EPISODE 1

THE NETWORK REVOLUTION

THE INEVITABLE CHURCH

D2d. Playlist

Appendix E: Milestone 5 – Project Appendix Documentation

E.1. Alternative logo colorways

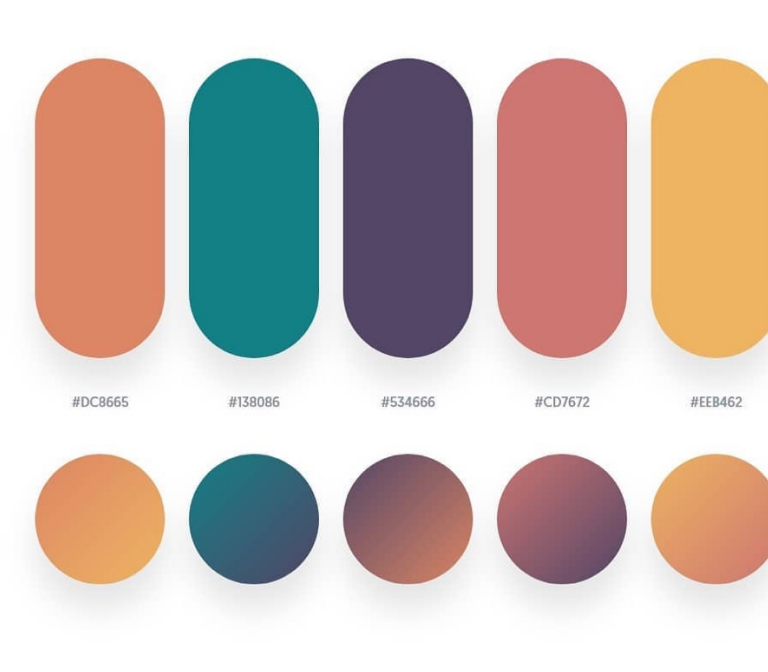


E.2. Color Palettes

E.2.1. Retro Colorway for secondary logo

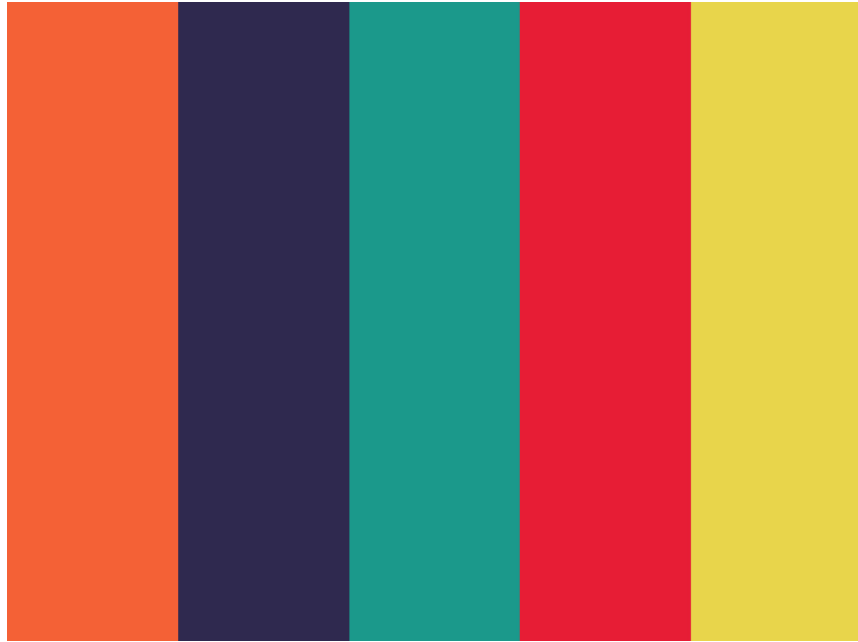


E.2.2. Retro Colorway for future marketing campaigns



E.2.3. Alternative primary colorway

There is a strong saturation and distinctness in this color palette. I think it is a great set for spring and summer. This set was not used for the initial launch but there is an opportunity to redesign the aesthetics around these colors.



E.3. Foundations Series Episodes

E.3.1. Assets for “Most Viable Prototype // Foundations Series Episode 2”

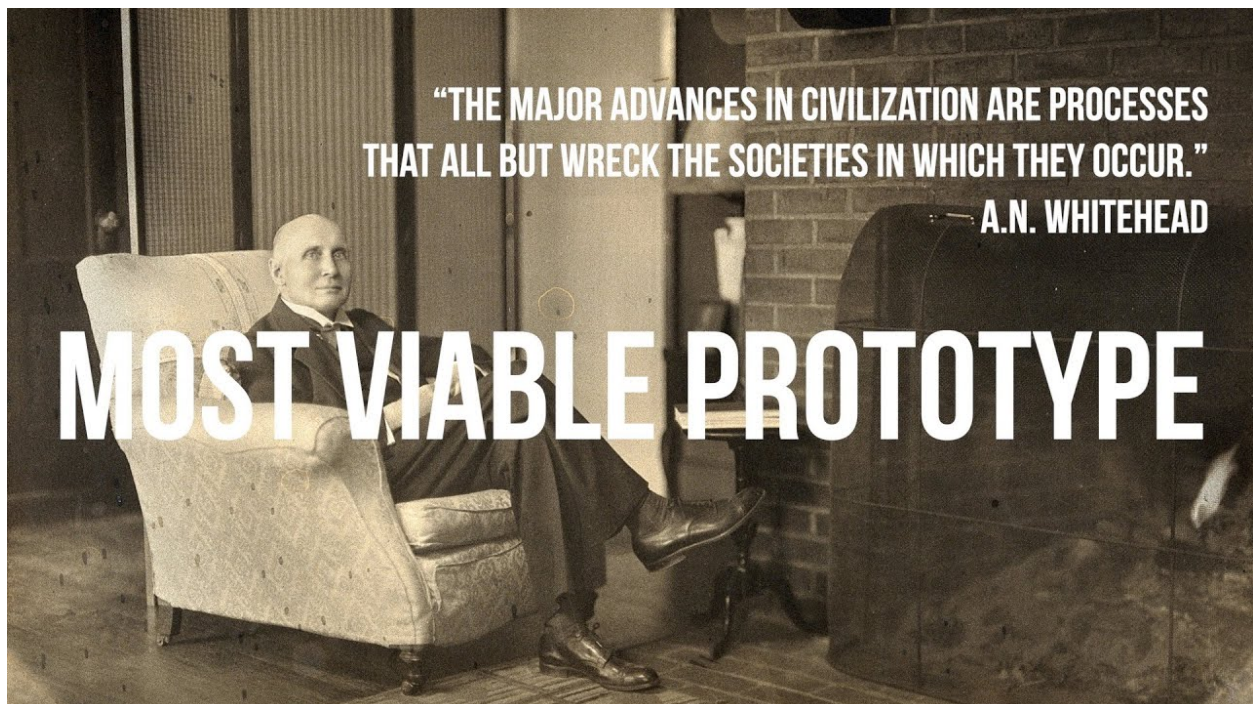


Figure E3.1.1. Thumbnail of “Most Viable Prototype // Foundations Series Episode 2”

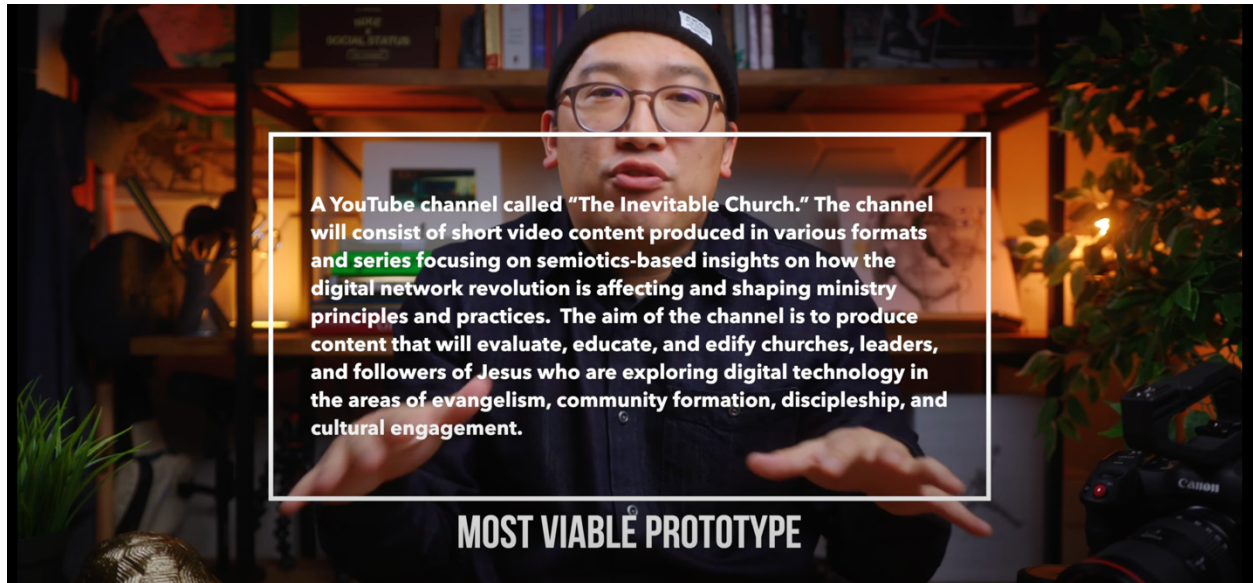


Figure E3.1.2. Screenshot at 1:38 with the most viable prototype stated in a title animation

Video details

Title (required) ?

Most Viable Prototype // Foundations Series Ep. 2

Description ?

A YouTube channel is an incredibly powerful platform to create your content and share it with your audience. In this video I talk about why I chose to create a YouTube channel as the foundational piece to my project dissertation.

connect with me:

Twitter - <https://twitter.com/iamminsoochoi>

Instagram - <https://www.instagram.com/iamminsoochoi/>

Website - <https://www.dallasmorrowproductions.com/>

The Inevitable Church YouTube channel is a Portland Seminary project dissertation for the fulfillment of Doctor of Ministry in Semiotics, Church, and Culture track. Check out their program at the link below if you're interested in an incredible, transformative program that seeks to aid you in your ministry calling.

<https://www.georgefox.edu/seminary/index.html>

Figure E3.1.3. YouTube description box for "Most Viable Prototype // Foundations Series Ep. 2"

E.3.2. Assets for “Theology of the Inevitable Church // Foundations Series Ep. 3”



Figure E3.2.1. Thumbnail of YouTube video. The backdrop is a bustling city and has this intended meaning of wanting to contextualize theology in the world



Figure E3.2.2. Title screen for the Inevitable Church Foundations Series



Figure E3.2.3. Custom Illustration of J.I. Packer with custom quote, “God Saves Sinners,” Gospel Coalition, J.I. Packer, digital animation, accessed December 3, 2021, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/j-i-packer-appreciation-don-carson/>



Figure E3.2.4. Screenshot of Min Choi and animated title “Sanctified Imagination”

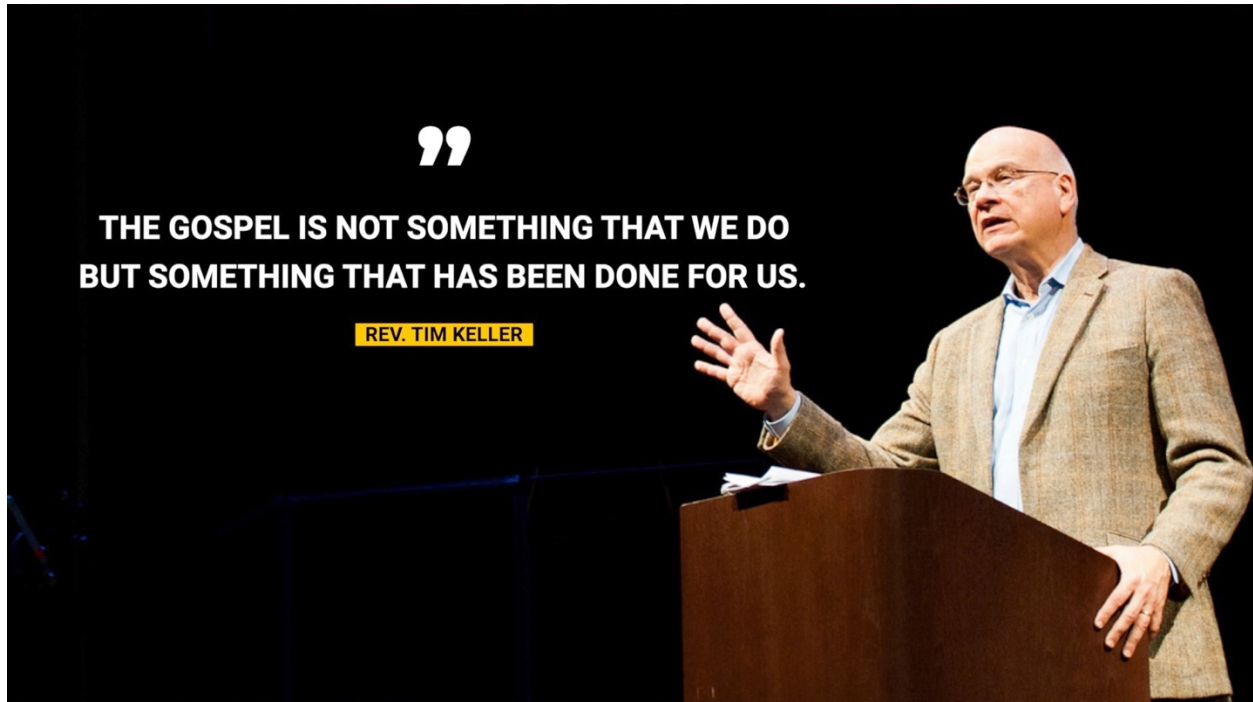


Figure 3.2.5. Custom illustration created in Final Cut Pro X of a picture of Tim Keller preaching. Quote is from Tim Keller. *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City*. Grand Rapids, MI. Zondervan. 2017.

E.4. Vlog Assets and Materials

E.4.1 James Webb Space Telescope: Shaping the Future by Showing the Past // Vlog Ep. 9



Figure E.4.1.1. James Webb Space Telescope launch day. Screenshot from NASA, "James Webb Space Telescope Launch," By NASA, Uploaded on Dec. 25, 2021, Accessed on Dec. 25, 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7nT7JGZMbtM&t=1766s>

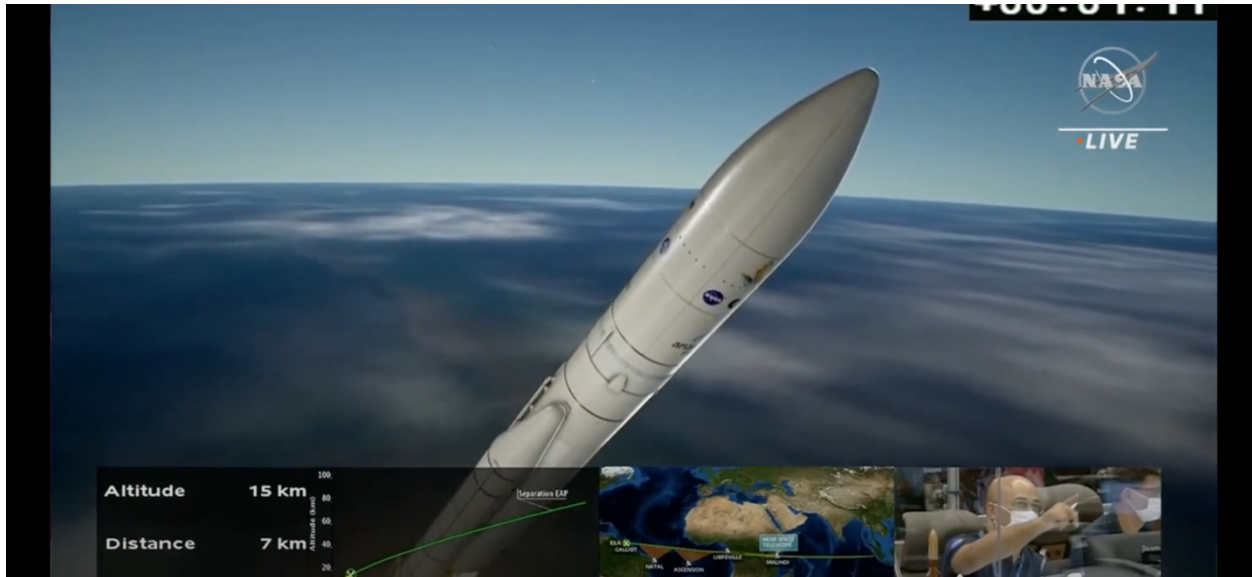


Figure E.4.1.2. JWST rocket entering upper atmosphere, live stream from Nasa. Screenshot from NASA, "James Webb Space Telescope Launch," By NASA, Uploaded on Dec. 25, 2021, Accessed on Dec. 25, 2021.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7nT7JGZMbtM&t=1766s>

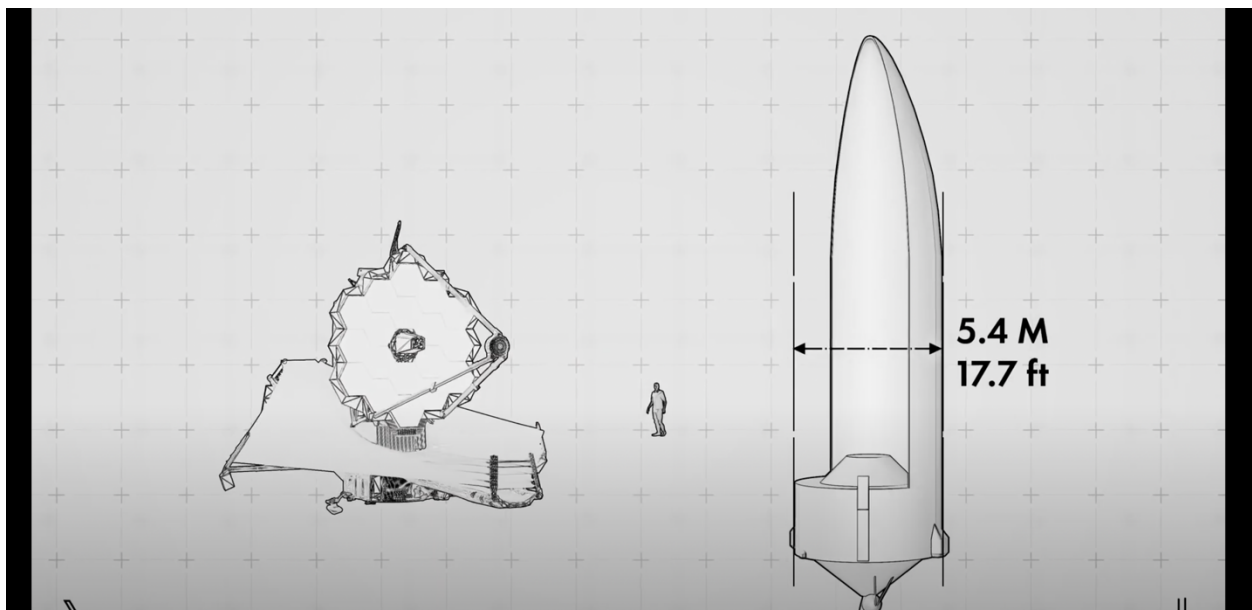


Figure E.4.1.3. Rendered drawing of JWST. Image provided by Joss Wong, "Why the James Webb Space Telescope looks like that," By Vox, Uploaded on Dec. 25, 2021, accessed on Dec. 25, 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I2GhFSInBqA>

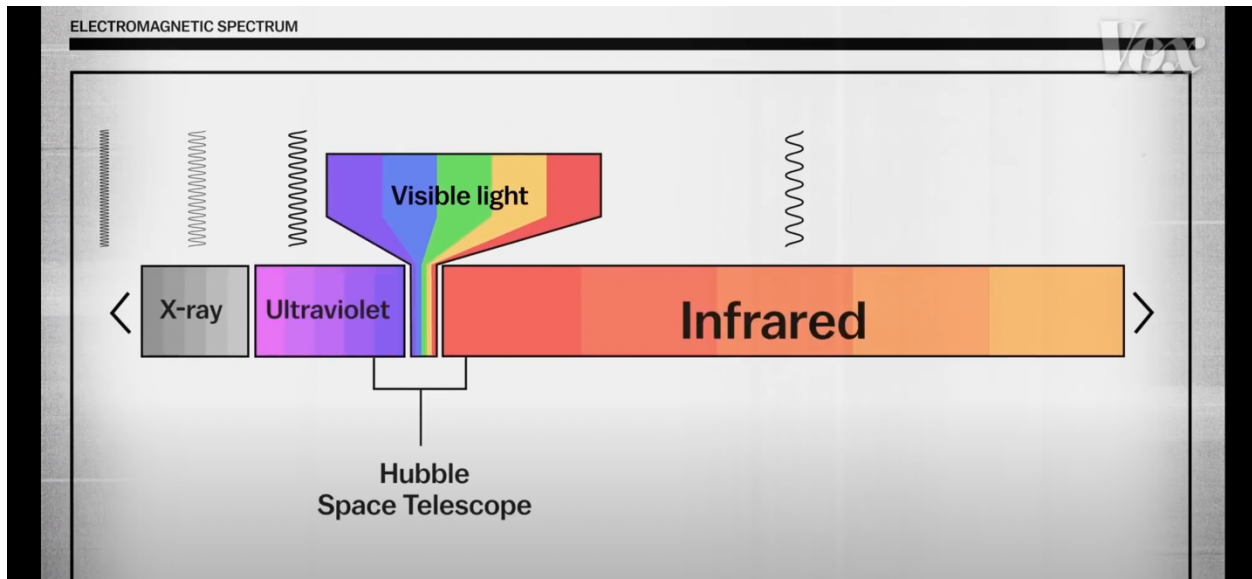


Figure E.4.1.4. Electromagnetic Spectrum chart provided by Joss Wong, “Why the James Webb Space Telescope looks like that,” By Vox, Uploaded on Dec. 25, 2021, accessed on Dec. 25, 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I2GhFSInBqA>



Figure E.4.1.5. The Hubble Bubble—image of the visible space that we can see. Image provided by Joss Wong, “Why the James Webb Space Telescope looks like that,” By Vox, Uploaded on Dec. 25, 2021, accessed on Dec. 25, 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I2GhFSInBqA>



Figure E.4.1.6. Screenshot with insight quote, “JWST may be a telescope in its form, but the primary function is more like a time machine.” Screen grab from “



Figure E.4.1.7. Screen grab from “James Webb Space Telescope: Shaping the Future by Showing the past // Vlog Ep. 9” by Min Choi, Uploaded on Dec. 29, 2021. This is a quote from astrophysicist Amber Straughn talking about the potential of James Webb Space Telescope.

E.5. Digital Incarnation and the Inevitable Church

In this vlog episode, I talk about the basic idea that the more churches invest into the digital space, the more they can accomplish incarnational endeavors in ministry. The video is addressing the misunderstanding that digital is trying to replace our tactile, tacit, physical needs as human beings.

E.5.1. Script for Digital Incarnation and the Inevitable Church // Vlog Ep. 9

A great concern of today is the rise of digital technology, social media, and smartphones. In sermons, at conferences, amongst many church leaders and pastors, it's clear that for the last two decades, the church has been very wary about how our digital habits have formed and how those habits impacted our desires and priorities.

We're called the most information-bombarded generation, the most distracted generation in history.

And for many, that fear has been affirmed by our polarized, stressed out, disenchanted culture, and for many faith-communities, it has also doubled the resolve of keeping tech as far away from church life, from ministry, and from how we think about faithfulness.

You look back and realize social media arrived and hit us like an unannounced tsunami, flooding and immersing us in information to a level that had never happened before in history. An entire generation went from simple browsing of websites, yahoo chatrooms, and AOL instant messages to being able to catalogue all parts of their lives through all kinds of media all while being able to acquire an audience very easily through whatever platform you were on.

It was this ability to create attention at the individual level that made social media so powerful a tool. There was no manual. There was no masterclass on social media. And there was no tradition or history for us to rely on for wisdom and best practice.

In other words, because tech came so fast and made itself so accessible, we just died in—it wasn't in the cards for us to learn, take the necessary baby steps, and slowly build an ethic around the internet so that we could make it into a pleasant, peaceful, mutually beneficial digital library where we all got along and utilized respect and civility.

Clearly, something along the way went very wrong for us.

And we'd like to blame the tech itself, right? It made us do it! I think that's misplaced and, in another video, I want to dive into this idea more, but the internet is a mirror. It only exposed us—it didn't necessarily change us.

Anyways, whether you are wearier or hopeful about tech in 2022, the chief concern is this:

DISEMBODIMENT: a generation that overtime loses sight of humanity's need to be present, rooted in the physical. Will we forsake the physical and the present for something that feels more distant and artificial?

Truthfully, our culture's less and less interest in the life of the church, religion, and Christianity can be considered a crisis. And for many, technology, and exposure to opposing ideas is blamed. But I think there's a more hard-hitting reason that the church continues to regress in culture—it's because the church is unwilling to meet the people where they are.

Think about the last two years. The pandemic has pushed us towards the digital mediums. Our work, our communities, the way we connect with families and friends, even leisure stuff like shopping or going to the movies—we've had to pivot to digital. But think about how each of your churches have responded? Have

they tried all that they can to transition and be effective in connecting during this time? Or have they tried to do what they've always done because that's all that they know?

The pandemic has accelerated where we were inevitably going, and that observation comes with a lesson that perhaps what worked in the past hasn't been working that well in our current times and will work even less as we move into the future.

For us the church, how do we pivot without losing ourselves, losing our identities, forsaking tradition? How do we adapt and discern what God is calling us to?

In Matthew 28:16-20, Jesus gives the church our prime directive:

16 Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. **17** When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. **18** And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **19** Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20** and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

The primary verb is to GO, and in that GOING, we are to make disciples. Has your church been faithful to this calling? To GO? And by the way, where are we supposed to go? If we are to go to make disciples, then it follows that where we are perpetually commanded to go is where the people are.

But what that looks like certainly looks different with every single civilization and age of humanity. How do we account for progress? How do we account for technological breakthroughs?

When we are talking about technology and the advancement of civilization, there are three principles that we need to keep in mind if we are to adapt at those critical junctures.

ONE, you can't go backwards. You can't put the genie back in the bottle. Progress always moves forward. At best, if you're powerful and influential enough, you might be able to suppress, censor, and delay technological advancement for a very short period but it's like trying to stop a massive tidal wave, it will all be in vain as the sheer power and speed of that game-changing tech will engulf our minuscule ability to control it. But we must always remember that new technologies act as gravity and it is futile to try and reverse her forces.

TWO, the novel and weird will become ubiquitous. All technological adoption across history starts small and slow. And many people resist precisely because they are new, and they are disruptive. Visionaries and pioneers will introduce them, the risk-takers and early adopters will test them out, and for most of us, we'll come around and slowly integrate those life-altering technologies, even if we don't want to initially, because of the sheer advantage or convenience it brings. The caution here is to be open-minded or we might be left behind and ineffective in ushering in goodness alongside change.

And THREE, those who are bold to understand and master it first, will generally have the most say in how the future is shaped by that technology. The pioneers set the trend. And the more we hesitate means that others will decide the direction of our future. This is the great danger of prudence at the critical points in history where there is an explosion of cultural breakthroughs. Sometimes, we as the church need to consider progress as an obedience of faith.

And yet, look at the dominant posture of the church—have we not disregarded these principles?

A lot of churches long for the days before smartphones and social media, that hope prevents them from being innovative because they see these things as temporary trends. There's almost a hope that these things are temporary fads and distractions, that they are mostly harmful and unnecessary, and that they are in some ways undermining the sacred and spiritual. And so, they want to go backwards to a time where these things did not infiltrate our lives.

There's also a willful ignorance about technology, especially with older adults who didn't have it for half their life or more. It's very much a "we didn't have it back then so why would we need it now?" Mentality which is understandable—but the truth is each generation that follows will be born into this new reality.

Other churches do not invest much thoughtfulness into how tech can be or should be used—they mostly mimic other entities that seem to be successfully employing it but forget that different entities shape these technologies for their own purposes. They believe these things are powerful, but they see them as a way to gain an advantage or for self-serving endeavors. What they are looking for are shortcuts to greater survival rather than being prophetic leaders, leading the culture to greater flourishing.

If the church continues to fixate on days past, and keep these new things at an arms distance, and have no desire to really understand what's going on so that she can lead herself and others well through these disruptive periods of history, then the church is risking her ability to be salt and light in the community. They'll be lapped by culture, and they will wither into obsolescence.

The mistake, I think, is this: believing that tech and church is at odds and thinking that tech will never be kneaded into the central life of the church. It's grounded in a misunderstanding of God's providence in human history. Is God not in control of all that is physical and all that is digital? Is he not the God of nature and physics?

What is real? What is authentic and meaningful? Today, real, meaningful human experiences are happening through our digital mediums. We cannot deny this. New industries, careers, and vocations are flooding into existence and our world is changing. People are finding community, significance, romance. It is becoming their place for curiosity, creativity, and rest. The core of their learning and education is being facilitated through the internet—hybrid learning, asynchronous learning, college, continuing education. This is the brave new world, and we must partake so that we can continue to be salt and light, so that we can continue to be the faithful church.

Whether you think church can happen virtually is one question. But one unequivocal truth is that life IS happening virtually, and so, the church must be a part because the church is a conduit of life, meaning, ethics, and destiny.

So, the path isn't a dual path: it isn't even digital AND incarnational, side by side—the path of the church is through the digital to get to the incarnational. Digital will be a requirement to be salt and light.

We cannot stay behind; we cannot stay above the digital ocean and not get wet. God's calling and command invites us to dive and to see what he's doing in this vast new world.

E.5.2. Assets for Digital Incarnation and the Inevitable Church // Vlog Ep. 8



Figure 6.2.1. Screenshot of the a-roll with title animation "Disembodiment."



Figure 5.2.2. Screenshot of people working in an office from storyblocks.com



Figure 5.2.3. Screenshot of augmented reality and face, provided by license agreement from storyblocks.com



Figure 5.2.4. Screengrab of Min Choi talking about Matthew 28:18-20, the great commission.



Figure 5.2.5. Multiple screengrabs that have the main points from the video

E.5.3. The 3G's of Future Church Design // Vlog. Episode 6

The 3G's of Future Church Design was a topic that I wanted to explore about the observations of many churches in America and how they go about existing in culture. I found it peculiar that many churches are extremely indifferent to culture, which is not just a product of resisting digital, but it's a theological foundation that they are adhering to. What I noticed was a privileged church that has enjoyed the freedom of being carefree in this culture. This has accrued a spiritual and cultural debt that is now due in the form of people's post-Christian and post-church dispositions.

What I wanted to explore is the sincerity of churches who truly say they are about people and about being in close community but resist digital. What if there was a correlation between the desire to stay distinct in culture and the desire to not take digital seriously? What if there was an inherent design flaw that the church wants to be popular, wants to have the cultural spotlight, but for a very long time has never had to earn it? This creates a theological gap in thinking and practice in my mind.

That's why I want to explore the concept of church design and how our designs of church ministries are going to rapidly shift. Inevitably, a few churches will be thoughtful and make great contextual decisions, and then everyone will most likely follow, and then, a great new model will be birthed.

E.5.3.1 Script (Rough Draft)

INTRO

Tech is creating an opportunity for churches to examine and adapt to a new way of presenting itself in culture and neighborhoods.

In the past, churches were representative of the majority culture and so, spent little time presenting the gospel as wonderful, holy, and mysterious. It was more presented as dogma and philosophy.

It also became the norm to be anti-transparent, over indulging in the trust that the average churchgoer gave.

This led to less accountability and more importantly, a low tolerance for accountability.

The church also became hyper rational to a degree that some did not distinguish rationality with rationalism. This affected how the Bible is taught and learned, this affected how we model discipleship, and it also indirectly made community one dimensional. Churches became community of dullness, really not knowing how to integrate and make space for people who need other angles to connect and make meaning out of their spiritual journey to Christ.

A great deal has been said about the church's relationship with culture in America in recent times. The landscape of America is changing—some will say it is fracturing and splintering, creating polarity, threatening the old traditions and values.

But others like me, see a new birth, a new birth induced by the great technological bloom that is happening right now (and has been for decades). We have not even seen the apex of the technological revolution—it is yet to come, and from this point until then, it's going to get pretty rocky. Life as we know it will experience disruption, disorientation, and new demands.

STORY

We've become so comfortable as the American Church, haven't we? Remember when we thought American culture aligned perfectly with Christianity? Well, it's safe to say that our rose-colored glasses have come off. But I have a great deal of hope even in the midst of this socio-religious phenomenon we are experiencing collectively as Christ followers today.

A great deal has been said about the secularization of America. As historians, we've seen it time and time again that various places in the world over the course of the church's history have experienced the rise and fall of Christendom—it seems like America will inevitably disregard and disassociate itself directly from its early religious roots. If history repeats, then America will not experience the same level of Christian religiosity ever again. And that can feel like a threat to life and a threat to the church. But it's not. Here's why.

But what might be surprising is that a great deal of the mechanism of secularization isn't just the changing of the spiritual guard—America isn't losing it's soul (and by the way, it had a very troubled soul from the beginning but let's not get into all that). It's not because America has grown more antinomian or more relativistic.

It might surprise a lot of us but what is a deeper answer, and a much more telling answer is that the world has changed completely because of technology. What life was like even 100 years ago is not even distinguishable today, and that is largely because all the vital strands of what makes up daily life has altered.

Think about the most basic concepts of human interaction and endeavors. How we grow, learn, befriend, build communities, and work define what civilization looks like. What happens when the inevitable advancements brought to us from every field of study brings with it unavoidable...

E.5.3.2. Assets



Figure E.5.3.1. Screengrab with title



Figure 5.3.2. Screengrab of main ideas

E.5.4 From Consumption to Creation: Building Resiliency, Clarity, and Patience // Vlog Ep. 5

In episode 5 of the vlog, I had a spur of the moment inspiration to go out and create an off-the-cuff video on creativity vs. consumption. Much of the criticism about digital is that it is a means to tug on our consumeristic tendencies. This is where social media and the internet has become a massive concern for idolatry.

While, idolatry is certainly a concern, it is more concerning that the church has had an inadequate vision for the vacuum they are creating. When moderation and resistance to the digital medium is pronounced, the intended desire to help foster a more God-centered heart is only temporary. What is required is a more robust vision of how to navigate a digital life.

This vlog is a desire to create a vision of creativity that I believe overrides the natural tendency for us to revert to consumers. If we can grasp the beauty and meaning of unlocking our creative capacities, then I think we can inhabit and create a better world.

E.5.4.1. Assets



Figure E.5.4.1.1. Opening shot in Vlog Episode 5.



Figure E.5.4.1.2. Main shot.

E.6. Semiotic Spelunk

E.6.1. Introduction – Script

Hello, welcome to the Inevitable Church. My name is Min Soo Choi, I am a Christian Semiotician, and welcome to the **Semiotic Spelunk** where we dive and take a look at the subterranean caverns of the digital frontier.

A major part of the mission for this channel is exploring and teaching the techniques and principles that allow us to be effective communicators and inhabitants of our digital landscape every single day. That is why I thought the metaphor of spelunking was appropriate—we're going to dive into the mud and earth of daily digital practice so that we can form the right skillsets and habits that allow us to be faithful, human, and conduits of the gospel.

One of the major stumbling blocks for a lot of churches is that they lack a digital footprint or presence that allows them to know their communities and in turn, be known from different distances. Static, outdated websites, sparse content on their social media feeds, no videos, no news, no updates, no personalization, and no compelling stories. Churches who have no interest in the digital dimension of their faith communities not only miss out on the lives of their people during the week, they also conceal their witness to the greater community.

And in a time, where there is a lot of misconception and doubt about the value of a church rooted in community, this becomes a great concern. A church that is exclusive to being in person looks inactive and dead from a distance—and this compounds with our already suspicious culture who questions the church's place in their neighborhood.

As the world progresses, undoubtedly it will become more and more immersed in digital and virtual spaces. Already, the world is reliant on the power of the internet for many, many things. The internet will continue to mature and from that digital soil will sprout brand new industries and jobs, new ways to create communities and relationships, new ways to express who you are. AI, the metaverse, blockchain... these things will usher in new possibilities like what the printing press did in the 1500's. What the automobile did in the 1900's, what television did in the middle of the century, and what the smartphone is continuing to do

the last 30 years. It's inevitable that wherever progress is headed, we human beings are close behind. And every time this happens human beings with their hearts, minds, and souls will migrate towards this progress.

And the stakes are high for the church that chooses not to engage, to not go where the people are going, to not lead and guide.

Think about different components to ministry. Tech is changing how we do all of them. Discipleship, evangelism, justice-oriented endeavors, church planting, you name it. Digital is creating the need for new language and new layers to consider—that's why the old methods are going to fall off real hard. And it's important to discern what is substance, the non-negotiable characteristics of the church, and form, the thing that changes depending on time and culture.

Tech is bringing up new sets of questions, new methodologies, styles, and strategies. Right theology employed wrongly can be equally ineffective and therefore we have to be open-minded and creative if we are to hear what God is calling us to.

So, here's what I want to build and share with you all. I want to create guides and principles around tech that allows us to start integrating them in fruitful ways into ministry. I want to talk about how to make compelling stories, devotionals, and content through videos, vlogs, posts, and more. These are important signposts for churches. What is that church about? Who are they? What kind of culture do they want to make? What is the mission of that church? It can't be just in the form of a mission statement or a staff page. It has to be compelling, up-to-date content that feels personal and compelling.

I want to help churches to not feel like they are losing themselves in the overwhelming process of learning how to create avenues for connection through our digital world. Anyone can do this no matter what generation you are from and no matter how you grew up. But it takes humility and an open-mind and heart to begin this process.

These things takes years to be really good at. It takes even longer to make it effortless and natural. The barrier of entry is the lowest it's ever been, by the way. We can pretty much do it all on a smartphone, so the power the make significant progress into the digital sphere is all in the palm of our hands.

In the videos to follow, I want to talk about the creative process of filmmaking, vlogging, and content creation in a way that helps you start your journey in a very good direction. I want to help you explore what works for you and what doesn't. What will be specific challenges you'll face as you try to build a habit of creativity and innovation in your own personal life as well as in your ministries.

I'll be talking a lot about my own journey of 15 years now getting into video, building up techniques and an eye for my own aesthetic style. I'll be sharing both technical advice as well as general principles that I've learned from various resources and people.

So, I look forward to helping you think about these things in a renewed way, to give you encouragement and hope that you, too, can create compelling signposts for Christ.

E.6.2. Assets for Semiotic Spelunk Episode 1



Figure 7.2.1. Title card of the episode.



Figure 6.2.2. Screen grab with Mission Statement of the Inevitable Church.



Figure 6.2.3. Content creator setting up her home studio. Screen grab at 1:23 in Semiotic Spelunk Episode 1



Figure 6.2.4. VR user. Screen grab at 3:01 in *Semiotic Spelunk Episode 1*

E.7. Interview Data

E.7.1 Interview Candidates #1: KV & SV with notes

Description: 30-minute conversation over Zoom with notetaking

Date: 10/22/21

Video: [Vlog #2: What is my NPO statement? The “Why” Behind the Channel](#) + From Consumption to Creation: [Building Resiliency, Clarity, and Patience \(Vlog Ep. 5\)](#).

1. What are your initial thoughts on the overall video?

- Likes the look of the studio but looks like there’s room to fill the background space.
- A little long (15 minutes should be 10-11 minutes), need to change up pacing—possibly dive into the core content quicker.
- The backstory of print is interesting, and they understand the connection to modern context. They said to develop that a bit more in another video.
- Episode 5 was much better lengthwise. 7 minutes is a sweet spot. Try to keep it around this amount of time.
- Strongly resonated with the consumerism of digital technology (minute 2:10).
- Dive into resiliency and creativity (minute 3 in vlog episode 5).

2. Do you think this video connects to the Inevitable Church NPO? If yes, how? If not, what needs to be talked about?

- Yes, vlog 2 directly addresses it. How did you come up with the NPO? Possibly make a video specifically about the problems that have risen for me to explore this NPO.
- A great question: how are we thinking wrongly about tech? (This is a great video topic)
- So, approaching tech with a new set of values is kind of what IC is about? I said yes and becoming aware of how these technological forces are changing how we behave.

- Discipleship was the main thing we talked about as it pertains to vlog ep. 5. How discipleship intersects with content creation—going through repeatable practices (disciplines) that address vital characteristics of the gospel.
 - The main question had to do with what biblical principles are wanting to be addressed. How do we continue to bring in Biblical texts and ideas or even Gospel-related items into the videos?
3. Is the video educational, entertaining, and edifying? (1-5 for all three). Comments?
- Educational: 4. Make distinct sections where you're purposefully teaching and not just processing the ideas (I have an idea about making a foundations series).
 - Entertaining: 4. Use more illustrations and stories possibly although they understand that the vlogs are more my process. The aesthetics look great, they said. Very moody, very "Min."
 - Edifying: 3. Some of it is overwhelming to think about. Also, what are the practicals? What should we be considering in our daily life? That's an important question, challenging and I need to think about it more.
4. Any additional comments?
- Are you going to make distinct series or is the vlog going to be main video? I told them if I made distinct series, would that orient the content into more accessible videos? They said yes. I have noted that

E.7.2 Interview Candidates #2: SA + KA with notes

Description: 30-minute conversation over Zoom with notetaking

Date: 11/6/21

Video Presented: [3G's of Future Church Design // Vlog Ep. 6](#)

1. What are your initial thoughts on the overall video?
- Intro is interesting, great animations.
 - Clear what was being talked about. Liked that each of the things are easily memorable.
 - Interesting idea to come at it from the perspective of design.
 - Looks really cool, the background is interesting. Lighting is dramatic. Very professional looking.
 - They can see excitement, energy, and passion.
2. Do you think this video connects to the Inevitable Church NPO? If yes, how? If not, what needs to be talked about?
- (After I share with them the NPO), they see the connection that I am making in terms of how the form can affect the church. They found it interesting how I connect glass conceptually to accountability (2:56).
 - One question that they asked is what is the difference between current church designs and future church designs. I think they were asking what's the difference between what I am talking about and what churches are utilizing. This is making me think about needing to articulate the difference between having a print mindset and a visual mindset.

- We talked about the need for artists and gardeners from a theological perspective. They found it interesting that I am talking about artists and gardeners when I am focusing on tech. I told them that the best of tech helps us become more human (I should make a video about this).

3. Is the video educational, entertaining, and edifying? (1-5 for all three)

- Educational: 5. Insightful content. Thoughtful. Good length.
- Entertaining: 4. Presentation is great. The music, animations are really cool. Maybe add more illustrations and graphics.
- Edifying: 4. Hopeful idea. The questions at the end (9:00) are good but practical steps of how we would incorporate them might be good in another video.

4. Any additional comments?

- Examples of churches either doing this well or telling stories that illustrate the points.
- Have you considered making a how-to guide if someone wanted to start doing what you're doing, making videos, making content?

E.7.3. Interview Candidate #3: SF with notes

Description: 30-minute conversation in person with notetaking

Date: 11/18/21

Video (Presented): [The Metaverse and the Inevitable Church // Vlog Ep. 7](#)

1. What are your initial thoughts on the overall video?

- Informative, insightful.
- Presentation right at the beginning is HQ.
- He's seen previous videos. The pacing on this much quicker, smoother. He thinks that is helpful.
- Neal Stephenson – Snow Crash illustration helpful in showing how old the metaverse concept is. Helpful illustrations/examples.
- Metaverse is a new concept and it's fascinating to think about how this intersects with faith, he said.
- Very professional. Communication is great.

2. Do you think this video connects to the Inevitable Church NPO? If yes, how? If not, what needs to be talked about?

- Yes. He talked about how the ecosystem and the social dynamics of metaverse clearly has significant implications for communities.
- He appreciated 10:25: Gospel is primed to enter into these spaces. He didn't think about these things being actual dimensions or spaces for human endeavors, questions, work, life, etc.

- Question he asked: Do you think metaverse broadens what true worship is? Does it create greater insulation and desensitization? We discussed this and it made sense to him why it's an important question or topic to consider. Great question.
- At 5:07, he thought that was helpful in laying out some of the implications.
- The vision makes sense to him.
- The 8:08 summary of where we've come from with social media was a good point.
- The 5 aspects were good. Compelling, persuasive.
- What are the principles that we should be practicing prior to when the metaverse becomes common/popular? Great question.
- QUESTION: is point 5 assumed? Will people come out? Or will it invert people's lives? I think he was talking about this idea about the digital life becoming "primary." We talked in length about what primary vs secondary mean. Does working in a cubicle better?
- Contemplated what it would look like for the transition in the church. What will they be? Baby steps? Is the church still way off in terms of even having a use for this?

3. Is the video educational, entertaining, and edifying? (1-5 for all three)

- Educational: 4. More details about who are the major players in the metaverse. Or what kinds of programs are being developed.
- Entertaining: 5. Good use of pictures, sound, lighting. Looks very polished.
- Edifying: 4. Great insight. Great script, thoughtful.

4. Any additional comments?

- Possibly think about a biblical principle or story that highlights the central point of why we would prepare for the metaverse. Is the metaphor of the land of Canaan a parallel here? He wanted more of what I was getting at right at the end of the video.

E.7.4. Candidate #4 KP Interview over zoom with notes

Description: Zoom Interview with KP with notes

Date: 12/9

Video (Presented): [The NPO // Foundations Series Video #1](#)

1. What are your initial thoughts on the overall video?

- Beautiful, aesthetically interesting. Great intro.
- The look of the studio, background look elegant.
- Lots of interesting ideas, good clarity.
- The history of Martin Luther was particularly interesting. The parallel is very provocative.
- Feels like a documentary.
- Great use of clips and images.
- Great use of words on screen.

- The intersection of biblical ideas and context—very engaging.

2. Do you think this video connects to the Inevitable Church NPO? If yes, how? If not, what needs to be talked about?

- It outlines the NPO. I asked her what is missing or does the NPO make sense?
- NPO is long. There are several major components.
- What is an example of a recontextualized gospel principle? Great question. I want to make a series of videos for this.
- Stronger connection from printing press era to what the church is doing today.

3. Is the video educational, entertaining, and edifying? (1-5 for all three)

- Educational: 5. Very educational. Theological and historical. Learned a lot. Presented in interesting way.
- Entertaining: 5. Highly produced! Content was super interesting. What about a personal story or journey? Modern examples?
- Edifying 4: The call at the end of we need to dive in and be agents of change. Where do we start? Practicality?

E.8 Timesheet

Date	Objectives	Hours
9/11	Script Writing for Vlog #1, What is Christian Semiotics, and	3
9/13	Script for The Tech Monk, Network Revolution	3
9/14	Filming of Vlog #1, Storyboarding what is Semiotics, Editing Vlog #1	4
9/15	Editing Vlog #1, uploading first vlog video. https://youtu.be/GSXGH9dmARM	2
9/16	I did some script writing for What is Christian Semiotics. I was pretty sick this week so I didn't get as far but I am catching up on the weekend.	2
9/17	Spent a late night working out vlog #2. I did some filming but I didn't like how long or convoluted it was. I am going to try and explain my NPO in a single video and I want to be able to break it down succinctly and leave room for interpretation. https://youtu.be/YMC4Hy2jOc0	2
9/18	Went to the coffee shop to finalize What is Christian Semiotics. After this I am hoping to start writing out Episode 2 of the Inevitable Church. I got to still do some research. I am watching two documentaries on Martin Luther that are super helpful in framing him. I am going to take parts of what they present about early	2

	life and then show how the technology of the printing press gave him the resources.	
9/19	Thought about a new video on Jesus' statement, "I am the truth, the life, and the way." I think this is ripe to be semiotically analyzed. Looking at other texts to go through.	1
9/22	Filming Vlog #3, editing, set design	3
9/23	Editing Vlog #3, prepping for Semiotics Video. Uploaded Vlog #3: https://youtu.be/RK3dPQJkuaQ	2
9/25	The 4 Seasons of Faith and Culture - Conceptualizing, brainstorming	1
10/3	Vlog #4 filming, editing, uploading, scripting. https://youtu.be/j7R8VQVVJsU	4
10/5	Reading Art + Faith - Introducing the Theology of Making as a concept, semiotic	3
10/6	Discipleship of Creativity - The Creative Disciple	2
10/7	Filming "What is Semiotics?" - Filmed all scenes around 5 minute Semiotics video. This will be part of the foundational series or CONCEPTUAL theories. Also, reviewed and began editing the video.	4
10/8	More editing on What is Semiotics?	2
10/12	Writing for Martin Luther/ Jan Hus Episode	2
10/13	Editing Semiotics Short (complete) — uploaded: https://youtu.be/9F6-xjWUoe8	3
10/15	Created Instagram, Twitter, and a few other social media accounts. Created marketing images, new thumbnails, new logos	3
10/19	Vlog #5 - Filming, writing, conceptualizing, finding assets on story blocks.	4
10/20	Editing/uploading Vlog #5, https://youtu.be/eB21XD38lOM	3
10/22	Interview / Feedback gathering with Individual #1 KV + SV	1
10/24	Scriptwriting - The 3 G's of Future Church Design, set design	4
10/29	Recording of The 3 G's of Future Church Design	3
10/30	Research on Jan Hus	4
10/30	Editing 3 G's of Future Church Design	4
11/5	EDITING 3G'S OF FUTURE CHURCH DESIGN // UPLOAD: https://youtu.be/3ffw8nd5br0	3
11/6	Interview #2 SA +KA	1
11/10	Writing of Metaverse and the Church - 40% done	4
11/11	Writing of metaverse and the church	3
11/12	Filming, editing metaverse and the church. Writing about the PROBLEM—core concern the church is navigating.	5
11/15	Researching teleprompter	2

11/16	Re-recorded the metaverse video with teleprompter. It was so much easier to use teleprompter method. Start editing right after.	4
11/17	Finished editing metaverse and the church // Vlog Ep. 7. Uploaded to YouTube: https://youtu.be/XZILsipvfTo	3
11/18	Interview / Feedback gathering with Individual #3 SF. In-person. 30 minutes.	1
11/23	Started writing script for digital incarnation	3
11/24	Refining digital incarnation script. Added conclusion component	3
11/25	Writing a new series called Semiotic Spelunk Episode 1- Introduction. Finsihed editing Digital incarnation. Thinking about branding and the series in general. Read through Marshall McLuhan's Gutenberg Galaxy again.	4
11/26	Filming of Semiotic Spelunk and editing of the A-roll.	2
11/27	Edited Semiotic Spelunk. Uploaded to YouTube. Created thumbnails: https://youtu.be/MhS9gohaw2U	4
11/28	Researched new title animations and quote animations for the new Spelunk series and Garden Gallery intro	2
11/29	Set redesign for Garden Gallery. This is the set design that I am going to use for the remainder of the project. There might be variation in lighting.	3
12/1	Filming for Digital Incarnation and the Inevitable Church and post-production editing and upload: https://youtu.be/wGmcjCKoQjA	4
12/3	Writing Foundation Series Script Video 1	2
12/4	Writing Foundation Series Script Video 1: NPO and MVP--Finished. Then started working on video 2 of the foundation series: theological foundation. I want to talk about the main theological principles and teachings that I am employing in the Inevitable Church.	3
12/5	Finished editing Script for Foundation Series Video 2. And also edited Digital Incarnation and The Inevitable Church Vlog	5
12/7	Filming Foundations Series Video 1: The NPO and MVP. Data Backup. Setup in Final Cut Pro X	2
12/8	Editing FS episode 1: NPO and MVP. Decided that the Episode 1 is too long and I am going to split the NPO and MVP and make two episodes. Upload link: https://youtu.be/hPc5NrdTWj4	3
12/9	Interview #4 - KP - Zoom	1
12/10	Instagram posts, marketing, thumbnail creation for Episode 1.	2
12/11	YouTube maintenance, bibliography work. Added links to Foundations video 1.	2
12/13	Progress Report	5
12/15	Interview with JT + CC over zoom.	1

E.9 Incomplete Scripts

E.9.1. Technological Forces and the Inevitable Church

Welcome to the Inevitable Church! This is episode 4 of the Foundations Series of the channel.

In this episode, I want to introduce part 1 of identifying the technological forces that are changing our society, including the church. These technological forces are becoming more widely accepted as sociological mechanisms that are changing our behavior and our lives. They forces are creating disruption and disorientation in our work and in our homes. and for many, these forces are subterranean and difficult to identify without taking time to understand it.

Kevin Kelly is a man who has taken the task of helping us understand our future. He is one of the key voices of this project and he is the founding executive editor of Wired magazine, he's a prominent expert on digital technology, and he wrote an interesting book called The Inevitable.

And you'll notice how perhaps the title of his book inspired the name of this channel.

In this book, he talks about a dozen technological forces that have been active for decades but up until recently, have only been recognized by a few. When we think about the rise of smartphones, social media, VR, AI, and beyond, many of these developments and patterns have come into fruition because of these forces. And Kelly says that all these advancements were inevitable—that the characteristics of these technologies all but guaranteed the progression of digital technology that has come to be.

It would be inaccurate to call Kevin Kelly a great predictor of technological outcomes. He wasn't guessing. His insights came from careful analysis of the nature of these forces. He saw the biases, he saw the logical outworking as these technologies matured, and then he considered the human factor and anticipated how people would utilize and repurpose these technological novelties, continuing to drive the iterative nature of digital.

In part 1, we'll introduce the first four major technological forces:

Becoming, Cognifying, Flowing, Screening

You'll notice each of these forces are verbs. They are “doing” something to our culture, our lives, and us.

And this matters to faith and the church. Until we understand these forces (which by the way, many still are unaware) and how they are deconstructing, disrupting, and disorienting what has been built into the fabric

of our society, we will remain pedestrians and onlookers as the world moves forward. Understanding these subterranean, metaphysically infused technological forces will help us to proclaim and be witness to the good news to a new world and to a new generation.

So, let's dive in and talk about each of these forces and how they are changing the world and the church.

E.9.2. Content Creation and the Inevitable Church

In this episode, I want to talk about content creation or the creative process as a model for modern Christian discipleship.

There are three main ideas that I want to communicate in this video:

Bearing Fruit of the Spirit

Imago Dei

Bearing witness to the story of Jesus

Breaking the idols

Being creative is not a personality, it's a discipline—so that means anyone can create, not just the artist, not just the young, and not just the “talented,” whatever that means. And if anyone can create through discipline, then maybe creativity can be a sort of a building block or foundation for discipleship, which is a word that just means an individual who is dedicated to following a specific kind of way, truth, or life.

All stories should be told, and all stories are creative—self-expression and storytelling are elements of the human condition. There is nothing more powerful and meaningful than being able to share stories with each other. Storytelling is what makes us human and that means creativity is an avenue to restore our humanity.

Creativity is the great remedy to consumption—to choose to tell our stories and to self-express our creativity requires a temporary withholding of our habit to consume. And in a world that bombards us with the temptation to be ever-consuming, the counter-cultural act of creativity liberates us from the idols that attack and distort our loves and desires, and allows us to build up hearts, minds, and souls that are resilient, self-sustaining receptacles of the Spirit.

FIRST: being creative is not a personality, it's a discipline.

Over the years, I've talked with many people about what creativity and the act of creating means to them. I think the most common conversation I have initially is...

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