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Kim's "Analog Church: Why We Need Real People, Places, and Things in the Digital Age" (book review)

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Book Reviews



Kim, Jay Y. (2020). *Analog church: Why we need real people, places, and things in the digital age*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP. 203 pp. \$18.00. ISBN 9780830841585

In the book *Analog Church: Why We Need Real People, Places, and Things in the Digital Age*, Jay Y. Kim asks significant questions about the use of technology in church, questioning if such technology is helping or hindering the mission of the church.

Far from being opposed to using modern technology in churches, Kim currently serves as pastor of teaching and leadership at Vintage Faith Church in California and has served at several large churches, including one church where he preached to multiple sites via live video feed. He also serves on the core leadership team for the ReGeneration Project (where he serves with Scot McKnight, who also wrote the foreword to this book) and hosts the *ReGeneration Podcast*.

Kim claims that by rushing headlong into social media, podcasts, and technology use in worship, churches are more concerned with being relevant and creating a product that people want to consume rather than providing transcendence and community.

The book is organized into three sections: Worship, Community, and Scripture. In each section Kim explores the topic in the “digital age” and then goes onto critique the “digital age.” He argues that the solution to this issue is for the church to go “analog” and explores why “analog” succeeds where digital fails. The book includes endnotes and small group study questions, but the questions are more focused towards pastoral and church leadership discussion than layperson reflections.

This book asks important questions that all churches should ask before jumping on the train of digital engagement. Especially in a time of COVID-19, as churches navigate the stormy waters of when and how to reopen, and what to keep from their forays into livestreaming worship services, the questions asked in this book are more relevant than when Kim was writing.

It is written in an accessible style; however, Kim routinely engages with Scripture, philosophers, theologians, and popular media outlets to make his argument, showing he has done ample research. However, his argument could have been stronger had he incorporated arguments from Jeremy Begbie’s *Redeeming Transcendence in the Arts: Bearing Witness to the Triune God*, Jennifer Allen Craft’s *Placemaking and the Arts: Cultivating the Christian Life*, and James K.A. Smith’s *Cultural Liturgies* series. He does

refer to some of Smith's work, but only the popular level distillation of his *Cultural Liturgies* series. There are much stronger arguments that could be drawn from the full version of the series.

In addition to his research, Kim draws upon personal experience, giving his book a much more personal feel than an academic research project. It is recommended for colleges that have undergraduate ministry preparation courses, seminaries, churches, and pastoral libraries.

Reviewer

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